



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



amicus
one person at a time

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Country that we work on and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and the Elders of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Moreover, we express gratitude for the knowledge and insight that Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contribute to our shared work.

We acknowledge that our offices are on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung (Bendigo)





Our Vision



Everyone living their best life

Our Purpose



We make a difference - together.
One person at a time, one place at a time.

Our Values



Respecting Diversity

We welcome and respect each and every person - their culture and individual needs, choices and abilities - and what matters most to them.



Building Partnerships

We work intentionally to build strong partnerships with and for our people and the communities in which we work.



Social Impact

We believe in a just society with equal opportunities, where everyone can contribute, is included and feels that they belong.



Developing Leadership

We develop the capabilities of our people; we advocate and champion and have the courage to shape a better future.

Our Strategic Statement



We create opportunities and impact - one person at a time and one place at a time, through our innovative and high quality services and supports, community partnerships and contemporary technology for people of all abilities, ages and stages, in the communities in which we work. Every participant will tell us that we make a positive difference to their lives, every employee will feel valued, and communities will welcome our contribution.



Our Goals

Goal 1

Grow our organisation to meet community need

Goal 2

An employer of choice

Goal 3

Have the best possible impact on people and places

Goal 4

Achieve excellent organisational health

Risk Management Framework

Amicus's risk management framework is embedded across all operations. The framework is the totality of systems, structures, policies, processes, and people within Amicus that identify, measure, monitor, report and control or mitigate internal or external sources of material risk.



A Message From Our Chairman & Acting CEO



On behalf of Amicus Community Services, we are pleased to present our Annual Report and audited financial accounts for 2023-24.

Like so many other quality registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers across Australia, Amicus continues to wrestle with challenges including staff recruitment and retention; narrowing financial support and margins; industry change and uncertainty.

The financial results for 2023/24 are encouraging but there are still challenging times ahead. Our Operating Result for 2023/24 was a \$2.1m improvement on the prior year however, despite best efforts, Amicus concluded a financial loss of \$401,402. This was achieved by year on year growth in all core revenue streams with expenses slightly down. This is a tremendous result and a reflection of the commitment of our employees to remain focused on delivering quality service to our participants.

2024/25 will be challenging with constrained NDIS fees increases and growing cost pressures. We remain totally committed to delivering quality services to our participants and supporting our employees. We will look to grow our revenue base through increasing participants numbers in selected areas, while also exploring diverse revenue sources, operational efficiency and effectiveness measures and strategic partnerships and alliances.

Notwithstanding the challenges, Amicus is proud and unwavering in its commitment to the care and support of our participants, helping them grow and enjoy their very best lives.

We so often hear and talk about 'values' in society and in the workplace, but to see them lived out and the difference dedicated people can make to the lives of others, speaks to who we are at Amicus. Our participants are seen as individuals with aspirations and hopes, frustrations and barriers.

The past year saw Amicus continue to improve what it does and how it does it. Continuous improvement and transition, however, is never easy. It has required determination and, at times, difficult but necessary decisions.

This Annual Report provides but only a brief snapshot of some of the aspects of our services and people and summaries our efforts and achievements across the organisation. There is much we have done in the past year, but equally there remains more we need to keep doing, and in some instances do better.

The Board and management are proud of the many participants we support in the region that choose to use our services. We are equally grateful to the staff at Amicus that also choose to work with us.

We had intended to prepare and launch our new Strategic Plan in 2024, but we hit a few speed humps along the way that distracted and delayed some of our efforts. One major distraction was the unforeseen departure of CEO Kevin Feeney who departed in late June to pursue other endeavours. We wish Kevin well in that regard. Thank you to Sophia Wight, our highly regarded Head of Service Delivery, who assumed the Acting CEO role. She did so with care and integrity and with the support of the Board and staff.

To Board members and our management team, thank you for your commitment and stewardship.

And finally, we offer applause and gratitude to our staff for their service, care and commitment to our many and varied participants and wider Amicus family. Their daily contribution cannot be summed up in one brief sentence but is best seen in the inspiration and ongoing impact their energy and commitment make to the lives of so many people in our region. Thank you!

