

**2021
Annual
Report**



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www.amicus.org.au



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Amicus Manifesto

We are vibrant and purposeful innovators,
we remove boundaries and celebrate
each person's capabilities.

Individuality is your right;
no two people in the world are the same.
We respect that each is unique and
have different wants, desires and needs.

We are passionate about people,
the individual, the human.

We listen, adapt and support others
with flexibility and individuality.
Together we pursue your uniqueness,
and take nothing for granted.

We are fun, we celebrate and we lead.
We are here, we are available -
whenever you need us.

Everyone deserves a good life -
a chance to follow their passion;
to find their own way.

We champion normality, independence
and community connectivity.

We work only with One Person At A Time.

We are Amicus.



Vision, Purpose and Values

Our Vision:

A community that welcomes everyone for who they are and what they bring.

Our Purpose:

Supporting people with a disability or disadvantaged of all ages to live their good life.

Our Values:



Self Directed

Each person decides for themselves

We believe that all people have the right to decide about the things that happen in their lives. We give information, support and opportunities for people to direct their own lives and the services they want from Amicus.



Individuality

Each person is an individual

We welcome and respect that people are individuals and have their own cultural background. At Amicus this means people we support, their families, people who work here, volunteers and everyone in the community.



Active Participation

Each person should be in the community and be part of it

We believe that all people have the right to be part of the community they choose. We recognise the unique skills and interests of a person and their ability to contribute to the community. This means we support people to be involved in the community, feel part of the community and to add to the community in their own way.



Capacity Building

Each person has the opportunity to grow and learn new skills

We have an important role to make sure that everyone has the skills they need. At Amicus this means the individuals, their families, people who work here, volunteers, people in the community and our partners. We give everyone the chance to keep learning.



Chairman's Report

Paul Somerville

I am pleased to provide my report for the year ended June 30, 2021 in a year that provided many challenges, but also some great opportunities for Amicus.

Over the past few years, the Committee of Management has worked to transition from being an Incorporated Association under Victorian Legislation, to a Company Limited by Guarantee under Commonwealth Legislation; to better reflect the size and scope of the organisation.

I am pleased to say that through the hard work of many this transition occurred on 28 June 2021. As part of this transition we took the opportunity to vary our registered name to Amicus Community Services, to also better reflect the broader range of services that we now deliver to communities across central and northern Victoria.

The threat of COVID has loomed in the background throughout the 2020-21 financial year, and the organisation has been working very hard to ensure our pandemic response provides a safe service for our participants and their families and working environment for our staff.

It has at times, been a great challenge to communicate and implement government directives, sometimes at very short notice, but I would like to acknowledge and thank all the staff at Team Amicus for their ongoing commitment to the wellbeing and safety of our participants and team.

Construction of our two Specialist Disability Accommodation Units at Webdon Drive has not been immune to the impacts of COVID, with our construction program hampered by both workforce restrictions and scarcity of building materials.

We were pleased to be able to 'turn the first sod' on the project in late March, but unfortunately the unavoidable COVID impacts mean that we won't be in a position to welcome tenants into the units until early 2022.



OFFICIAL 'TURNING OF THE SOD', MARCH 2020

From January 2021, the Board worked alongside the Leadership Team to commence consultation and development of our Strategic Plan 2021-24. We had strong engagement in our consultation phase with participants and their families, staff and our community partners through surveys, interviews and workshop attendance.

The Board were also able to consider a paper on areas of community need and future growth opportunities, and a review of our current and future Information, Communication Technology needs draft to ensure our IT capability into the future.

We are close to finalising our Strategic Plan 2021-24 and look forward to launching it prior to the end of this year and working with our team, participants, families and community partners to implement it. We hope to see tangible results very early on that will benefit our participants, individually and the communities in which we work.

As we launch into the 2021-22 financial year, we are focusing on Board recruitment to ensure that we have a strong skills-based board to oversee the implementation of our next strategic plan, and also lay the foundation for succession planning and renewal.



Key Work of Our Sub-Committees

Finance Sub-Committee

The Finance Sub-Committee chaired by Paul Somerville, continued to meet on a monthly basis monitoring the financial performance of the organisation with a specific focus on any potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Finance Sub-Committee worked closely with the Executive Leadership Team to enhance reporting to provide greater visibility. Despite the challenges for the year, Amicus recorded a surplus of \$1.83m for the year ended 30 June 2021 (\$1.86m surplus for the year ended 30 June 2020).

Governance Sub-Committee

The Governance Sub-Committee chaired by Heather Paterson, continued to meet on a monthly basis with their main focus to lead the transition from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

This transition was finalised on 28 June, 2020 and our registered company name is now Amicus Community Services Limited, although we will still be known as Amicus.

Along with this transition, a great deal of work has taken place in the development of our Company Constitution, Governance Manual, enhanced policies and a focus on Director Recruitment and further development of our Director Induction Program.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Sub-Committee chaired by Joe Ciancio, again had a busy year. In spite of COVID-19, Audit and Risk Meetings continued throughout 2020-2021 with the committee focusing on the risks associated with the delivery of services in conjunction with COVID-19.

Quantum conducted an external audit for NDIS in February 2021. The audit focussed on Provision of Supports for Participants and Human Resource management. The final report recorded no major non-conformance notices, and re-certification of Amicus as a provider of NDIS services was recommended by Quantum.

During 2020-2021 the Internal Audit Program has been reviewed, with 42 active audits in place in line with NDIS Quality Indicators. The Internal Audit Program will continue to be reviewed over the next eighteen months to bed down audits that are meaningful, provide relevant data and support all of our participants.

The internal Audit Program focuses on the following areas:

- Rights and responsibilities
- Governance and operational management
- Human resource management
- Occupational health and safety
- Provision of supports for participants

The quarterly dashboard implemented in 2019-2020 is providing relevant information to the Committee in relation to identified risks across the organisation.

With the Committee's oversight of both internal and external audits, risks are identified quickly and are updated as mitigation processes are put in place.



CEO's Report

Ann-Maree Davis

It gives me great pleasure to share with you my report for the 2020-21 financial year and what a year it has been! Whilst the impact of COVID has been with us throughout this year, and has certainly provided many challenges, there is much to celebrate as an organisation.



