



The power
of purpose

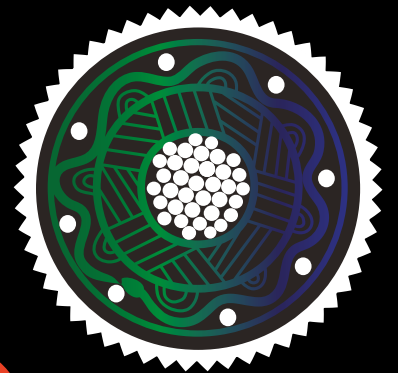
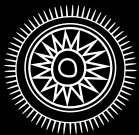


Acknowledgement of Country

Life Without Barriers acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country and their connection to land, water, and community. We extend that acknowledgement to the local Awabakal people, on which our National Office is located.

We pay our respects to them, their culture and customs and to their Elders past, present and emerging. We believe that reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians. We are committed to an ongoing journey towards truth telling and reconciliation.

We also recognise and value the contribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, carers, people we support and communities to our continued reconciliation journey together.



Our purpose

is to partner with people and
change lives for the better





Our values are our culture

Our purpose was formed nearly 30 years ago and whilst the decades have passed, we have remained an organisation that is hopeful and resolute to what can be achieved through partnerships. It sounds simple, but every day we strive to honour the relationships we have with people by acting with respect, responsiveness, imagination, and courage. This behaviour, influenced by our values, is what forms the culture we have as a collective of people working alongside each other at Life Without Barriers.



Courageous

Our courage is forged through optimistic determination. It is our way of being bold and generous in all our relationships and endeavours. Courage is our excitement and our perseverance as we steer steadfastly towards our purpose.



Respectful

We value every person we partner with and honour one-to-one connections. Respect is our human currency; it means we behave authentically and with integrity.



Responsive

We are thoughtful and responsive because we believe we can be considered in our thinking while adapting at speed. We listen and respond to people's expectations and choices – getting things done swiftly and thoroughly, every time.



Relationships

Relationships are everything. They are how we connect, form trust and understand what people expect and are seeking from us. Relationships are what we bring to every intention, every action and every partnership.



Imagination

Imagination gives us eternal optimism and creativity to be unrestrained in how we seek to partner and solve problems.



A message from Greg Ridder, Chair

On behalf of the Life Without Barriers Board, I am pleased to share our Annual Report for 2020-2021. I joined as Chair in March, grateful for the opportunity to serve an organisation that operates with a clear purpose for the people of Australia. Our theme for this year's report is 'The power of purpose' and it is apt we take this moment to reflect on the year through the lens of partnering with people to change lives for the better.

In sharing this year's report, I extend my appreciation to former Chair, Terry Lawler, who retired from the Board in May and whose legacy will carry us all forward in the years to come. The contributions of Terry and his family are immeasurable, as are the contributions of retiring Directors Tony Deegan and Doug Dean. It is apparent to me how much Life Without Barriers has benefited from their leadership over the years and we extend our gratitude to each of them.

As we welcome new representation to our Board, a key responsibility of all Board Directors is to shape and display all that we do in a way that is led by our values.

A values-led approach means our staff and carers can rely on our leadership to shoulder the responsibilities of securing our organisation against the

dynamic forces in which we operate, so they can focus on our purpose of partnering with people across Australia.

To meet this commitment, our Board will continue to be closely connected to our operations and support our Chief Executive and Executive team to be courageous in the impact we seek to have.

Central to our commitments as a Board is a steadfast belief in our responsibility towards Reconciliation. We will continue to invest in genuine and transparent actions that contribute towards the full realisation of self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities.

Strategy 2025 was launched this year and offers us a powerful compass for our journey and our Board is

actively invested in the commitments we are making in the next five years. I recognise the substantial hardship many Australians face and our role to facilitate opportunity by partnering with the sector and collaboration in all our endeavours. This requires us to have a vision for today and tomorrow but also for the years ahead.

I look forward to supporting our Life Without Barriers community and our Board, guided by our purpose every day. It is with great pleasure I invite you to reflect with us on the past year and all that has been achieved across the communities in which we serve.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Greg Ridder', with a horizontal line underneath.

Greg Ridder
Chair



A message from Claire Robbs, Chief Executive

On behalf of Life Without Barriers I extend our appreciation for the trust placed in us by the people and communities we have partnered with over the year. The past 12 months have demonstrated just how important relationships are and the power of our purpose is reflected through the stories we are grateful to have borne witness to.

This year, the pandemic has continued to require a sustained effort from our organisation. As you will read in this report, infection rates have remained very low across our organisation, which we credit to the absolute determination and care of our staff and COVID Response Unit. Our carers have shown extraordinary resilience and continued offering security, love and safety for children in care – despite the challenges of COVID-19. The pandemic has also required a cross-sector response in partnership with government and we welcomed the opportunity to share our experience with Federal and State Governments in responding to COVID-19.

This year we redesigned a strengthened plan towards Reconciliation – one we believe shows our resolve to do more than ever towards strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our commitment to Reconciliation is reflected in our next five year plan, 'Strategy 2025'. The Strategy focuses on our core commitments of delivering great services, influencing systemic barriers through social policy and creating positive impact for future generations. Each commitment requires us to work in partnership and our goal will be to do so with abundant generosity in every engagement we have.

We have sought to influence social policy this year through collaborations including Alliance20, Children in Care Collective and through relationships we have with many partners in the sector and government. We established a new team focused on supporting educational outcomes of children in care and we expanded services to support people facing barriers to employment.

Life Without Barriers has continued to contribute to the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) this year, including a submission on our experiences in encouraging people with disability to consider us as their next employer.

I extend my personal thanks to former Chair Terry, and Directors Tony and Doug for their support. I welcome our new Chair Greg to our organisation and a new chapter for the impact Life Without Barriers will take into the future.

Finally, I offer my heartfelt thanks to every individual and family who gave us the opportunity to support them this year. To our carers and staff in our Life Without Barriers community – I am grateful to work alongside you in serving the people of Australia.

Claire Robbs
Chief Executive

Year highlights

1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021



People we were trusted to provide services to

21,995



4,534

Children and young people supported



9,092

Older Australians chose us to provide in home services



We live and work in over

500

communities across Australia



5,687

People with disability supported



This year we achieved **Bronze Employer Recognition** for the first time. It inspires us to do even more to foster an inclusive culture

More than

11,250

staff and foster and kinship carers united by a common purpose



1,918

Refugees and asylum seekers welcomed and supported



92%

of carers were positive about our support during COVID-19 restrictions



115,660

Specialised courses completed by staff and carers through our online learning platform



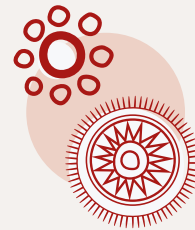
14%

of staff identified as living with disability (D&I survey)



Disability Confident Recruiter Status

We retained Disability Confident Recruiter Status – giving confidence to people with disability in our recruitment practices



We partnered with more than

100

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations



Invested more than

\$605k

in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses



7,237

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander online cultural training courses completed

Strategy 2025

This year we launched Strategy 2025 and shared the commitments we are making over the next five years. Our strategy is emboldened by partnerships and working together. We are hopeful about creating collaborative spaces where ideas can emerge, and that together, we can build a more inclusive, equitable, and environmentally responsible future for all.

Our Purpose: Is to partner with people and change lives for the better



Children, young people and their families who are in the child protection system



People with disability



Older Australians in need of in-home support



People experiencing mental health issues



People seeking refugee status and asylum in Australia

To achieve our purpose, Life Without Barriers has three priorities to 2025:



Deliver great services



Influence systemic barriers



Impact for future generations

We have six areas that will guide the organisation we want to be in the future:



We are guided by the people we support



Our people and values are the difference



We partner with purpose



We are impactful through innovation

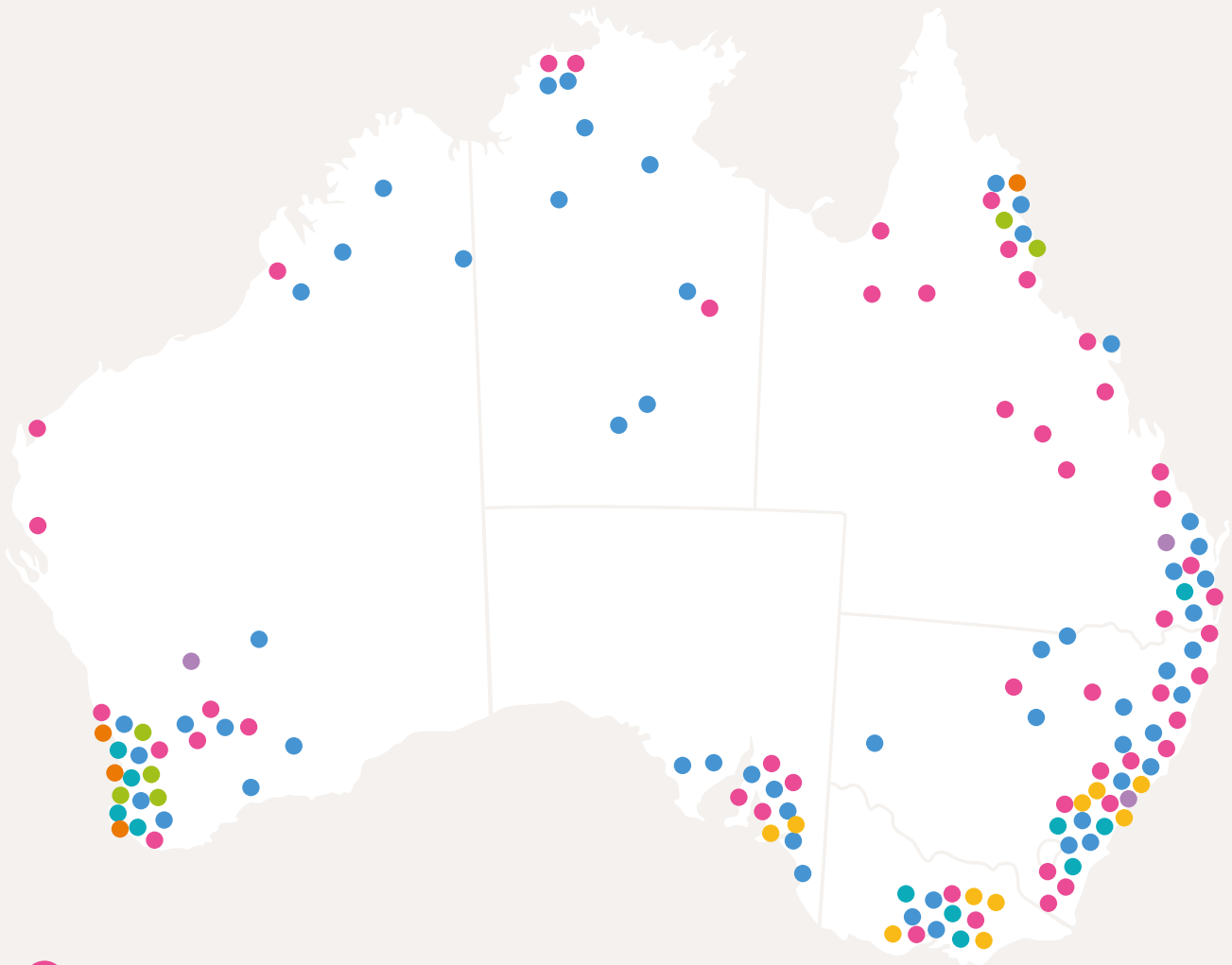


We embrace the benefits of technology



We are accountable and measure our impact

Services offered across Australia



- Child Youth and Family Services
- Disability
- Aged Care
- Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Support to Refugees & Asylum Seekers
- Home & Community Care
- Youth Justice

Our COVID-19 response



A message from Barb Dow

As the Executive Lead for our national COVID-19 Response Unit, I offer my sincere thanks to our Life Without Barriers community for your commitment and support throughout 2020-21. Our Pandemic Plan goals – the safety and wellbeing of our staff, clients, carers, and continuity of care to the people we support, continues to guide us.

It must be said that while living and working during the COVID-19 pandemic has brought us unprecedented challenges, we leant on our values and kept our Pandemic Plan as our north star. Early on, our Board and Executive realigned critical resources to ensure we had the right people in the right place to keep our community safe.

Since March 2020, we have constantly adapted in a very dynamic environment, and we continue to do so today.

We have developed new resources, equipment, communications and technologies and have reshaped some services so that essential supports were not disrupted. We ensured our staff, foster and kinship carers and clients had what they needed, when they needed it.

I am also very proud that as a larger organisation, we have also been able to help other organisations with their COVID-19 response. Sharing our resources and knowledge through partnerships with others and government continues to be one of the highlights for us and for me personally. We worked closely with the Federal Government, other service providers and Aspen Medical to establish dedicated Disability Vaccination Hubs to help accelerate the rate of vaccinations for people with disability and their support workers in both Victoria and New South Wales.

This year, the Life Without Barriers National COVID-19 Call Centre and COVID-19 Response Unit have responded to over 50,000 enquiries by phone or email, we have managed over 3,000 COVID-19 contacts and 55 positive cases.

Our positive case numbers are relatively low for an organisation our size and I think this reflects the commitment to COVID-19 safety in our organisation. I am particularly grateful to many of our essential workers who have had to work under difficult conditions for a long time, sometimes in full personal protective equipment – you are stars!

At the time of writing, I am delighted that as an organisation we have the additional protection of vaccination now widely available, which will create a safer future for everyone.

While there will no doubt be challenges ahead, I am confident we are well placed to respond, given the way we have managed the journey so far.

I ask everyone to please continue to take extra care and stay safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barb Dow', written in a cursive style.

Barb Dow
Executive Lead,
COVID Response Unit and
National Incident Controller



Brett Rasmussen, one of the people with disability who we support, was one of the first people to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Australia.

Helping people stay safe through vaccination

In June 2021, Life Without Barriers assisted in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout for people in Priority 1a and b groups by establishing dedicated vaccination hubs specifically for people with disability in partnership with Aspen Medical. The hubs located in Dandenong, Victoria and Newcastle in New South Wales, were thoughtfully designed to offer a calm and supportive environment for people in Supported

Independent Living (SIL) and their support staff.

Life Without Barriers Chief Executive Claire Robbs commented, “Life Without Barriers is very supportive of the vaccine strategy because we know that vaccination saves lives.

“We felt strongly we needed to play our part and do whatever we can to support people with disability and their support workers to be vaccinated. The dedicated disability vaccination hubs have been so successful in making it easy for people to get vaccinated in a calm and accessible environment.”

Delivering vital Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

During the pandemic, stock of PPE was difficult to source, so Life Without Barriers reached out to Position Promo, an Aboriginal-owned and operated company. They came to the rescue, supplying Therapeutic Goods Administration approved face masks, hand sanitiser and goggles. Position Promo continues to meet our supply requirements, including preparing and shipping care packs to our staff and people we support in residential services.

Every Job Counts



Protect yourself and others

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

“

Life Without Barriers has been clear on our intention to support efforts to ensure people with disability and disability support workers can be vaccinated. ”

Claire Robbs, Chief Executive, Life Without Barriers.

Journey towards Reconciliation

We believe Reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians. Through our Reconciliation Action Plan, we commit to listening to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout our organisation and ensure that the work we do supports the cultural, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





Western Australia team sharing thoughts on Family Matters Week of Action, which aims to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up strong in their families, cultures and communities.



Engaging our teams

Each year we continue our journey towards reconciliation through educating and engaging our teams and reflecting on what we need to change to make the most substantial impact towards reconciliation that we can.

Chief Executive, Claire Robbs reinvigorated governance through the inaugural National Reconciliation Strategy Group (NRSRG) she co-chairs with the National Director, Reconciliation. The NRSRG is comprised of equal representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees from across the organisation and provides expertise and leadership in our Reconciliation commitments and guides our commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

Black Lives Matter Movement

The circumstances of the death of George Floyd was felt right across Australia and within our own organisation. It prompted us to reflect on where we need to address racism and prejudice in Life Without Barriers and the communities in which we live and work.

This year, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees met with senior leaders, including our Chief Executive, to talk about the Black Lives Matter Movement and its relevance in our own organisation.

These conversations have led to a substantial focus on anti-racism in our next Reconciliation Action Plan.

Reconciliation Week

The discussion for the 2021 National Reconciliation Week theme ‘More than a word. Reconciliation takes action’ centred on why it was important for people to embark on their own reconciliation journey. Queensland State Lead, Leoni Lippitt, encouraged employees to explore their own local community, acknowledge whose Country they are on, and do this “from the heart, not by filling out pieces of paper in a meeting room.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Support, Leadership and Governance NSW Manager Shannon Mackie shared, “There’s always beautiful landscapes and sites that mean so much to your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, so Reconciliation Week is about taking the opportunity to broaden your knowledge. We live and breathe our culture, and we live and breathe our ancestors, so part of your reconciliation journey is to do something different, to do something, not just talk about it”.



Celebrating Reconciliation Week in Western Australia.