Stan Liacos – Chairman
Sophia Wight – Acting CEO

Our Story



Amicus believes the best way to work with people is one person at a time. The focus is on the individual and with intentional support provided by staff, we match people with similar interests and passions.

Working with families has always been the approach of Amicus and we aim to provide whatever support we can to keep families strong.

In 2011 Amicus commenced providing support to younger people with a disability, Amicus was successful in obtaining a State Government grant to provide Out of School Hours and Vacation Care in partnership with Bendigo Regional YMCA. This program has since ceased.

Amicus has witnessed first-hand the impact that choosing mainstream opportunities throughout childhood and teenage years has on the pathway chosen in adulthood.

Through Amicus's work with children, we have come into contact with children and teenagers where there was a disproportionate number of them living with a disability in residential care. While working with these children to deliver NDIS funded supports, we are connecting them back with a supportive and engaged community.

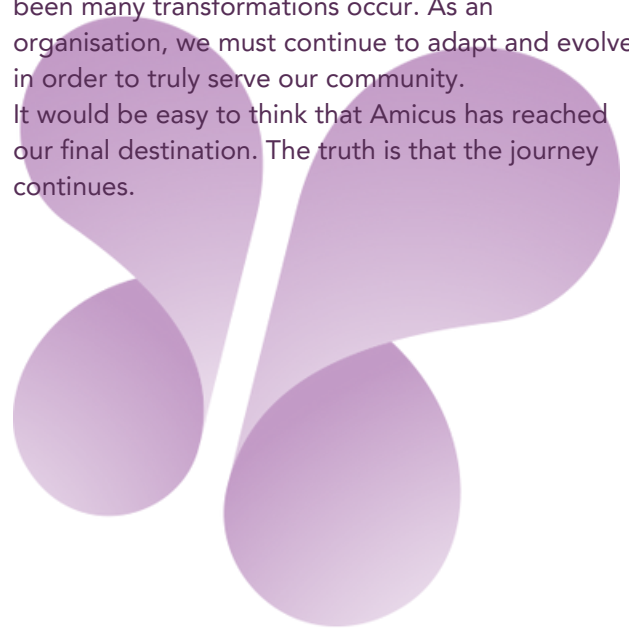
Over the 30 plus year history of Amicus there have been many transformations occur. As an organisation, we must continue to adapt and evolve in order to truly serve our community. It would be easy to think that Amicus has reached our final destination. The truth is that the journey continues.

Amicus Community Services have been supporting the needs of vulnerable people and local communities across central Victoria since 1988.

It is no coincidence a butterfly forms part of the Amicus logo. For a number of years Amicus has been an organisation undergoing metamorphosis. In response to the Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012, and a number of State Government initiatives like Changing Days, Amicus really embraced the principles of individualised support and community inclusion, and these formed the way forward for Amicus.

Small steps saw a return to supports occurring in the community and in mid 2013, Amicus made the decision not to offer facility-based supports to new participants. By 2014 Amicus moved from the Cecil Street site to the central business district. This move marked a transition for Amicus from delivering centre-based day services, to a fully community-based model.

In late 2022, another new transition occurred, combining our three sites into one centralised location in Williamson Street which was officially opened by Bendigo Mayor, Andrea Metcalf on 22nd March 2023.



Our Board of Directors



Stan Liacos
Chairman



Norm Cockerell
Director



Mike Kiernan
Director



Katherine Shamai
Director



Leigh Svendsen
Director



Jo Ciancio
Director



Ben Yuen
Director





Our Governance

Amicus Community Services is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and registered as a charity under the Australian and Non-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Act 2012. Ultimate responsibility for the organisation rests with the Board of Directors.

The role of our Board

The Board's task is to ensure Amicus Community Services achieves its strategic objectives whilst mitigating risks. As a group, the Board provides strategic leadership and goals for the organisation, monitors business activities and financial position and also assesses whether all actions are achievable, implemented and delivered appropriately.