Achievements

In the past year, all of Team Amicus have been involved in one way or another in some very important work behind the scenes to ensure we continue to deliver high quality individualised service to our participants.

Highlights include:

Separation of Children's and Adult services

This work has enabled us to deliver a targeted service for the young people that Amicus supports regardless of how they are funded. It has also strengthened our Child Safe framework to ensure that the services we deliver to our vulnerable young people are safe, age appropriate and culturally aligned.

Welcome to our Pathways, Capacity and Engagement Team

The creation of our Pathways Team has established a single point of entry across the organisation to streamline access to all of our services, NDIS Service Delivery, Support Coordination, Behaviour Support Services and Targeted Care Packages (TCP), and improve the experience of our existing and new participants.

In addition to on-boarding functions, the team also has a lead role in undertaking capacity building and community engagement across the organisation.





Implementation of key roles

The creation of the Incident Reporting and Incident Investigation Officer role has streamlined our processes across the organisation. The role has also enhanced in our incident reporting and feedback processes and was acknowledged as best practice in our NDIS Quality and Safeguards accreditation audit.

We have also developed the roles of Behaviour Support Coach to assist in our implementation of Behaviour Support Plans across the organisation and a Supported Independent Living (SIL) Manager to oversee all of our supports in SILs. We have seen very positive outcomes for our participants through these roles.

Quality audits

In November of 2020 and February of 2021 Amicus underwent independent external audits of our Quality system. I am pleased to advise that the outcome of these audits was our full registration as an NDIS provider (replacing the provisional registration that was in place previously), recertification under HHS standards for our DFFH funded services, and Certification in the new ISO standard 9001:2015.

Whilst quality is part of our everyday business, there is a lot of work that goes into preparing for audit and in particular, the self-assessment and evidence requirements as well as participation in the audit schedule, and I would like to acknowledge the work of all involved.

Lumary Implementation

As you can appreciate, transitioning to new Customer Relations Manager (CRM) software is a significant piece of work under usual operating conditions, but COVID-19 requirements certainly added a few extra implementation challenges.

Over the past 12 months the whole team at Amicus has been involved in the implementation of our chosen CRM, Lumary, and I am pleased to report that we continue to develop and customise the package so that it is tailored to the unique needs of Amicus.

Over the next 12 months we will continue to see improvements that will support the Amicus team to work in a much more effective and efficient manner, which will in turn enhance service delivery to our participants.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) review

In addition to the implementation of Lumary, Amicus took the opportunity to work with ICT Consultants Dog and Bone to review our current systems and develop a roadmap for the future needs of the organisation.

The roadmap has now been finalised and we have already commenced implementation, although the greatest enhancements will start to roll out over the next 12 months.

Challenges

Our pandemic response

We have now been living with COVID for almost two years, and for all of us the impacts of this sustained effort are becoming evident. There are challenges in continuing to be resilient as we respond to rapid changes including restrictions and lockdowns, implement working from home arrangements for some, and maintain service continuity.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our whole team who have worked tirelessly throughout this period to keep our participants, families and their colleagues COVID free.

Workforce

COVID-19 has certainly had an impact on workforce availability with participant service cancellations leading to work uncertainty for our current team and a shortage of skilled staff in the labour market. A further compounding issue has been the implementation of NDIS Worker Screening Checks from 1 February 2021.

Whilst the increased workforce screening and safeguarding of vulnerable participants is welcomed, implementation of the scheme was characterised by lengthy processing delays of up to six weeks, which impacted our services significantly.

Efficient pricing

The efficient pricing model of the NDIS continues to present challenges in some areas of our NDIS service delivery. Pricing reviews particularly in SIL, have had a significant impact on the viability of some services and we continue to monitor these impacts carefully.

We have been active in raising these issues with our peak association National Disability Services and will continue to support their advocacy efforts to address these challenges.

Partnerships

Every year our circle of community partnerships grows and in 2020-21 our Community Inclusion and Consultation framework has enabled us to expand our partnership circle even further. This year we established a consultative committee with broad representation and we welcome the feedback and participation of members.

We continue to enjoy strong relationships with our existing community partners and look forward to the opportunity to expand our collaboration over the next 12 months.

Of note this year, I wanted to acknowledge our work with Mt Alexander Shire Accommodation and Respite Group (MASARG) in meeting the short-term accommodation and respite needs of participants and families across Central Victoria.

I also wanted to thank Haven Home Safe who have assisted us with the construction phase of our Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) units at Webdon Drive.



In closing

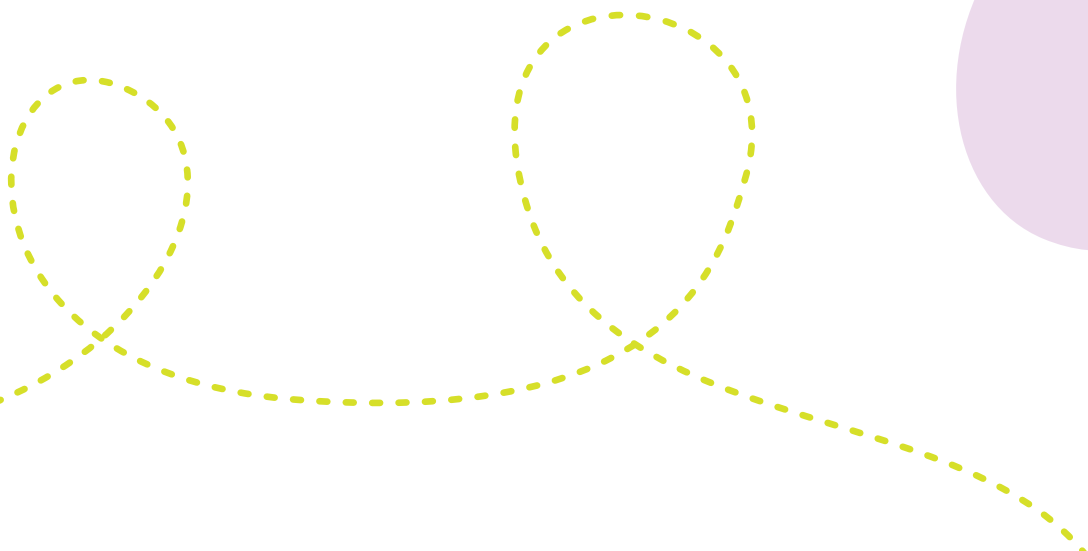
It was a great pleasure to work with the Board in the development of our new Strategic Plan and to hear the ideas and feedback of our team, participants, families, and community partners to shape the organisation's future directions.