NAIDOC Week 2020 'Always Was, Always Will Be'

This year, we celebrated NAIDOC Week with Life Without Barriers' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders developing a virtual calendar of events designed to create opportunities to discuss the importance of yarning circles. One of the sessions included connecting to Torres Strait Islander Aunties.

Our leaders planned a theme for each day, inviting Elders and guests from across Australia for a yarn and to share and celebrate the diverse cultures and rich history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

“
The footprints of our ancestors are forever embedded on this land our mother earth. Colonisation has not been able to break our connection to who we are and our cultural, spiritual and physical connection to this land. Our Sovereignty has never ceded. That's why it Always Was and Always Will be Aboriginal land.”

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lead for Western Australia, Pamela Thorley.

Connection to culture

Northern Territory Lead, Damien Mick, led the development of a tool to capture and identify cultural connections for people we support across programs in the Northern Territory.

This tool will help support care plans to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people maintain a strong connection to their cultural identity, family, community, and Country.

Implementation of the tool began this year and it will continue to be led by key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and Cultural Support Planners across the Northern Territory to ensure cultural safety and respect guide everything we do.



Cultural awareness training in Queensland.

Cultural awareness training

This year, 1,505 employees participated in face-to-face cultural awareness training, which included cultural awareness sessions for more than 750 people about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. In addition, 7,237 online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural training courses were completed.

This yearly training continues to promote positive cross-cultural working relationships within Life Without Barriers and is a mix of theory, practical learnings, and a strong focus on history.

Learning about Country

A child-focused Learning about Country and Culture program was provided to 60 children in out-of-home care through the Thikkabilla Vibrations Cultural Camp in Newcastle.

The camp provided young people we support with the opportunity to engage and learn about culture whilst meeting and interacting with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and adults.

This was one of a number of cultural camps held across the country, which supported

ongoing knowledge sharing for many people we support – of all different ages.

At the Strong Spirit Woman Camp in Queensland, nine young women, including three Aunties and six employees, attended Gittaba camp. Although the rain almost washed them out, the group enjoyed the experience of growing connections to culture and spirituality from a young woman's perspective.

There was laughter, lots of yarning, journaling, and expression of self through art.



We gain a greater understanding of how to approach difficult conversations and how to better listen, understand and support each other through the process of learning, accepting, and moving forward. ”

Luke Barnes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lead for New South Wales.



Leoni Lippitt, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lead for Queensland.

CareerTrackers Intern Manager of the Year

For the past four years, Life Without Barriers has partnered with CareerTrackers to provide paid internships for a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This year we hosted five students. At the CareerTrackers gala awards, Leoni Lippitt, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lead for Queensland was named Intern Manager of the Year.

Leoni was nominated by intern, Daniel Chilly, who spoke eloquently about the inspirational leadership provided during his journey. “Aunty Leoni is a strong, proud Torres Strait Islander woman who strives to find safe, inclusive spaces for employees and people supported within Life Without Barriers and the broader community,” said Daniel.

Strengthening employment opportunities

We were delighted to partner with Saltbush Social Enterprises, a not-for-profit organisation providing job opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Together we have committed to working alongside one another to support and mentor job seekers. This partnership has allowed a clear pathway for participants to connect to opportunities and to support their ongoing employment with Life Without Barriers.





Year highlights

Throughout this financial year, we are very pleased to have achieved the following:

- In the Northern Territory, our partnership with Group Training Northern Territory, which focuses on upskilling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the Territory with training and work placement, continues to flourish.
- Introduced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Introduction online training for all employees and carers.
- Produced 'Our Values' posters in local Ngaanyatjarra, Noongar, Pittjantjarra and Wangkatja languages in our Kalgoorlie office.
- Partnered with Orange Aboriginal Medical Service to provide support for Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care and updated our successful MOU.
- Developed targeted COVID-19 messaging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and carers. This included cultural and age-appropriate information around what COVID-19 means for children and messaging on topics like how to conduct Sorry Business during a pandemic.
- Partnered with Kubingui Youth and Family Development to prepare families for the return to school post lockdown.
- In partnership with the National CARE Team, State Leads developed culturally specific CARE Supervision cards, part of the CARE Card Supervision Pack.
- Developed a relationship with CAHOOTS. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lead for Western Australia, Pamela Thorley provided cultural advice and guidance on the development of CAHOOTS Innovate RAP, cultural camps and activities.
- Ngatti House residents participated in a cultural camp on Wadjemup (Rottnest Island).
- Continued partnering with CareerTrackers to focus on student success in three ways: university, work and community. This is our fourth year partnering with students, placing nine interns.
- Supported the Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy. Supported three students do their placements and complete a Cert IV in Allied Health.
- Networked with Palmerston Indigenous Network and Darwin Men's Inter-Agency Network to explore opportunities to enhance culturally appropriate services.
- In South Australia, continued to strengthen partnerships with UniSA Magill Campus, Tauondi Aboriginal College and the Yalata Aboriginal Community (APY lands).
- Advised several Reconciliation Action Plan community and stakeholder forums in Western Australia including Rottnest Island Authority and City of Belmont.
- Gittaba Cultural Program, Boomi Hegarty, Wakka Elder: Celebration of a 15 year partnership – reconnecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with culture.

Delivering great services

Throughout the year, our focus has continued to be on delivering great services in partnership with people we support. Every day we witness extraordinary stories because of the people and families who entrust us into their lives. They are true partnerships built on trust, respect and the importance of choice. This year, we supported nearly 22,000 people and each and every person has a unique and powerful narrative to tell. We can't share them all, but we take this opportunity to thank everyone who allowed us into their lives and who shared their story with us.







More choice and freedom with National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS continues to be one of the most important reforms in disability services in Australia. This year, 600 people with disability in Victoria were supported to transition their housing services to NDIS funding. This means greater opportunity for people with disability to choose where they live, how they live and who they live with.

Supporting that transition were 1,200 Department of Health and Human Services staff from Victoria, who officially became Life Without Barriers employees. Over the past two years we have worked alongside each other as a team, sharing skills and experience. We held celebrations at each Victorian Disability Accommodation Supports home with food, welcome gifts, and video greetings from senior leaders.

We supported people to understand the changes and what it means for them through group discussion sessions with people and their families. A specialised team was created and worked together with disability support house

staff to support every resident and their families individually through the change to NDIS funding.


Director of Victorian Disability Accommodation Supports David Benau said, “It has been an absolute privilege to support people with disability and their families to understand the changes to the NDIS and what it ultimately means for them.

“NDIS funding is designed to give people more choice and with more choice, they have greater freedom and independence to live life the way they choose. Our job is to facilitate those choices in a way that people with disability ask us to.”

Investing in continuity of services

In March, we welcomed 250 employees formerly of DUO services in the ACT. The welcome marked the official cessation of DUO as an independent entity after it merged with Life Without Barriers in 2018. In the ACT, we also partnered with provider EACH, an organisation that supports vulnerable people with home garden maintenance, to transfer services to Life Without Barriers, ensuring we continue to provide services for 100 people in the program.

Delivering great services



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NDIS funding is
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David Benau, Director of Victorian Disability
Accommodation Supports.

Creating holiday memories

Michael* is an energetic and kind Aboriginal boy who was in Life Without Barriers care when the first wave of COVID-19 hit Australia. Previously, during school holidays, Michael would travel back to his community to see his family, but this time public health orders meant his trip was cancelled.

This was very hard for Michael who thrives on his connection to family and culture. Our local team got together to

brainstorm ways for Michael to still experience a 'holiday' and a change of scenery from residential care. They found a local foster carer who could give him that one-on-one connection over the school break.

The team knew Michael could become very anxious about new circumstances and change. They put together some visual aids and social stories to help Michael transition from residential care to the foster carer's home and back again, during the school holidays.

This preparatory work, along with Michael's patience and resilience, helped create a wonderful 'holiday' experience that included games of basketball and fishing. Michael even made a storybook about the holiday.

This holistic approach and the power of teamwork led to an outstanding outcome for Michael. He is now back in kinship care with a family member and back living in his own community.

*Names changed to protect privacy.



Restoring hope

Ahmad Khan* is an asylum seeker who fled Afghanistan because of persecution and conflict. Ahmad is one of thousands of people fleeing their homeland with a single purpose – to save their own life and the lives of their family.

On his way to Australia, the boat Ahmad was on was intercepted and he was taken to Nauru. After spending five years on Nauru, Ahmad and his family were finally transferred to Australia. Life Without Barriers' National Immigration Support Service (NISS) then supported Ahmad to find accommodation and secure a loan to buy a car and work tools so he could begin the next chapter of his life in Australia.

"The employment team at Life Without Barriers connected me to the Thrive Refugee Enterprise and they assisted with the loan application." Ahmad is now putting the building skills he learnt on Nauru to good use and is currently employed as a tiler.