The ACNC lists the following Governance Standards that registered charities must comply with:

Standard 1: Purpose and not-for-profit nature

Standard 2: Accountability to members

Standard 3: Compliance with Australian laws

Standard 4: Suitability of Responsible People

Standard 5: Duties of Responsible People

Standard 6: Maintaining and enhancing public trust and confidence in the Australian not-for-profit sector

Directors Meetings

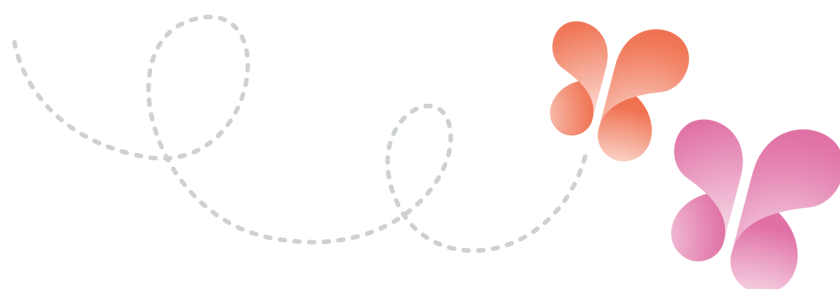
Attendances by each Director during the year were as follows:

Director	Board Meetings		Governance and Risk Committee Meetings		Finance Committee	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
Mike Kiernan	12	11	-	-	2	2
Giuseppe (Joe) Ciancio	12	10	-	-	2	2
Ben Yuen	12	12	2	2	-	-
Norm Cockerell	12	12	-	-	2	2
Katherine Shamai	12	11	2	2	-	-
Leigh Svendsen	10	10	2	2	-	-
Stan Liacos	11	11	-	-	-	-

A - The number of meetings eligible to attend.

B - The number of meetings attended.

-- Not a member of that committee.