The plan will be launched prior to the end of 2021 but we have already started working behind the scenes to get the right organisational structure in place to assist us to deliver the strategic directions of the plan. We will also have some new roles to commence in 2021-22.

The impact of COVID-19 has affected each of us differently and it has been a long haul since the pandemic was first declared in March 2020. I would like to thank all of Team Amicus who have risen to the many challenges that have presented throughout the past 12 months, including working in an uncertain operating environment as we continued to adapt to the rapidly changing government directives and maintain high quality individualised services.

I would also like to thank our Board who have been strong in their governance of the organisation and a great support during the uncertain COVID times.

Finally, my biggest thanks goes to each and every one of our valued participants, their families and supporters. We thank you for your continued loyalty and support of Amicus and your belief in our vision, mission and values. We look forward to working with you in 2021-22 to get your best life.



Committee of Management



Paul Somerville
President



Greg Noonan
Treasurer
(July - November 2020)



Mike Kiernan
Treasurer
(December 2020 - June 2021)



Joe Ciancio



Heather Paterson



Matthew Florence



Belinda Smith

Amicus Service Badges



A big thank you to the following staff for their years of service!

Jaime Childs
Sophia Wight
Ian Cumming
Connor Beaman

Shane McClelland
Jesse Hopkins
Noel Hourigan

Executive Leadership Group



Ann-Maree Davis
CEO



Georgena Stuckenschmidt
Acting Corporate Services Manager



Shayne Scott
Adult Services Manager



Melissa Zera
Pathways, Capacity and Engagement Manager



Sophia Wight
Children's Services Manager

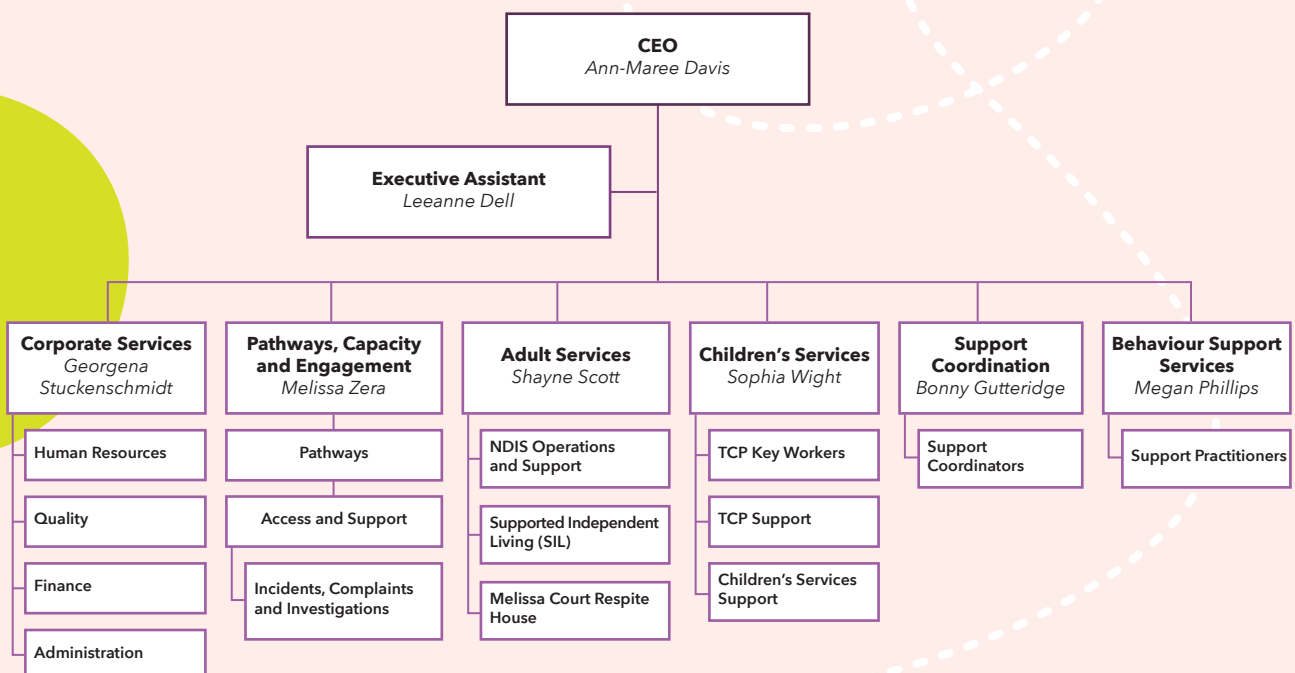


Megan Phillips
Behaviour Support Services Manager



Bonny Gutteridge
Support Coordination Manager

Organisational Chart



Pathways, Capacity and Engagement

MELISSA ZERA, PATHWAYS, CAPACITY AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Amicus continues to invest in resourcing and building our services to enhance the quality and experience for our participants. In another step forward, the Pathways Capacity and Engagement (PCE) unit was launched on 31 August 2020.

It is challenging establishing a new service and team during a pandemic, however I have gratitude and pride for the teams' hard work and commitment. They have given their absolute best during a continued crisis. They have shown a commitment to solve problems (big and small), been innovative and delivered the highest quality services possible to our participants, families and community.

Amicus is a team and offers a whole village of support. Pathways work within the village to provide a single point of entry, support planning and coordination across the stages of service provision within Amicus, including Adult Services (including NDIS, Fee for Service, Commonwealth Home Support Program), Children's Services, Supported Independent Living (SIL), Melissa Court/Short Term Accommodation, Support Coordination and Behaviour Support.

A key achievement has been the development of a suite of new policies and procedures to support a positive and integrated intake and journey at all stages within Amicus.

Relationships are everything to Amicus and to the Pathways Team. We take time to know our participants and their families, to listen and to support them to achieve their very best life.

The team aim to ensure our participants and families have the best possible experience with us, are proud to be with Amicus and we look forward to building long term relationships.