"I love the culture in Australia where all people are accepted no matter where they come from and what they believe. This way of life gives me encouragement for my family's future and hope for humanity."

*Names changed to protect privacy.

Delivering great services



More than enough love to go around

For Sharon*, being a foster carer has been challenging, but she's grateful to have made such a difference in the lives of the children she cares for.

Sharon's journey as a foster carer began when 11-year-old Alana* joined her family. Now aged 18, Alana continues to live with Sharon as a member of her family.

"A while ago, I was approached to see if I would welcome another child. We talked about it and Alana said, 'well you gave me a place to live, I think it's only fair that you offer somebody else a home too, if you can.'"

That's how Jackson*, now 14 years old, came to live with Sharon.

She says that building positive relationships is a vital ingredient to the carer-child dynamic. "I always put myself in a young person's shoes and see how things look to them."

"Instead of focusing on when they do something negative, we'll look for positive things. When kids hear a 'well done', you can see their self-worth climb."

Sharon says that one of the most rewarding parts of being a foster carer is seeing first-hand the changes that happen for children when they have a nurturing and stable home environment.

"Jackson has made such a turnaround. He was getting suspended, and then we got him into a great high school, where he's in a supported learning unit. Now he's just powering through there, and they love him."

“

I've also seen Alana grow from someone who was a scared, tiny and shy little girl into a young woman who's really got a voice now. ”

*Names changed to protect privacy.



Matthew has thrived in his new Supported Independent Living home.

Matthew's story

Matthew* lives in supported accommodation and has chosen Life Without Barriers as his support provider. Matthew's transition to greater independence was a big change for Matthew and his mum Kate, who had been Matthew's primary carer for the first 17 years of his life.

Matthew has lots of different interests and likes to be out and about in the community. Matthew is non-verbal, on the autism spectrum and before he lived in supported accommodation, relied on his mum for most daily tasks, including feeding and dressing.

Working closely with Life Without Barriers, Kate helped Matthew settle into his new supported independent living home. Kate says the growth and change in Matthew since the move has been remarkable.

Matthew is now an active participant in the house, feeding himself and enjoying the outdoors, including visits to the park. He has gained so much independence over the past three years that Kate has said, "the positive changes are phenomenal."

"He doesn't need me as much anymore – which is a great thing," said Kate.

Matthew's relationship with his mum has also changed and he is finding his own independence. From needing his mum for everything, Matthew is now thriving in supported accommodation.

*Names changed to protect privacy.



My purpose is to empower the people we support to feel independent and confident so they can enjoy all that life has to offer. ”

Natasha Walton,
Disability Support Worker.

Building confidence through #synergy program

Jane* was a young woman struggling with significant depression and anxiety while living with a hearing impairment. She was referred to Life Without Barriers' #synergy program, a youth mental health program for young people aged 12-25.

Throughout the #synergy program, Jane engaged in regular face-to-face therapeutic psychological support to practice and implement the skills she needed to build confidence and get out into the community.

Since receiving support from Life Without Barriers, Jane says her self-confidence has grown enormously. She even participated in a voluntary work program called Troublesmiths and gave a 10-minute speech at her Year 10 school leaver's celebration.

*Names changed to protect privacy.



This was really important as it showed that I could do anything. I'm feeling really good about my future – I know my journey won't be easy, but I'm really ready to face any challenges in front of me. ”

Delivering great services

Embracing the choice for a supported future

For many people, the concept of needing supports as they get older is difficult to grapple with. Life Without Barriers' in-home supports for older people seeks to challenge that thinking and offer services that respect how people want to use services to sustain their independence and make choices.

This year, we welcomed the Federal Government's announcement of an additional 23,000 home care packages.

Ray and Maureen receive a home care package funded by the Federal Government and provided by Life Without Barriers.

"Life Without Barriers has been absolutely fantastic. Nothing has been too much trouble," says Ray. "We have a weekly cleaner and have also had a number of helpful modifications made to our house, including the installation of safety handrails and making our bathroom more accessible."

As well as the cleaning, Ray and Maureen also benefit from the regular support they get with things like getting lifts to the shops. Enjoying walks, spending time with friends and feeling supported in a way they choose has been so important for Ray and Maureen.

"We would be lost without you," says Ray, about the support he receives from Life Without Barriers.



Ray and Maureen enjoying their independence.

“**Australians are living longer and with that comes an increasing desire for older Australians to retain their independence and live in their own homes for as long as possible.**”

Sue Jones, Manager for Aged Care Services.

Vee's story

Vee had been struggling with mental health issues for most of her youth. She felt like she didn't fit in. She was skipping school due to her struggles with drugs and alcohol and was even hospitalised with self-harm injuries.

A social worker put Vee in touch with Life Without Barriers' Ngatti House which provides community-based homeless youth services to young people.

"Ngatti provided me with so much assistance for any kind of problem I had," Vee said. "There were a lot of things they did that may have seemed small at the time, but made a really big difference."

Having successfully completed her time at Ngatti House, Life Without Barriers helped Vee transition into permanent housing with Housing Choices WA, where she still lives today. Vee is now working with RUAH community services to support other people with similar experiences.

Disability Ability Wellness Network

Our Disability Ability Wellness Network (DAWN) serves as a network and resource for employees with disability and their allies. This year we elected our second committee. The committee developed a plan focused on increasing the visibility of employees with disability, creating spaces for employees with disability and allies to connect, and ensuring employees with disability are supported in their employment.



Seeing DAWN grow as a space where employees with disability and their allies come together has been fantastic.

Emily Reaper, DAWN Committee Chair.

Diversity & Inclusion week

In February 2021, we celebrated our annual D&I Week with the theme 'I Belong'. We explored what it means to belong through a series of virtual events. We also invited employees to share their diversity information and workplace inclusion experiences with us through our first D&I Survey.



Diversity is a fact, inclusion is a choice, and belonging is a feeling.

Ashleigh Sternes, Diversity & Inclusion Lead.

Australian Workplace Equality Index results

We celebrated our Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) results by attending the Australian LGBTQ Inclusion Awards on 28 May in Sydney. Life Without Barriers has participated in the AWEI for the past four years with our score increasing each year from 18/200 in 2018, 54/200 in 2019, 74/200 in 2020, to 102/200 in 2021.

Pride Without Barriers

In February we launched our second employee network, Pride Without Barriers, which serves as a network and resource for LGBTQIA+ employees and their allies. The committee developed a network action plan focused on growing the network and increasing the visibility of LGBTQIA+ employees.



In order from left: Phil Beckett, Nathan Reynolds, Neen Chapman, Ashleigh Sternes, Leanne Budd, Kieran Sneddon, Fiona Davies, Katherine McLeod and Darryl Monaghan attend the Pride in Diversity Australian LGBTQ Inclusion Awards in Sydney.

The number of employees sharing with us that they identify as LGBTQIA+ increased from 6% in 2018 (Employee Engagement Survey), to 15.5% in 2021 (D&I Survey).

Delivering great services

“

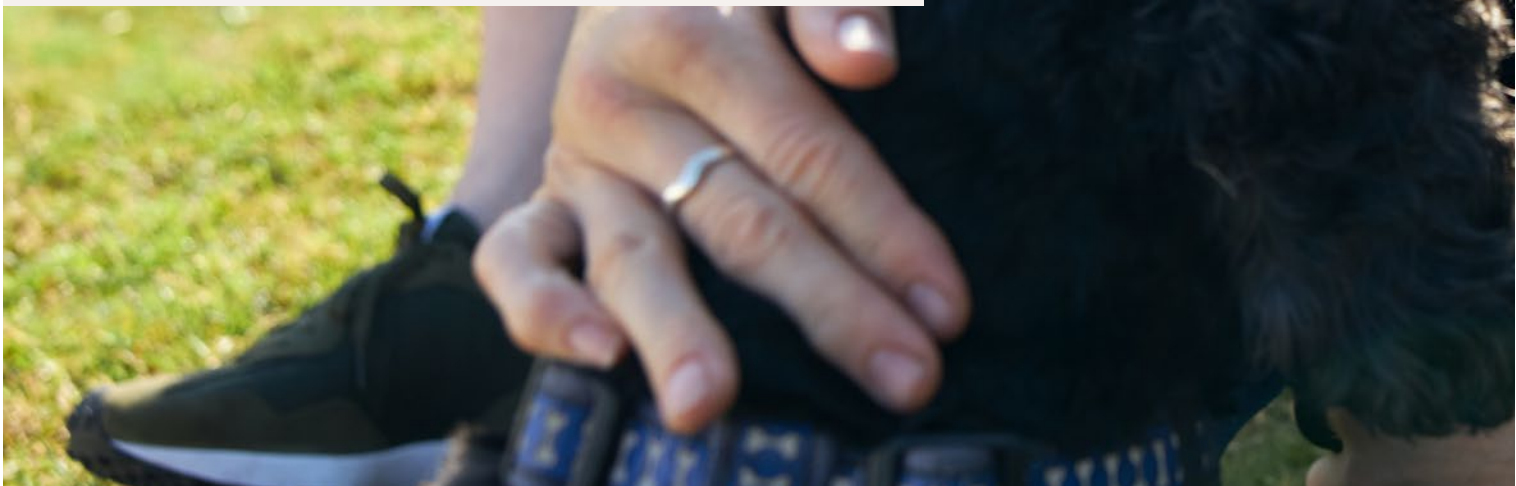
It is my hope that this network will smooth the path for members of the Life Without Barriers community who feel unsure about bringing their whole selves to work and acts as a beacon of true inclusion for LGBTQIA+ people. ”