Our Executive Team

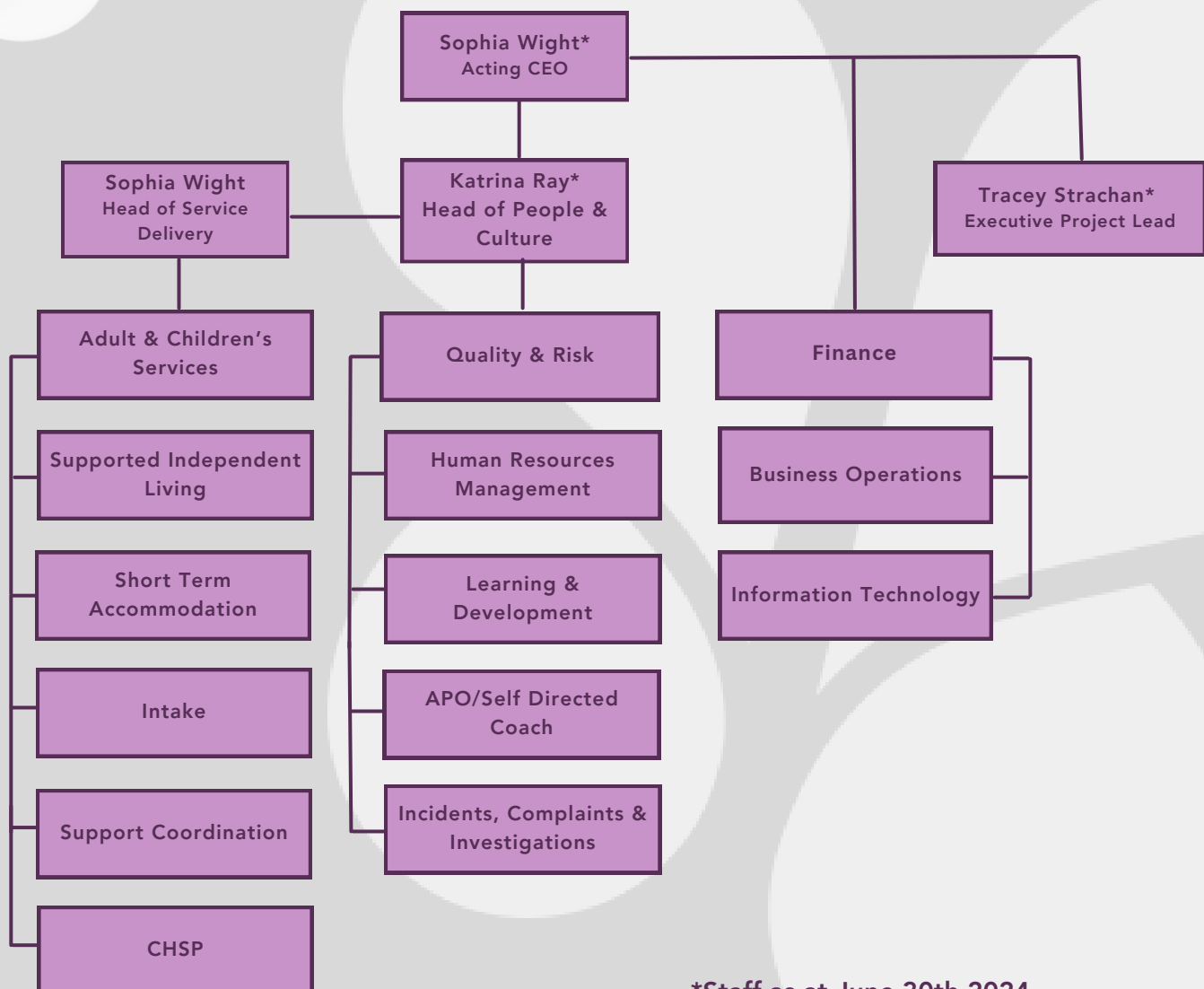


Sophia Wight*
Acting CEO



Katrina Ray*
Head of People & Culture

Organisational Chart



*Staff as at June 30th 2024



Our Partnerships

MASARG Partnership

Mt Alexander Shire Accommodation and Respite Group (MASARG) worked tirelessly over a 10-year period to fundraise and construct short-term accommodation, or respite house, to meet the needs of local people with disability many of whom have ageing carers. This facility is known as Melissa Court.

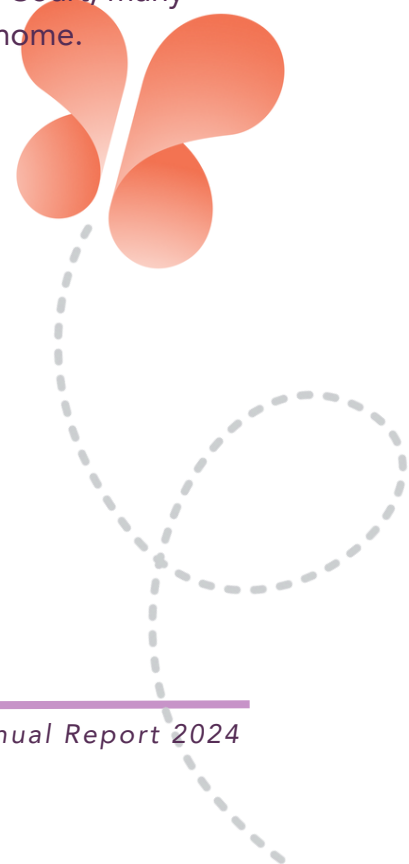
Amicus was successful in its submission as the preferred provider and continues to work with MASARG to get the best outcomes for our participants.

Melissa Court provides a landscaped tranquil bush setting with secure gardens. The home is fully equipped for people with high needs, accommodates up to four participants at a time and includes a self-contained unit where participants can see what it is like to transition to independent living.

While staying at Melissa Court, participants can expect to see kangaroos in the front yard and an abundance of bird life amongst the beautiful native gardens, including the occasional sheep and cow that may visit from next door.

Day trips to Maldon, Daylesford, Creswick and a short trip to Melbourne by train are all activities that participants are offered during their stay. Participants are involved in choosing the menu for their stay, cooking their chosen meal and of course helping with the clean-up.

Amicus values the relationship we have with MASARG and without Melissa Court, many participants and families would not be able to experience time away from home.