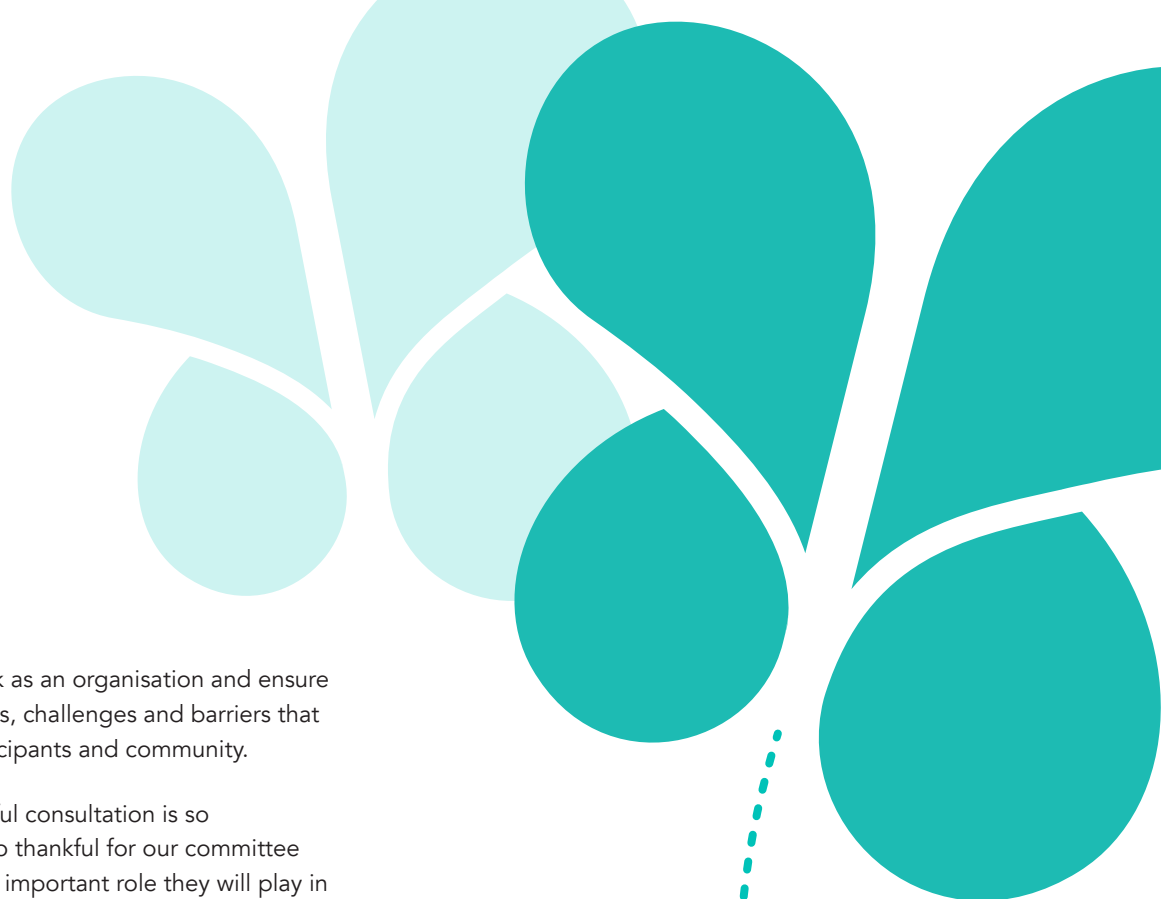
We have a broad and extensive experience in the community services space, including an expert level of knowledge within the NDIS. We have really enjoyed and been very proud of how we have been able to use this to assist our participants to achieve the most from their plans and services. The team is fast becoming the central point for trusted advice and assistance in our local community which is a service we are happy to provide.

Our management of the Incidents and Feedback portfolio has provided a dedicated, continued effort in improving the quality of our services for participants. Amicus welcomes and values all forms of feedback and we look for every opportunity to learn and improve. Amicus received three comments, 18 complaints and eight compliments from October 2020 to June 2021.

During our NDIS practice standards and quality indicators audit in February we were awarded a best practice recommendation for our post incident response processes. This means that if our participants are involved in an incident they can be assured that our response, care and support is considered best practice.

Health and wellbeing has been a continued focus for our team and for our participants. Looking after ourselves and each other so we could continue to deliver uninterrupted service to our participants has been a focus during the challenges of lockdowns and restrictions.

Amicus is a community that welcomes everyone for who they are and what they bring. We have formed the inaugural Amicus consultative committee to support us in our work to ensure our organisational values of One Person At A Time, Valued Roles and Community Inclusion are embedded in everything we do, every day.



We also want to give back as an organisation and ensure we are active on the issues, challenges and barriers that are important to our participants and community.

This insight and meaningful consultation is so appreciated and we are so thankful for our committee and their support and the important role they will play in informing our work.

We would like to acknowledge the external members of our consultative committee Liz (Women with Disabilities Victoria), Casey, Sam, Taryn and Kelli (Kalianna School), Nikki (City of Greater Bendigo), Karyn (Community member) and Britta (parent of Amicus participant).

We are excited for the year ahead with the increased efforts in capacity building and engagement, the launch of our Amicus Community Inclusion and Capacity Building Framework and further work with our consultative committee to create the valued roles and community inclusion outcomes within Amicus and our community.

We also look forward to growing our services, expanding our great work and welcoming new participants to the Amicus village.

Behaviour Support

MEGAN PHILLIPS, BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICES MANAGER

Behaviour Support has continued to grow in both reputation and staff numbers. Our team now consists of five practitioners including one psychologist, two social workers, one applied behaviour analyst and one special education teacher.

We have provided behaviour support services to up to 45 participants and up to eight individual therapy participants as well. We continue to have a waitlist for our services, however we are endeavoring to shorten wait times by increasing our team members in the coming year.

The initial barriers caused by the implications of COVID were quickly overcome with the team becoming creative and adaptable in the provision of services to our participants and service delivery continued during lockdowns and restrictions.

We continue to strive to assist our participants and their families to increase their quality of life and reduce the need to use behaviour of concern. We have had many success stories throughout the year and the fabulous teams we have built around our participants have been the drivers of these remarkable outcomes.

The recruitment of a newly created role of Behaviour Support Coach was implemented in the course of the year. This role supports our frontline staff by way of coaching, guidance and advice to the team and has been an enormous success. It is certainly reflected in the outcomes we are now seeing.