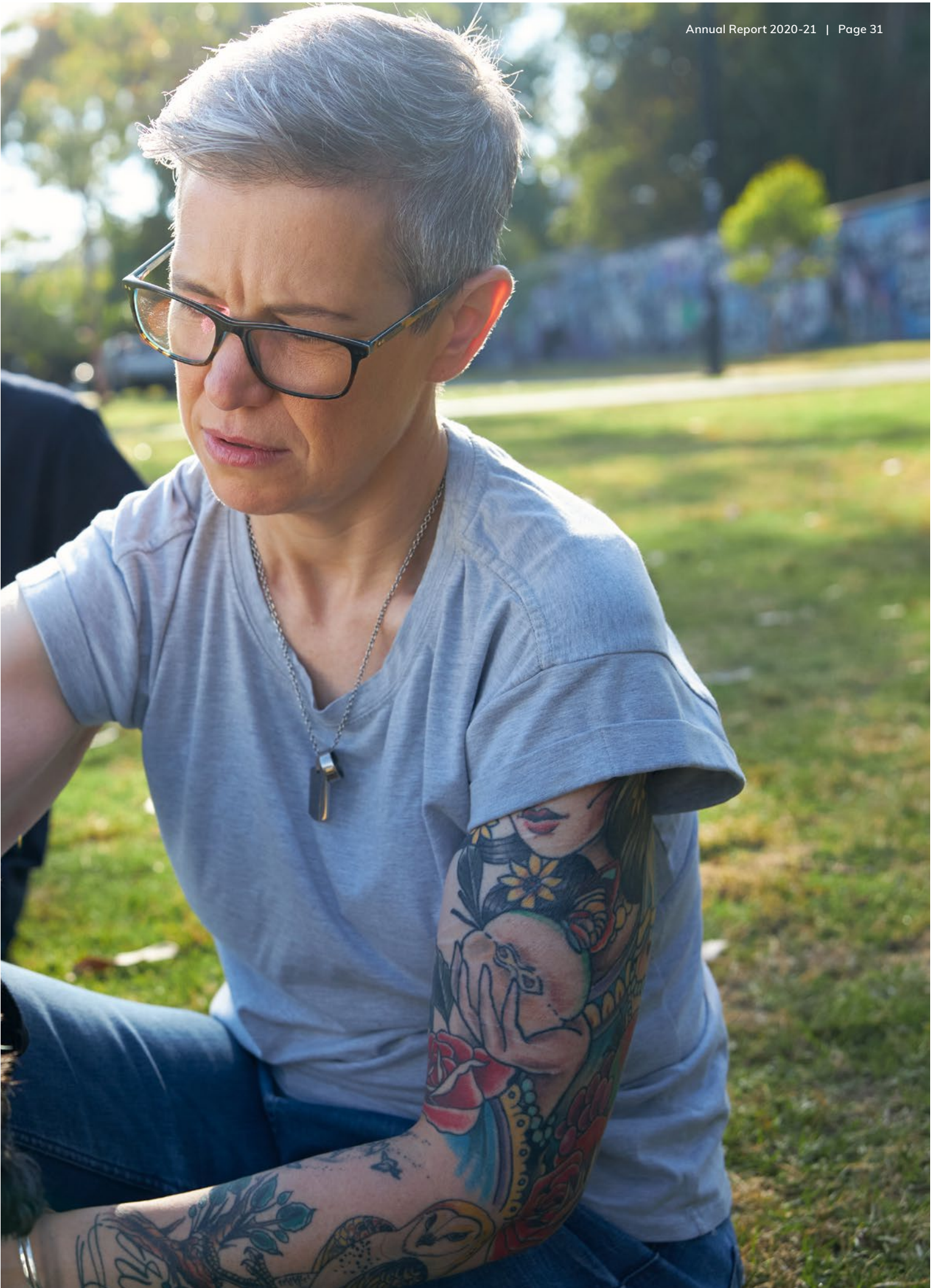
Mary McKinnon, Executive Director
Group Risk, Performance and Impact.



Influencing systemic barriers

Long-standing social justice issues require collaboration and shared thinking. This year we continued our commitments to influencing social policy through the Alliance20 and Children in Care Collective and we also forged new partnerships that contribute to disrupting the barriers many people face in Australia. We responded to government-led community consultations, and parliamentary inquiries including the Successor Plan to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Australian Disability Strategy and the National Employment Strategy.







From left to right: Eric Hutchinson, Administrator, Norfolk Island, Chris Chippendale, Executive Lead Disability Engagement, Life Without Barriers, Graduates – Chad Pettet, Kath King, Eve Semple, Shannara Grambeau, Savannah Thomas, Liat Baddock (collecting for Natasha Arnold) and Gaz (collecting for Lisa Bigg).

Norfolk Island celebrations

People with disability living on Norfolk Island have a new team of disability support workers after seven graduates proudly received their graduation certificates on the lawns of the beautiful Norfolk Island Government House this year.

This year, the Australian Government provided funding to Life Without Barriers to assist five Norfolk Island residents obtain a Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability). In a nice surprise, a further two people who had heard about the training joined at their own cost.

Chris Chippendale, Life Without Barriers Executive Lead for

Disability Engagement said, “This is collaboration at its best! It is a coming together of like-minded people who are committed to supporting people with disability. The NDIS is about choice and control and ensuring skilled disability support workers are available is a crucial part of making the NDIS truly work.”

Chad Pettet was one of five locals awarded a scholarship enabling him to become a fully qualified disability support worker.

He has been supporting Lleyton and Jayden for almost three years now and describes their relationship as kinship, with “plenty of laughs and all the banter that goes with it.”



Lleyton, Chad and Jayden enjoying an outing.

Chad says becoming a support worker has been an empowering experience, “the training and skills I have gained are all about supporting people to make their own choices and go from there. As a career, it’s just so rewarding.”

Influencing systemic barriers



Residents of Devonshire Road house enjoying their home garden.

Creating choices in housing

Our ability to choose where we live and who we live with is a fundamental human right and can be one of life's biggest decisions.

In the past, many people with disability have had limited choices and sometimes had to live wherever they could access support services. For people with higher support needs, the choice has been even more limited.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is changing this, with the development of specialist accommodation that is increasing housing options for people with disability.

Life Without Barriers is partnering with people with disability to invigorate living choices that create genuine opportunity for people to choose where they live and who they live with.

Our National Disability Housing Unit was established in 2019 to encourage person-centred housing design and greater housing options that are informed by people with disability. To achieve this, the collaboration brought together people with disability, their families, and the wider housing sector.

This year through Strategy 2025, we launched our 'Home and Living' project, which has started initiating important conversations with the people we support in

specialist housing about how they live now, and how they would like to live in the future.

These discussions will continue to help us share with Specialist Disability Accommodation Providers about housing needs, based on the direct feedback of people with disability, particularly people with intellectual disability or those who may have specific behavioural support needs.

In the past twelve months, we have formed a number of strategic partnerships aimed at increasing the supply of housing options for people with disability and we will continue to nurture these partnerships in the future.



Strengthening families to be change agents

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is a community-based, family driven program for young people who have interactions with the criminal justice system.

The program empowers parents and caregivers to be long-term change agents.

In 2020, the MST program, YouthChoices, was delivered to families of young people on supervised court orders across South-East Queensland, with the goal of reducing reoffending.

Compared to last year, young people whose families completed MST spent 92% fewer nights in custody, and there were 43% fewer charges among this group.

We also supported five agencies in New Zealand,

three agencies in Australia, in addition to our own two teams. All teams achieved impressive outcomes despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Opportunities with purpose

When Jade* turned 18, she had to leave her long-time carer and move out of home. It was a scary time for her as any security she had known in her life was disappearing. She didn't know if she could afford to move out, where she was going to live, or what supports were available to her.

