



2018  
ANNUAL REVIEW

**UNISSON**  
DISABILITY

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# ABOUT UNISSON DISABILITY

## TRADITIONAL OWNERS

We'd like to take this opportunity to recognise that we respect and embrace the Aboriginal elders and people of this region as the traditional custodians and cultural knowledge holders of this land.

We further acknowledge the cultural contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with disability, and reaffirm our vision of a world where every person is welcomed.

## ABOUT US

At Unisson Disability we are unwavering in our belief that no one should be defined by their disability. We are passionate about enabling people with disability to live their best lives, in a world that can feel more restrictive for them than for others. Our work is about establishing and deepening connections with our clients and their families. Through our services, we forge unique and meaningful relationships which act as the bridge to rich and fulfilling personal experiences in the community.

As one of NSW's leading NDIS service providers, Unisson Disability has been at the forefront of providing support to those with disability and their families since 1924. Our services cover Sydney and the Central Coast, Hunter and the Nepean Blue Mountains regions.

## PURPOSE OF REVIEW

Unisson Disability's Annual Review isn't just a progress report or a review of our achievements and financial performance throughout the 2017 - 2018 financial year. It's also an opportunity to share with you the experiences and stories from the people we work alongside every day. Our review is published for our many stakeholders, valued supporters, community partners, employees, government agencies, families, advocates, the people we support and anyone who is considering becoming part of the Unisson Disability story.