During our external NDIS audit in early 2021, we were given very positive feedback on our policies and procedures which the team had worked extremely hard on developing and with the foundations laid and a strong team in place, we look forward to the coming year, the stories we can share and the lives we can change.



Adult Services

SHAYNE SCOTT, ADULT SERVICES MANAGER

Following an 18 month absence, I have been privileged to make a return to Amicus. Over this period, Amicus has implemented some unique initiatives to improve the quality of services for participants. Unique to the organisation has been the initiative to create specific coaching roles in areas of community inclusion and positive behavior support.

These coaching roles have been designed to assist our support workers and team leaders to identify opportunities and develop strategies to effectively work towards participant outcomes in line with their individual aspirations. Coaches are able to provide support staff and team leaders with training and guidance through liaison with local community regarding inclusive opportunities or with allied health and specialist services for positive behavior support.

Supported Independent Living (SIL) services remained steady throughout the challenges of the Pandemic. As Pandemic protocols were developed and implemented this provided comprehensive guidance to our SIL Teams as well as to all support workers across the organisation. The SIL teams undertook extensive training in infection control and COVID-specific training and continued to provide the quality support to our most vulnerable.

As families have experienced intensified pressures with changes to routines and lockdowns, the ability to take a break to recharge becomes all the more important. Amicus has continued to provide Short Term Accommodation (STA) support for families both at our 'home away from home' at Melissa Court in Castlemaine, and also within the community that best suits the individuals preferences and needs.

STA provides an opportunity for the individual to trial what it is like to live independently, learn new skills and try new experiences. A big thank you is extended to MASARG (Mt Alexander Shire Accommodation and Respite Group) for their ongoing collaborative support with Amicus in maintaining the amenities at Melissa Court to the high standards appreciated by guests and their families.

Our Access and Support service funded by the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Home and Community Care (HACC) continues to assist people from CALD, LGBTQI+, Indigenous and remote communities to break down the unique barriers to accessing services these people experience. To achieve this, our Access and Support officer maintains a widespread network to maximise opportunities and options for participants.

Amicus continues to support our Karen community, with both participant and staffing numbers increasing. Amicus focused on improving our own accessibility for the Karen community, and through consultation with community groups, participants and their families, and our wonderful Karen support workers, we were able to raise awareness regarding services available within the community.

Our web page now has specific links for Karen people, both written and through video to meet varied communication needs. Please take the time to look at this new information, as it was with great pride from our participants and staff who were eager to assist, to achieve this for their community.

The past year certainly has been a year of adaptation under the pandemic. Support teams have needed to coordinate and stay connected more remotely through technology. Support workers have supported participants to adapt to changes in routine, reduced community connectivity and involvement – not an easy thing for most of us, but even more challenging and disruptive for many who Amicus support.

A 'hats-off' and 'shout-out' to all of our support workers and team leaders who on a daily basis, work alongside participants to provide individualised, essential support, making a difference, one person at a time.

PARTICIPANT STORY:

Living a good life

After many years living in his own home, Terry experienced a serious fall in May 2020 creating a serious risk to his ability to remain living independently.

Amicus received a request to provide 24/7 support to Terry for six weeks, during his recovery, post hospital discharge. After the initial six weeks, Amicus continued to support Terry, reducing supports as he rebuilt his confidence.

Terry grew up in a small country town with his parents and family, and owns his own home in Bendigo. He is a resilient person who is determined to make his family proud.

He ensures he is well presented and has pride in his appearance every day, is extremely social and likes to retain a strong connection with his family, his home town community and the Bendigo community.

He is a gifted story-teller, making the listener feel like you are right there with him in his home town; describing past conversations, people he has met, and events he has attended. A big football fan, Terry loves watching games on the TV and attending local matches as often as he can.

Terry often expresses how happy he is living independently in his home. He is supported each morning to safely get up, prepare for the day, and to attend activities and appointments. He strives to keep his home environment clean and tidy and is diligent on completing regular household tasks such as washing his clothes and cleaning the dishes.

Terry has a brilliant memory and remembers his appointment times, and what he needs to do each day. Support staff remove barriers Terry experiences due to his mobility issues when accessing the community. He appreciates the support he receives to achieve his daily goals; staff report that Terry is always polite, and grateful for their support.

One of Terry's goals is to improve his health and wellbeing and maintain his weight. Terry is supported to plan his weekly menu, with a strong focus on healthy choices.

He is supported to make home cooked meals each night. He undertakes a daily exercise routine to maintain and improve his mobility, with support from his team of Allied Health professionals and Amicus. His family have recently commented that Terry has lost weight over the last few months; Terry has also been getting compliments on his weight loss from his support Team.

Terry is looking forward to increasing his social engagement as COVID restrictions ease, and attending social activities and sporting events that he enjoys. Amicus work closely with Terry to identify and solve issues as they arise with the one goal of supporting him to remain independent and home where he is living his best life.



Children's Services

SOPHIA WIGHT, CHILDREN'S SERVICES MANAGER

Children's Services have shown that despite the challenges the wider community has experienced during the pandemic we have been able to adapt, respond and continue to provide services through this difficult time.

The team have been flexible and committed to Amicus and their participants, having undertaken a range of different tasks to ensure we have continued to respond to participant and family needs.

The team embraced new ways of working, learned new skills and used technology to connect with participants and each other to continue to deliver services. Learning materials, games and other items were dropped off to the children to keep them entertained during lockdowns, as well as the team assisting families with shopping and providing in home supports whilst following the health advice to ensure safety for all.

The team have shown resilience, care and commitment to participants while managing their own concerns relating to working on the front line during a pandemic.

Organisational Support teams have been working both remotely and on site depending on individual circumstances and have been heavily reliant on technology to keep the essential business functions going. In this new world we have onboarded staff via Microsoft Teams and used the technology to get them inducted and on the ground.

Our real heroes are our support workers who have continued to provide face to face support. The team have worked consistently and tirelessly to ensure the best possible care and support has been provided showing dedication and commitment to Amicus and our participants.

We have continued to grow services in the areas of NDIS children supports and DFFH funded programs despite the pandemic. Pandemic protocols were developed and implemented that provided comprehensive guidance to our teams. Over time, these protocols have continued to be reviewed, adjusted and enhanced so that they are always reflective of public health advice.