That is where the Youth Advocate Program (YAP) team stepped in. They helped Jade find accommodation and start planning for her future. She was also able to complete some short courses, including barista training, body piercing and financial literacy.

The continued support of Jade's wellbeing has also been very important. The strong relationship she has with her Youth Advocate has been crucial as she deals with anxiety issues. Jade recently gained employment as a cleaner and is now working alongside her sister.

“

The MST program has turned our whole life around from constant police intervention, court dates and never knowing where Anthony* was or what he was up to, to him attending school (the first time in 2 years), no drug use or crime and us always knowing where he is. ”

Jane*, Anthony's carer.

Influencing systemic barriers



Partnering with Lesley Chenoweth AO on 'Towards an Inclusive Future for People with a Disability in Australia'.

A remarkable roadmap for disability housing

To create the future, we must understand the past. Disability services in Australia have moved away from institutional settings to recognising peoples' rights for choice and opportunity to lead the life they want to experience and influence how they receive services.

Life Without Barriers believes more can be done in partnership with people with a disability if we understand the journey that has taken place over many years. To help us, we partnered with prominent researcher and academic Lesley Chenoweth AO, a positive activist in the disability sector.

The partnership has resulted in the development of a



A good life resides in a holistic context. It rests on being loved and cared for within family and friends, having relationships and connections, having a secure home, having purpose, being safe. All this requires a community and society that welcomes and includes everyone. ”

Lesley Chenoweth AO.

monograph 'Towards an Inclusive Future for People with a Disability in Australia' co-written by Lesley Chenoweth AO and Daniela Stehlik.

The work charts a remarkable roadmap for the disability sector in Australia by examining the way forward, by viewing history, theory, and policy in the disability sector through the lens of service provision and exploring future-focused inclusive models of support.

"It's difficult if your own goals have been determined by others in the past," said Lesley. You may not be able to imagine what you can do with your life, with only past experiences to guide you.

Throughout the monograph, Lesley and Daniela have identified common values and principles as inherent for supporting a good life:

- Relationships are central – importance of linking with friends, families, and other ordinary people.
- Focus on human rights – it's imperative that the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability is central to delivery of service. That means putting the rights of people with disability first, rather than the convenience of the service provider or of carers.
- Having choice and control over decisions that affect you – this is central to the NDIS in Australia.
- Person at the centre – almost all services aspire to this, but what makes a difference is spelling out the specific details of how the person is central to the planning of services and is involved throughout the process.



Life Without Barriers embraces the wonderful differences each person brings to this organisation says Corrina.



Life Without Barriers has been wonderful in recognising my abilities and providing me with the support I need to do my job. ”

Corrina Phillips, NDIS Planning and Engagement Officer, Life Without Barriers.

Corrina's Story

When Corrina first started working at Life Without Barriers in 2012, she never expected to have so many opportunities.

Born with autism, Corrina knows how important it is to have a supportive employer who understands the many daily challenges she faces. Challenges such as anxiety, being misinterpreted and compared to 'neurotypicals'.

“To the lay-person I can come across as disorganised, rude or strange. This is because sometimes I can take things out of context or don't respond in ways considered appropriate, like not smiling or knowing when it is my turn to speak,” she explains.

My past employers haven't offered the same flexibility I've found at Life Without Barriers.” Starting as a disability worker, Corrina has worked across multiple functions and different roles and is currently working as a Community Engagement Planning Officer.

“Life Without Barriers has been incredibly supportive, and during my 8 years with the organisation, they have given me the opportunity to work across many functions and roles,” she said.

Employment Without Barriers

One in five Australians have a disability, yet only half of those of working age have secured employment.

We have firm targets for employing more people with disability, pledging 12% of new starters be people with a disability by 2022. This year we welcomed 100 skilled and talented new employees with disability.

The number of employees who shared they have a disability

through the recruitment process was 3.7%. Interestingly, the number of employees with a disability who shared this information through an anonymous survey with the Diversity and Inclusion Team was significantly higher, at 14%.

Our goal is to create an inclusive, supportive, and flexible work environment where people feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work. We hope this commitment will inspire more employers to break down the barriers to employment for people with disability.

Submission to the Disability Royal Commission

This year Life Without Barriers made a proactive submission to the Disability Royal Commission, sharing our experiences of what we have found works in creating opportunities for people with disability.

Influencing systemic barriers



Improving employment opportunities for young people

Evidence tells us that young people with disability leaving school continue to face significant challenges in their transition to work and are more than twice as likely to be unemployed. To address this fact we announced a new collaboration with Joblife Employment – Young People’s Employment Pathways (YPEP).

The new YPEP program focuses on partnering with young people with disability to support them to lead their employment journey, build skills, confidence and acquire workplace experience to access meaningful work. A pilot program commenced in NSW (Hunter/Central Coast) and WA (Perth) and included the recruitment and onboarding of employment specialist staff.

As part of YPEP, Life Without Barriers also developed School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES), an NDIS funded support for young people in their final year of school or who have recently left school.

This year we also expanded YAPWORX, a specialised support program for young people in care. Amongst the barriers young people face as they transition out of care, is access to meaningful employment. YAPWORX offers an interactive curriculum that includes helping the people we support between the ages of 14 and 21 with employment skills and becoming job-ready. YAPWORX focuses on assisting young people to learn how to survive and thrive in the job market.



It is much more personal and friendly than other programs. I feel comfortable around my YAP worker, and I see them plenty. It creates a strong relationship and a strong bond. ”

* young person in the YAPWORX program.



Improving educational outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care, everyday and everyway

This year, Life Without Barriers established a specialist Education Team.

This team of specialist education consultants offers intensive educational support in partnership with carers, children and young people, our workforce, families, and schools.

They are united by the common goals of inspiring a love of lifelong learning and supporting children and young people to achieve their aspirations and goals.

Understanding that what we do now, in the present, has a direct influence on future outcomes for children and young people. The team work hard to positively influence long-standing barriers that halt learning pathways for children and young people in out-of-home care.

Guiding the work of the Education Unit is the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019). The Education Declaration sets out the national vision for education in Australia and the commitment of the Australian government to improving educational outcomes.

“
Support all young Australians at risk of educational disadvantage.”

Mparntwe Education Declaration.

Influencing systemic barriers



Clea North with her two youngest children on Yuggera Ugarapul Country, Boonah, learning about culture.

Championing a love of learning

by Clea North, Education Consultant, *Life Without Barriers*

If I can see one young person in my care succeed, progress through the education system, and feel supported and proud of their achievements, I know I am doing my job well.

I am a proud Australian First Nations woman, born in Charleville, Bidjara Country. I grew up in a remote community, and for most of my time in the classroom I felt shame. Even though I loved reading and

writing, I felt like I didn't fit in – that school was for my non-indigenous peers and not me.

At 15, I knew I wanted to be a teacher and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. I wanted them to have someone in the school environment they could recognise. Something I didn't have growing up.

My journey from teacher's aide, community education counsellor and teacher led me to Life Without Barriers, where I am an Education Consultant, working directly with young people, carers, case workers and

schools to support our young people to stay in school.

I truly believe that the development of numeracy and literacy can help move young people away from the cycle of poverty. Education is such a protective factor – it allows young people to have beautiful supports and networks.

As a champion and advocate for the young people in our care, what is essential in my role is putting the young person at the centre of the conversation and hearing their voice. After all, they understand their lives better than anyone.