*Ellen Dickinson*

# VISION PURPOSE & VALUES

## OUR VISION



a world where every person is welcomed

## OUR PURPOSE



working together to create possibilities for a great life

## OUR VALUES



### CONVICTION

we have the courage not to give up



### GENEROSITY

we give our hearts and minds in an effort to understand others



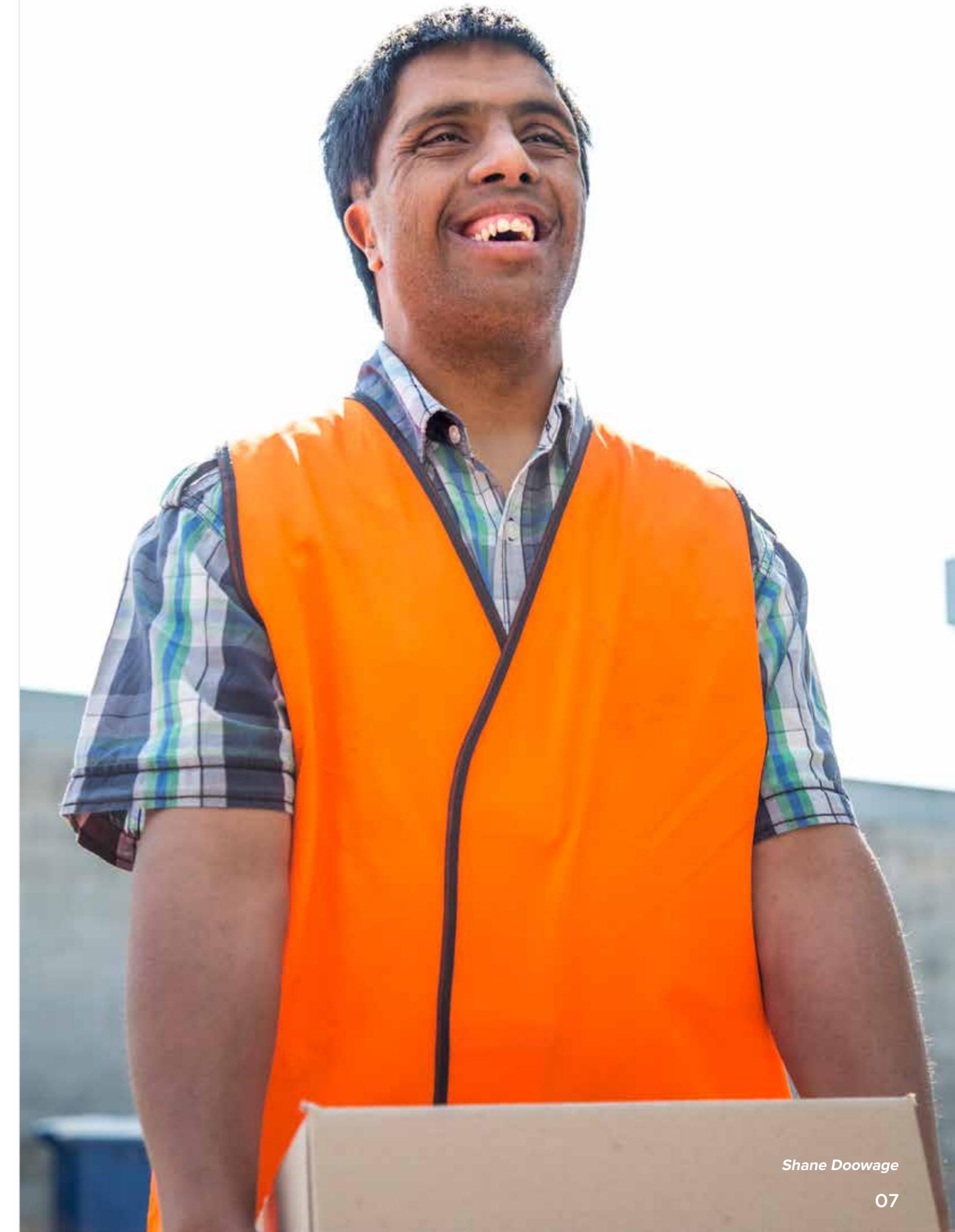
### INTEGRITY

we do what we say we will do



### COLLABORATION

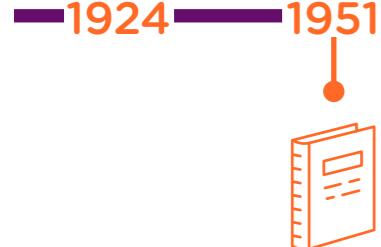
we work together, nurturing strong relationships



Shane Doowage

# A PROUD HISTORY

Lorna Hodgkinson, a remarkable Australian of great dedication and vision, establishes the Sunshine Institute. Lorna purchases a large house at Gore Hill on Sydney's Lower North Shore and opens it as a residential school for six children with intellectual disability.



Lorna passes away. By this time there are more than 60 students living and studying at the Sunshine Institute. In her will, she bequeaths the home to a group of trustees who decide to form a non-profit organisation. The Sunshine Institute is renamed the Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home.

The Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home becomes a registered charity.



In response to an ever-increasing demand for accommodation, dormitory-style residences are built over the next decade.



Vocational training commences for the residents with the introduction of a 'Sheltered Workshop'.



An official school opens on the grounds of the original Home providing an up-to-date educational program for the children.



The Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home celebrates its 50th birthday.



A new Adult Training Centre is completed. Additional specialist staff are appointed, including social workers, psychologists, speech therapists, dental therapists, nursing staff and teachers.



The Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home is shortened to Sunshine. Sunshine begins looking at ways to move away from institutional living. A number of units and homes are purchased and many of the people supported make the transition to living more independently in group homes.



Sunshine celebrates its 90th birthday.



Sunshine welcomes the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



Unisson Disability continues to expand its services which now include community services, supported living, shared living, short-term accommodation, supported employment and support coordination.

**UNISSON**  
DISABILITY



Steven Turner and Babak Bolourchi

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

**UNISSON IS GUIDED BY A ROLLING THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN WHICH IS REVIEWED BY MANAGEMENT AND THE BOARD EVERY YEAR.**

This year we conducted our weekend board retreat to review the plan, and the theme was developing strong partnerships and creating a culture that embraces innovation.

**Our growth and reputation as a quality provider saw us amalgamate with Jennings Lodge in Oct 2017, a small organisation with two group homes.**

I am pleased to report that the clients and staff in these two houses have benefited from our quality approach to service provision. It is heartening to hear that clients have been able to access the services and supports they need to help them pursue their goals.

**Repositioning Unisson in the NDIS landscape has not been without challenges. We continue to work with the myriad of issues as a consequence of delivering support and services funded by NDIS. The inadequate pricing, inconsistent policy execution and the delayed payments are just a few we have had to contend with. We are fortunate at Unisson that we have anticipated some of these issues and built some strategies around them.**

I want to thank all members of our Board of Directors (Unisson and Lorna Hodgkinson Foundation) who have been so generous and committed in giving their time and expertise to lead the stewardship of our organisation. We specially thank Mrs Jan Kneeshaw who retired this year following 27 years as a Director. We thank her for her generosity and valuable contribution to the organisation which spans almost 70 years.