This year can be summed up as one of intense effort! The Amicus values in action has stood out the most for me and I am extremely proud of what the team have achieved together this year. My sincere gratitude goes to the hardworking Children's Services Team as during this challenging time your adaptability has been an inspiration.

We have much to look forward to in the next year as the team and participants continue to achieve great things, not just in the current situation but looking to the future of life after COVID-19.



PARTICIPANT STORY:

Beating the odds

“Promise me you’ll always remember: You’re braver than you believe and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”

– A. A. MILNE

I am a young person that has beaten all the odds, and have done so more times than I should have had to given my age.

I have lived in three different placements during my time of being supported by Amicus. Three may not seem like a large number to some of you however these changes took place between the ages of 15 to 17. Just imagine what that was like for me as a teenager where I am already trying to find my identity and make sense of who I am.

Three changes in placement is not just changing my address, it is:

Three times my whole life changed and turned upside down in one day. No notice just “it’s over, time to move on”.

Three different carers - what are they like, how will they treat me, how long I will be here, how can I make this work?

Three different families - Will they like me? What will the other kids think? How will I know what to do? Will this be where I stay? I don’t know how to act.

Three sets of expectations - What will they want from me? Am I meant to help? Do I have to pay money to stay here? What if I can’t do what they ask?

Three times starting over – new house, new bed, new people, new everything!!

Three times to build new relationships – Who are these people? Do I try to get to know these people? How do I talk to them? What do they like?

Three times to move all possessions – pack, unpack, lost things, broken things, leave things behind.

Three times to find a place in the family dynamic – Where do I fit in? How does this work for me? What do they want from me? What do I want from them?

Three times as the “new kid” and the last one in – just shut up, fit in, don’t try too hard, doesn’t matter if no one likes me, I want them to like me, do what they say, don’t argue.

Three times of wondering what the future would hold for me – How long am I here for? Where to next? Will I get to stay? Should I unpack?

Amicus has been with me throughout my journey supporting me through all of this and without them I would not be where I am today.

Amicus gave me a consistent, reliable support system that helped me navigate what seemed like the endless changes and instability of my life.

With the support of Amicus I was able to remain out of residential care, return to education and pass year 10. I have studied for and passed my L plates test and driving with staff to get my hours of driving in. I now participate in my community, hold a fastest lap record at The Zone and attend necessary medical appointments.

Thanks to the team at Amicus I always have someone in my corner to advocate for me! I now have an apprenticeship and have started TAFE and there are many other things big and small that have made my life what it is today.

There were many times I could have given up, I had every reason to but instead I reached out to the trusted adults in my life, they worked hard to earn my trust and never took it for granted.

I have always dreamt big and because of Amicus these dreams are now my reality.



PARTICIPANT STORY:

My Amicus journey

“Amicus and particularly my support worker has given me hope, trust and a future to look forward to.”

– PARTICIPANT

I am turning 18 soon and have lived in a kinship placement for over three years now. I was linked in with Amicus Children’s Services in January 2019, staff started working with me on building safe and trusted relationships, while also building my independent living skills. I have a support worker that has worked with me consistently over three years and is still with me today.

I haven’t always made it easy for my support worker but she has stuck by me, her dedication, consistency, flexibility and her ‘never-give-up-on-me’ attitude is why I am who I am today. God knows she could have thrown her hands in the air many times and questioned if this was what she really wanted to do. I am glad she stuck by me through the good times and the bad – although at times more bad than good.

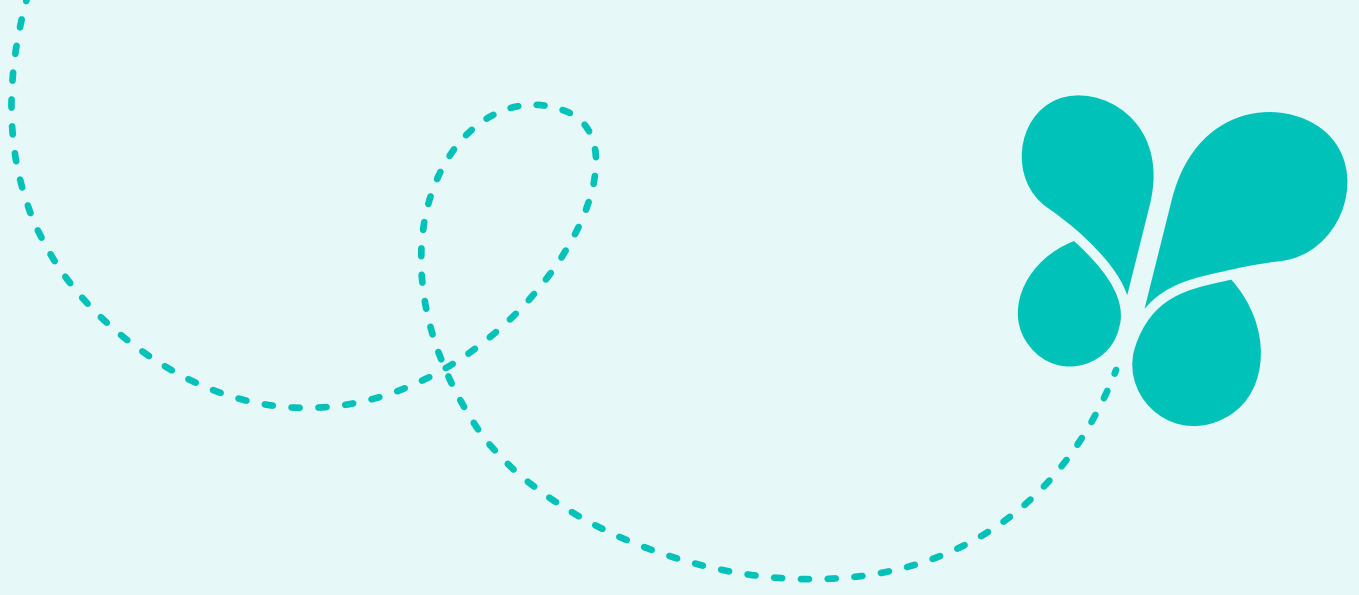
Three years ago I wasn’t attending school and had no desire to. Amicus supported me to link in to VCAL at TAFE and over the next couple of years I went on to complete the intermediate level of my studies.