Dale Murray, Director of Education, shares why purpose matters

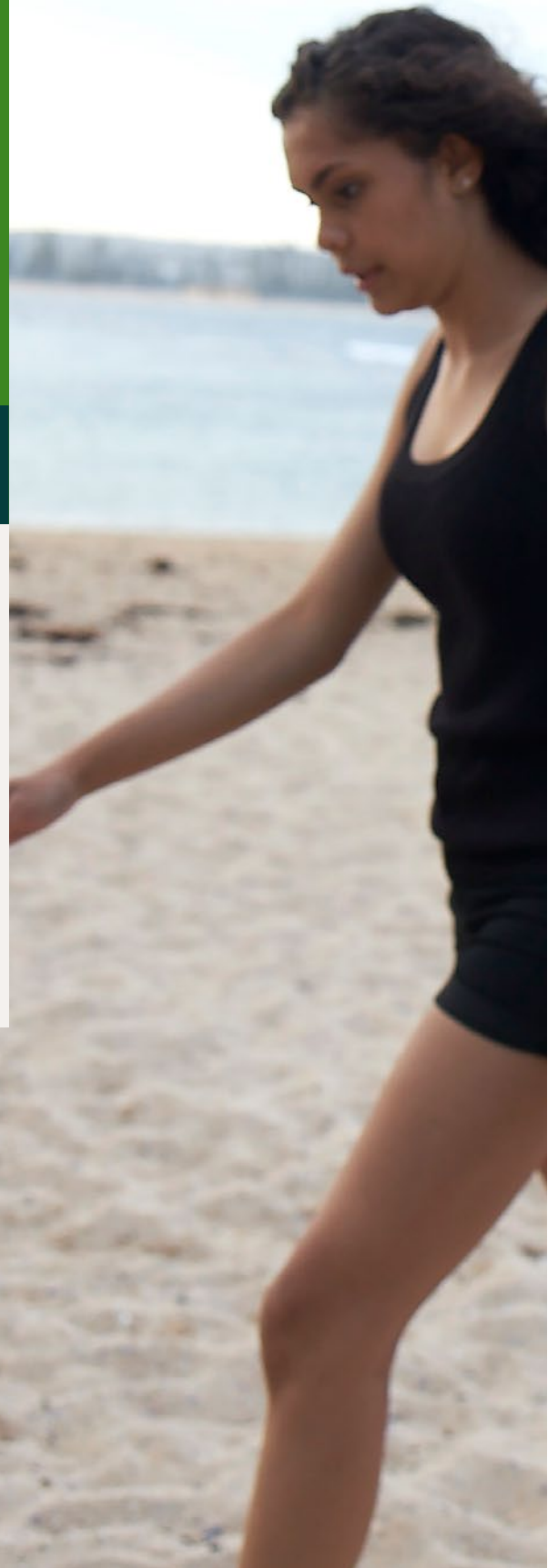
"For me, education and learning represent fundamental rights for all children and young people. Education and learning provide us with the building blocks to realising our full potential and a positive life.

I believe a deep sense of learning is built on relationships, relationships of trust where we hear each other and listen, deeply listen to each other, and respect each other's views.

I am committed to these ideas and with our team and community look forward to hearing your voices as we collectively build bright futures through education and learning everyday every way."

Impacting future generations

The future cannot be left to chance. Through our Strategy 2025, we recognise that everything we do today has an impact for tomorrow. Throughout the year, we have invested in purposeful partnerships and collective thinking, recognising some of the challenges generations across Australia are facing that we can positively influence by acting now. This year we welcomed opportunities to share our resources and ideas and we embraced the knowledge and skill of people we support, carers, staff and our partners.







Children In Care Collective

The Children in Care Collective (CCC) advocates for children and young people with complex needs to grow up safely and well in out-of-home care. In 2020, the CCC continued to share expertise on topics, such as working better with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities and the importance of a public health approach to child wellbeing and protection.

The CCC partnered with CREATE Foundation to produce the report Health and Wellbeing – Perspectives of children and young people with an out-of-home care experience in NSW.

Other key pieces of work were the successor plan for the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, advocating against the increase in fees for social work degrees and working with the NSW Department of Education to ensure its new Student

Behaviour Management Strategy accounted for the needs of children in care.

Raising the age of criminal responsibility and supporting care leavers after they reach the age of 18 have been core advocacy work for the CCC, including its 'More Care Required' report on care-leaver support in NSW.

Impacting future generations

Alliance20

In 2020, representatives presented at the Government COVID Group, the NDIS Q&S Commission Industry Consultative Committee and the NDIA Industry Reference Group. We participated in the ADE Employment Pricing Framework Implementation Round Table, the NDIS Price Review Working Groups, and SIL Participant Outcomes.

The Alliance20 also hosted a Support Coordination consultation and made numerous submissions around NDIS pricing. Engagement with the various Ministers and their offices continues to place the concerns of disability service providers front and centre with Government and decision-makers.

Social justice reform through partnering

We joined the Building Better Homes Campaign – a coalition of organisations working to make accessibility standards mandatory for all new residential homes. We support 1,400 people living in more than 400 residential settings across Australia and we witness the need for accessibility in housing.

We will continue pursuing opportunities to support people in new and innovative housing models which maximise choice and independence.

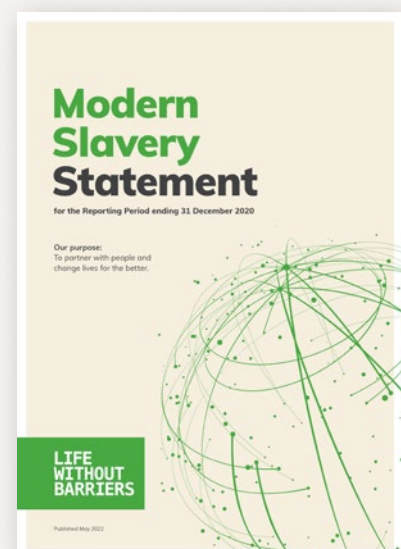
#IStandForRespect

In June 2021, Life Without Barriers joined more than 200 of Australia's leading organisations as signatories in the #IStandForRespect pledge. As part of the pledge, our Chief Executive and Executive Team each made a personal commitment to stand against gendered harassment and violence and take steps to address sexual and sex-based harassment in the workplace.

Our stand against modern slavery

In 2020, Life Without Barriers committed to actively preventing Modern Slavery within its structure, supply chains and organisation, according to legislation. Chief Executive, Claire Robbs said, "There is a clear and critical need for all organisations to knowingly commit to practices that protect vulnerable people from the devastating impacts of modern slavery. As a national organisation, we are acutely aware of our responsibility to ensure we purchase goods and services ethically, and that we actively engage in knowing the manner and processes in which goods and services are provided to us."

We are committed to demonstrating the utmost transparency in our procurement practices, working in partnership with suppliers to sustain a high standard of ethics, and maintaining vigilance on the role we play to eradicate modern slavery.



Helping the parent... helps the child

On 1 June 2021, Jessica Cocks, Life Without Barriers' Practice Lead for Children, Families and Young People, joined families, advocacy groups and agencies at a forum centred on family inclusion in the child protection system.

Hosted by the Family Inclusion Network of South East Queensland, the forum topic was 'Green shoots – how parent's lived experiences, tenacity, and teamwork have produced green shoots of inclusion in the child protection system'. The title of the forum came from an article written by Jessica on peer parent and family advocacy.

Jessica encouraged 'better and stronger pathways' for peer parent and family support advocates in the system because 'the vast majority of Australian parents don't get the opportunity to readily connect with people who know what it's like and who have been through it'.

Peer parent and family advocates are parents and family members with lived experience of child protection intervention. They support and advocate for parents and families who are currently experiencing that intervention.



Jessica Cocks, Practice Lead for Children, Families and Young People, Life Without Barriers.

Jessica says, "I have worked in child protection and out-of-home care most of my career, and it just became increasingly obvious to me that most of the children I worked with wanted to be with their families. Their sense of belonging and who they were, was so deeply affected – in no way are we able to replace family, so for me, it's all about children's rights."

Felicity Kime also spoke at the forum. She is the President of Family Inclusion Strategies in

the Hunter (FISH) and also a parent of children who have experienced a placement in out-of-home care. She told the forum "if we help the parent, we help the children. Without the family being okay, the children are never going to be okay fully, because they want their family. I know my children are happy because I'm supported."



The goal is to see peer parent and family advocacy become a reality in Australia. If that's the case, it will be absolutely life-changing. ”

Impacting future generations

Improving outcomes for future generations in the Northern Territory

In 2020, we strengthened supports for children and young people in care in the Northern Territory with the commencement of a therapeutic residential service.

Working within the **CARE** principles the program focused on improving outcomes for the next generation. Our team supports each young person with opportunities for growth, development, self-empowerment, and finding their own unique purpose. Family and local communities partner with our team and the young people on these journeys. The program aims to support each young person to transition to a kinship placement within their home community.

In our first year of the program, we have supported 28 young people, five of whom have returned to a kinship placement. We have strengthened our relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations working in out-of-home-care and have established a number of partnerships, including one in which we have developed a shared care model of support for one of our young people.



Connection to culture for one of the young people in our Intensive Therapeutic Residential Care homes.

Positively impacting the lives of children, young people, and families

In 2020, we recognised positive changes we could make across our Child, Youth and Family Program in NSW to create and deliver great innovative services and support our staff to have more time to focus on supporting children and carers. We made considered changes, including re-imagining and refreshing our out-of-home care model to deliver great services by:

- Developing a culture of excellence with outcomes for children at the centre of our thinking, practice and how we offer services.
- Valuing and enabling essential workers – providing learning and development pathways, practice support, embedding CARE and measuring our progress.
- Investing heavily in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and staff and ensuring cultural governance, safety and support are present in every decision and discussion.