Our Participants

Elmore Field Days 2024



During October we had up to 10 participants enjoy getting out of Bendigo to attend Elmore Field Days.

Elmore Field Days is one of the premier events in the Australian agriculture calendar. This is the result of decades of hard work and dedication from subsequent volunteer committees and sub-committees to ensure every event is even more successful than the last. Amicus Community Services is proud to be a part of it. Held on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of October 2024, the Elmore Field Days was a fantastic opportunity for our participants to learn about the latest developments in agriculture, explore new activities, as well as catch up with old friends and make new ones.

Our participants enjoyed a beautiful day out in Elmore exploring what the Field Day & localities had to offer with their Community Support Workers.

Participants enjoyed viewing heavy machinery, aircrafts, exhibits, participating in raffles, award ceremonies, tasting the food offerings, and engaging with farm animals!



Our Participants

Harriett Pearson

One of our talented participants, Harriet, has been busy making arts and crafts!

Harriet has been supported by Amicus for 14 years, and recently celebrated her 35th Birthday in the Amicus Team Hub with some of her favorite support workers and team leader!

Harriett is passionate about art and has spent more than 10 years engaging in her hobby. Harriet uses the funds she earns from the sale of her beautiful creations to purchase more resources to continue producing her art.

You will find some of Harriett's incredible artwork for sale in the foyer at reception. If you are interested in supporting Harriet and owning one of her unique pieces of art, please make enquiries to Meryle.



Pictured is Harriett's
crochet and diamond art

Our People



We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the amazing work of our Community Support Workers. Our team of dedicated staff are in our community everyday providing important supports to people living with a disability and enabling them to 'Live their Best Lives'.

We currently employ approximately 180 Community Support Workers who have come to us from all walks of life. Our workers use not only their previous employment experience, but also their lived experience. A great deal of our workers has a connection in some way to someone with a disability, a family member, friend or acquaintance and are wanting to provide our participants with the very best of care.

Behind the scenes are our Head Office staff, working tirelessly to ensure we can provide the best people to support our participants in our community and keep our organisation running smoothly.

We thank each and every one of you for supporting Amicus and our participants, we could not do what we do without you!



Our People

Tah Dah

Hi, my name is Tah Dah, I am Karen, hailing from both Thailand refugee camp and Myanmar. Growing up, I witnessed firsthand the absence of support systems in our community. Despite the hardships, my close bond with my grandparents deepened my understanding of their struggles. They, along with many others their age, lacked access to medical, social, and other essential support services. Witnessing their plight at such a young age fueled my desire to make a difference. Though I felt helpless as a child, I yearned to alleviate their suffering and that of others. This drive led me to become part of a support worker group, where I could offer assistance to those in need. Joining the remarkable team at Amicus has been a blessing. Their supportive community and dedication to extending aid to the Karen community resonates deeply with me. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such a compassionate cause.



Our People Milestones



In recognition of our dedicated staff, we would like to acknowledge the following individual milestones that occurred for the 2023 - 2024 year:

5 years of service

- Tanner Bentley
- Dallas McLeod
- Riley Wiltshire
- Meryle Bish
- Mervyn Crosbie
- Meegan Putman
- Thomas Maher
- Elizabeth Leathart
- Health Austin
- Robin Gray
- Pla Gay

10 years of service

- Gerald Nester

15+ years of service

- Dean Pawlowski





Culture & Engagement

Grand Final 2024 Sausage Sizzle

On Monday the 23rd of September an AFL Grand Final sausage sizzle was held for all participants and community support workers to attend. We had approximately 10-12 participants/workers attend the sausage sizzle as well as 15-18 office staff. This was a great event to connect with our staff and the participants of Amicus.

R U Okay? Day 2024

On Thursday the 12th of September, the Amicus office staff hosted an R U Okay? Day morning tea. The national day and our gathering gave our team the opportunity to reflect on the importance of checking in with one another; friends, family and colleagues. The day highlighted the value of building trust and normalising conversations around mental health and wellbeing every day, and asking the question 'R U OK? more regularly, not just on R U OK? Day.



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.





Amicus Community Services

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