TAFE have been so supportive with the teachers there keeping in contact and reaching out to me even when I was doing remote learning during the COVID lockdown and restrictions. I was supported to learn as well as build friendships and relationships with my peers and adults.

I love AFL Football and play in the Bendigo competition. I also do some umpiring and love it and get paid – AWESOME! I attended a three-day football umpiring coaching camp last year and had a great time and learned lots.

During football season I attend football training twice per week as well as my umpire training once a week. Belonging to the Football Club has been a very important community connection for me, but most importantly I have a valued role in playing and umpiring football.





Over the last three years I have had many challenging times in my kinship home. However due to the relationships I have built within the family unit and the primary kinship carer not giving up on me, I have been able to remain in my home long term.

Being able to have one consistent support worker and being able to have regular shifts with her, has meant that I have had a safe and trusted adult that I can debrief with. I have learned so much from her – life lessons, having someone who listens to me and who just gets me.

Last year I applied for an apprenticeship locally and had a couple of different trials, however this was not successful as they wanted an 18 year old with a license. My support worker would pick me up at 6.00am which meant I could get to work on time and be ready to start work.

I was disappointed that I couldn't continue without a license but reassessed what I wanted and enrolled in a Football Academy. I have travelled to Melbourne to complete my studies and have been determined to complete the course. At the end of the year I will have successfully completed my Diploma of Sport Development (Elite).

I got my Learner's Permit when I turned 16 (I was so excited) I participated in the L to P driving program through the Salvation Army. My reliable and trusted support worker also completed the L to P Drivers Mentor Program so she could drive with me. I got my 120 hours of driving over two years. We had a day trip to Geelong to celebrate reaching the 120 hours and turning 18.

My relationship with my support worker has grown stronger over the years and we have had many chats about many different things. She has been part of my life and helps me with making good choices and pointing out if she thinks a bad choice is about to be made, budgeting, cooking, cleaning, healthy relationships, education, employment and most importantly the responsibilities of owning a car and driving on the road. I hope that my support worker and I can keep in contact once I no longer need Amicus and that they will continue to be part of my life.

Amicus and particularly my support worker has given me hope, trust and a future to look forward to. I have big plans for myself, I have the drive, ambition, determination and resilience to be the best I can be. I will get my license, I have bought a car and am already planning on what car I will buy next, I will find a job.



Amicus update:

This young person has achieved her goals, she has accomplished what she has set out to accomplish, she has succeeded and she has made us all very proud, we wish her luck and hope she still drops in now and then to say "hi".

Support Coordination

BONNY GUTTERIDGE, SUPPORT COORDINATION MANAGER

The 2020-21 financial year saw change for the Support Coordination team. Former manager Susan Perkins left Amicus after a number of dedicated years to move closer to her family, some of the team accepted other Amicus roles, and others have moved into different fields outside of the sector.

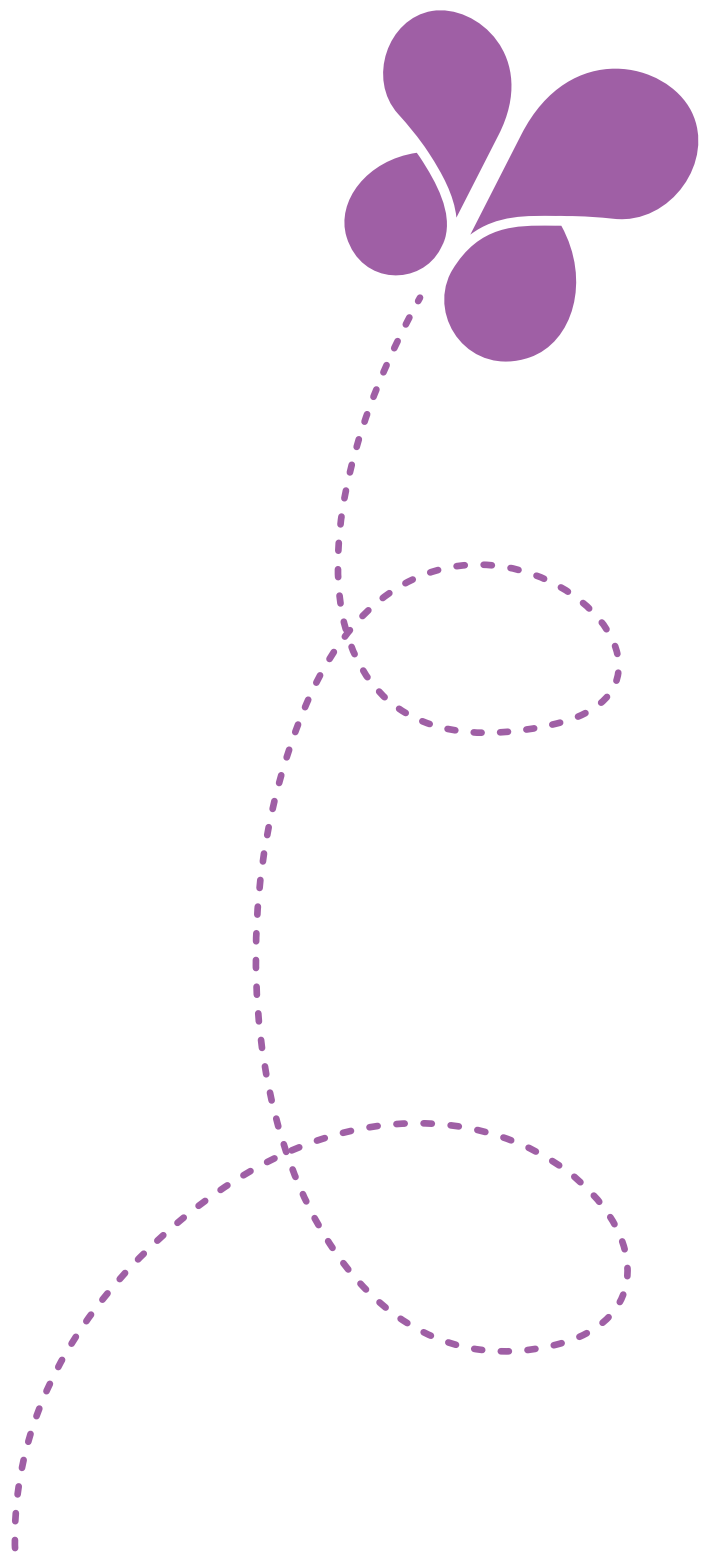
We continued to work with over 135 participants and their families to navigate the NDIS landscape, access a range of services and supports, and strive to meet their goals, all while the impacts of COVID-19 continued. While the lockdowns and restrictions on visitors to homes and workplaces impacted our ability to see our participants face-to-face, we were able to use some technology and creativity to stay connected.