Veronica Marin, Life Without Barriers Manager, Program Advancement and Implementation (CARE) and Martha Holden, Project Director of the Residential Child Care Project.

Collaborative thinking leads to better outcomes

Improving the experience that children, young people and families have when they interact with the child protection system can dramatically improve outcomes and have life-changing impacts for future generations.

Identifying the importance of collaborative thinking and the open sharing of resources, Life Without Barriers has partnered with Cornell University to enable more organisations that support children in Australia to access CARE – an evidence-based, best practice model for working with children and young people in out-of-home care to ensure they get the best outcomes.

Life Without Barriers Manager, Program Advancement and Implementation (CARE), Veronica Marin says “we all have a part to play in changing lives for the better. CARE guides our interactions at every level – from the day-to-day interactions with children and families, to how we lead, supervise and support our staff and carers, and how we align our policies, processes and systems to improve outcomes for children and young people”.

“**Life Without Barriers, having gained this experience as implementers, has a vision for the future and an eagerness to contribute to the field through research, innovative programs, and partnering with other organisations.**”

Martha Holden, Project Director of the Residential Child Care Project at the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University.

We believe this model will have a measurable impact on children in care. Martha Holden, Project Director of the Residential Child Care Project at the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University said, “Cornell University has been working in partnership with Life Without Barriers for the past five years to implement the CARE model nationally across their child, youth and family services.”

Impacting future generations

Over 210 people have received support via NISS employment programs this year, with 42 having secured employment and 29 people enrolled in training and education courses. In addition, 14 job readiness workshops – via Zoom! – were delivered between February and May 2021.



Helen found success through her apprenticeship in the Bread & Butter project, an initiative that assists people seeking asylum to become trained bakers and obtain employment.

Supporting people seeking asylum as they start new lives

The UN Refugee Agency reports that 1 in every 95 people across the globe has been forced to flee their home due to conflict or persecution. It is a significant human rights issue.

Through our National Immigration Support Service (NISS) team, Life Without Barriers has supported over 1,900 people seeking refugee or asylum seeker status to begin a new life. The primary purpose of this work is to ensure the people that we support are given the same rights as everyone else and to know they can equally belong and fully participate in Australian society.

The key priorities in supporting self-agency are helping refugees and asylum seekers find a new home, having access to skills training, English language classes and employment opportunities.

A new way to measure impact

In 2020 we began the journey to challenge our thinking about how we measure our impact – specifically what difference do we make that demonstrates how we are achieving our purpose as an organisation.

Our first step this year was to begin identifying what actually matters most to the people who trust us to provide their services. We recognise that impact is not just data and figures, it is about the small and big moments for people, their stories and what effect great services can have across a person's life and networks.

Our new approach to impact is essential for us to understand what works, where people

experience the best outcomes and what turns good services into great services.

Our journey to measuring the impact we have is a long-term commitment. We have partnered with key internal and external stakeholders in building an impact measurement framework and roadmap, to guide us over the long term.

Our approach is to begin with understanding stories of change for the people we partner with and to use this information to collaborate and identify the capabilities needed to deliver our impact measurement approach. Ultimately, we want our people, systems and processes to energise our staff and create a delivery model that reflects the positive change being created.



The resilience, strength and hope for the future that we see in every refugee and person seeking asylum in Australia is inspiring. ”

Panos Massouris, Director, National Immigration Support Services, Life Without Barriers.

Board Governance



Greg Ridder

Chair of the Board

Special Responsibilities: Chair. Member of the Finance and Audit Committee. Member of the Remuneration, Nomination and Succession Committee. Member of the Risk Management Committee. Chair of LWB QLD SBB Limited.



Gillian Calvert AO

Deputy Chair of the Board

Special Responsibilities: Chair of the Practice Governance Committee. Member of the Risk Management Committee. Chair of LWB Disability Services South Limited. Chair of LWB Disability Services Central Limited. Member of the Board of LWB QLD SBB Ltd.



Helen Szoke AO

Director

Special Responsibilities: Chair of the Risk Management Committee. Member of the Practice Governance Committee.



Graeme Innes AM

Director

Special Responsibilities: Chair of the Remuneration, Nomination and Succession Committee.



Jan Lowe

Director

Special Responsibilities: Member of the Remuneration, Nomination and Succession Committee. Member of the Board of LWB QLD SBB Ltd.



Tracey McCosker PSM

Director

Special Responsibilities: Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.



Natalie Walker

Director

Special Responsibilities: Member of the Practice Governance Committee.



Paula Head

Company Secretary and Director Corporate Administration

Board Retirements

Due to the Life Without Barriers Company Constitution, which was amended in 2015, Board members can serve for no longer than 9 years. We have been deeply fortunate to have wonderful Directors offer their leadership to our organisation and sadly this year we have said thank you and farewell to three Directors.



Terry Lawler

Terry Lawler retired from the Life Without Barriers Board in May 2021. Terry and his family are one of the original creators of Life Without Barriers and have contributed enormously over the past 30 years. We are so grateful to Terry and his family and the strong legacy of purpose they have instilled in us all.

Terry served as Life Without Barriers Chair and served on the Board Audit and Risk Committee and Finance Committee, Member of the Remuneration, Nomination and Succession Committee, Member of the Technology Enablement Committee.



Tony Deegan

Tony Deegan retired from the Life Without Barriers Board in March 2021. Tony is deeply respected and has supported Life Without Barriers for the past 9 years as Director on the Board.

Tony served as Board Director and special responsibilities included Chair of the Risk Management Committee, Member of the Remuneration, Nomination and Succession Committee.



Doug Dean

Doug Dean joined Life Without Barriers Board in 2015 and offered a unique and important insight from his years of commercial experience. With a real focus on safety, Doug was a vibrant and committed member of the Board. We thank Doug for being an important member of the Life Without Barriers community.

Assurance and Risk

Life Without Barriers continues to evolve to accommodate the changing needs of the people we support, opportunities brought about by the external environment and our growth and development as an organisation.

In continuing to mature our risk, assurance, safeguarding, regulation and performance approaches that are expected of an organisation of our scale and complexity, this year we established a new team dedicated to Group Risk, Performance and Impact. Led by Executive Director Mary McKinnon, the group provides a contemporary risk approach that recognises and values performance and positive impact.

Financial snapshot and summary

FY21 – Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021

2-year summary \$'000	2020/21 \$'000	2019/20* \$'000
Revenue & Expenditure		
Total Revenue and other income	755,640	702,687
Total Expenditure	755,403	697,426
Operating Surplus	237	5,261
Assets and Liabilities		
Total Assets	282,716	284,127
Total Liabilities	229,493	235,588
Net Assets	53,223	48,539

* Prior year amounts have been restated in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards

Services offered	Program income FY21	Proportion of income FY21
Disability	463,304	62.1%
Child Youth and Family	214,690	28.8%
Home and Community Care	35,816	4.8%
Asylum Seeker Support	16,511	2.2%
Mental Health	12,718	1.7%
Youth Justice	3,543	0.5%
Other income	9,223	
Total	755,640	

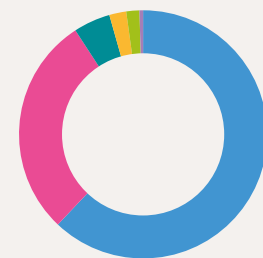
Sustainable service delivery

We maintained our commitment to prudent financial stewardship offering assurance to the people and agencies that trust us to provide services, that Life Without Barriers is an organisation that will continue to support people well into the future.

Total Revenue and other income
\$755.6m

Growth in Revenue and other income (%)
7.5%

People who received our services



Service Delivery Percentage
90.1%

Thank you

“ Terry, on behalf of all of us at Life Without Barriers, thank you for your leadership, generosity and guidance. You have inspired us to always hold the people who trust us into their lives every day at the centre of everything we do as an organisation. You lived our values by acknowledging people with sincerity and compassion. The legacy you have gifted reminds us all that our purpose of partnering with people to change lives for the better binds us together. This purpose will continue to guide us for years to come. ”



We extend our heartfelt appreciation to former Chair Terry Lawler, one of the creators of Life Without Barriers, who retired from the Life Without Barriers Board this year.

Paying our respects

Life Without Barriers acknowledges the lives of people we have been honoured to support over the year who have passed away. When a person becomes a member of our Life Without Barriers community, they are like family and the loss of any person in our community is felt deeply by us all.

We also wish to extend our condolences to every individual, family and community impacted by COVID-19 this year. Our love and thoughts are with everyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one and whose lives we recognise will never be the same.

National Office
352 King Street,
Newcastle NSW 2300

PO Box 2226,
Dangar NSW 2309

T 02 4033 4500
F 02 4927 5113
E info@lwb.org.au



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