The Support Coordination team supported a number of our participants to transition to more appropriate accommodation, gain employment and education. Also to navigate other services systems, such as Mental Health, Justice, and Aged Care, and assisted them to understand their NDIS plans and how they can be best utilised to live their best lives.

I'd like to acknowledge the great work and commitment of Jessica Parker (now SIL Manager at Amicus), Robin Gray, Chris Butler, Tamara Davis and Meredith Whittle.

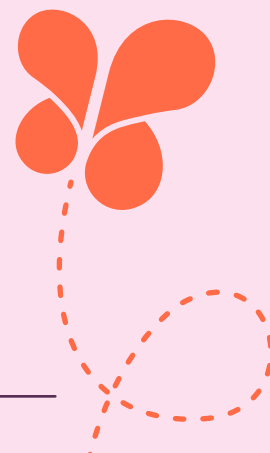
On a personal note, I would like to thank the team for being so welcoming to myself when I stepped into the manager role in November.

We look forward to the year ahead!



PARTICIPANT STORY:

Piper's story



Piper is 10 years old, who loves life and adores her family. She has Cerebral Palsy and also suffers from a rare Epileptic Encephalopathy. Understanding how to support her is extremely important.

Her Amicus team support her with exercises and stretching which is a vital part of keeping her agility. Piper loves the team, telling her stories and what is happening in the world, and she openly admits she is treated like "a Princess".

Piper loves to attend her SDA School as often as she can and has so much to do when she is there including music therapy, play therapy, hydrotherapy, speech therapy and of course stimulation through toys, sounds and textiles and much more.

Although this year has been a challenging one for Piper with a few more operations under her belt, she is full of life and has an endless supply of love from her dedicated family. For our Amicus team, she is a shining light!



Finance Report

Year ended 30 June 2021

MIKE KIERNAN, TREASURER

Summary of financial performance

The COVID-19 pandemic presented some challenges, however Amicus focused on delivering essential services.

Despite the challenges for the year, we are pleased to report that Amicus recorded a surplus of \$1.83m for the year ended 30 June 2021 (\$1.86m surplus for the year ended 30 June 2020).

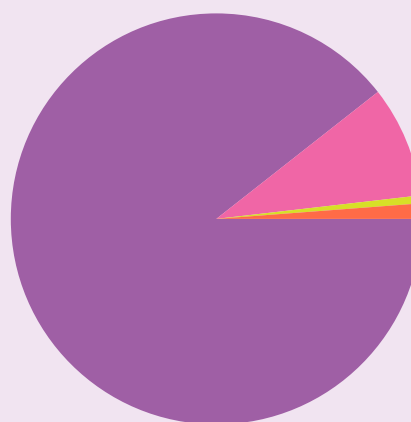
The Statement of Financial Position reports total assets of \$8.3m (\$7.7m in 2019-20) and Net Assets of \$6.3m (\$4.47m in 2019-20).

Due to the nature of Amicus, some financial assistance measures were available to combat the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as Job Keeper, PAYG relief and COVID-19 loading on some NDIS unit cost rates. \$1m of the surplus is attributable to land sales from the Market Gardens Estate.

Where our funds came from

The total income for Amicus for 2020-21 was \$15.74m (compared to \$14.85m for 2019-20). This represents 6% growth in income.

Most participants supported by Amicus are funded by the NDIS. Other significant income sources are from the Department of Family, Fairness and Housing for Targeted Care Packages and HACC, the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Continuity of Support services for participants over the age of 65.



Service Income, %

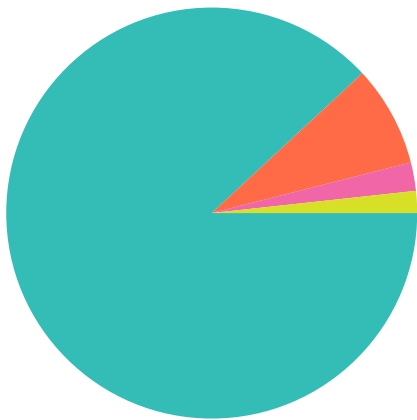
- 89% NDIS
- 9% DHHS
- 1% Fee for service
- 1% Commonwealth Home Support

How our funds were used

Expenditure for 2020-21 was \$13.9m (compared to \$12.99m in 2019-20). Employee costs accounted for 88% of expenditure.

Staff numbers were 121FTE at the end of the year, compared to 122FTE in 2019-20. Staff leave balances have been accumulating as there has been a reduction in staff requesting to take leave during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020 we implemented a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) client database and rostering system, to streamline our pathways process, and provide technology that can be used remotely by our support staff.



Expenditure, %

- 88% Employment Expenses
- 8% Administration
- 2% Property, Facilities and Vehicles
- 2% Client Expenditures

Future financial outlook

In 2021/22 we are implementing an ICT Roadmap that will retire the server and move data to Sharepoint, apply Mobile Device Management and Multi-Factor Authentication to mobile devices, implement a Human Resources System and replace our current Quality Management System.

During 2021-22 construction of two Specialised Disability Accommodation units in the Market Gardens Estate will be completed and ready for occupancy.

Amicus has move from an incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee. This change in structure is aimed at providing further opportunities for Amicus operations.

This year's success would not have been possible without the contributions made by many people. We thank all of our participants and the entire Amicus team. Together we are continuing to build foundations for the future of Amicus.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF AMICUS GROUP INCORPORATED

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Amicus Group Inc (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position at 30 June 2021, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the Association.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respect, the financial position of the Association as at 30 June 2021 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the *Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC)*.

Basis for Opinion

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

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

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the Association to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and *Australian Charities and Not-for profit Commission (ACNC)*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the *Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC)* and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

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Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

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

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

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

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

RSD Audit

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.P. Delahunty', enclosed in a thin black rectangular box.

P.P Delahunty

Partner

Bendigo 30 September 2021



Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm

Amicus

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