I want to thank Rebecca Fletcher our CEO for 14 years who is retiring at the end of the year. Rebecca has been with Sunshine Home, now Unisson for over 30 years. In this time, she has taken Unisson from a small campus focused organisation based in Gore Hill to its current highly respected position, headquartered in Pymble. After such a stellar career Rebecca has decided that it's time to retire and enjoy some of the more relaxing things in life. I am pleased to say however that Rebecca will remain involved with the organisation in her role as a non-executive director with Unisson Disability and the Lorna Hodgkinson Foundation as well as continuing to assist the board and the senior management team with certain development opportunities and projects.

**The Board conducted a rigorous selection process in which both external and internal candidates were assessed for the CEO role. We are pleased that this has resulted in the selection of an internal candidate who will be able to provide continuity of the current purpose and vision for the organisation.**

I am delighted by the appointment of David Kneeshaw as Unisson CEO. David will assume the position of CEO on 22 October 2018.

David joined Unisson in February 2015 as General Manager, Corporate Services, having previously been in Finance roles with Penguin Books in London and New York for 8 years and transferring back to Australia to work for Penguin's sister company, Pearson Education in a Senior Leadership role for 6 years.

**David will spend the first few months in his new position further familiarising himself with all our services and stakeholders and will therefore have the opportunity to meet with many of you.**

This is an exciting time and we look forward to continuing to work in collaboration with you all to deliver our purpose of creating possibilities for a great life.



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

**AFTER 93 YEARS OF BEING KNOWN AS THE SUNSHINE INSTITUTE AND THE LORNA HODGKINSON SUNSHINE HOME (SUNSHINE), THE YEAR IN REVIEW MARKED THE FIRST FULL YEAR OPERATING UNDER OUR NEW NAME, UNISSON DISABILITY.**

The journey to finding a new name was not an easy one. I've spoken and consulted with fellow CEOs who have gone through this process and there was one common message: it takes time. I am delighted with our new name which truly sums up what we do and how we do it. It also acknowledges and values the past and recognises it as the basis of what we do now and into the future.

We live in interesting times, times of disorder and uncertainty, though with great opportunities. The disability sector and Unisson have never seen a disruption such as the NDIS. We continue to be committed to the success of the NDIS. We believe that the NDIS is a world-leading approach to supporting people with disability, exceptional in its principles and intentions. However, the roll out has presented significant challenges. It has been a rollercoaster ride for many stakeholders, but we continue to have faith that improvements will be made to ensure the intent of the scheme is realised for people with disability.

The year in review has seen significant growth in our services and we continue to devote substantial resources in staff development, structure and systems. We've been able to maintain our competitive advantage by way of continually critiquing our processes, redesigning our systems and developing innovative approaches. The Unisson team continue to support the vision and purpose through their diverse skills and experience.

We opened new homes in Northern Sydney, Western Sydney, Central Coast and Hunter, making the total number

of clients supported through our shared living services 168. Our growth in Hunter continues to be strong particularly in community services but our shared living is also gathering momentum. We now have two houses and a third on the way.

**I am delighted to report that Jennings Lodge amalgamated with us, bringing two group homes based in Baulkham Hills, and we welcome the clients, families and staff to our fold.**

Our supported employment activities remain a challenge due to the skills and competencies of supported employees. We continue to review the type of work we could market to ensure there is a continuous flow of work to keep everyone engaged. In addition, we are currently undertaking a review of our employment brand to ensure we are positioned to appeal to business customers.

**The financial result for 2017-2018 delivered a modest surplus with a turnover just under \$47 million.**

I continue to be humbled by the results of our customer satisfaction survey. It is pleasing to note that clients, families and staff are primarily of one accord. They expressed their satisfaction in the quality of support and the responsiveness and engagement from Unisson. We continue to learn, adjust, refine and improve according to the voice of our stakeholders.

This is my 14<sup>th</sup> CEO report and my last. As I look back over the past 14 years, I can honestly say that it has been the most engaging and rewarding time in my professional life. It has been an honour to serve as your CEO. I have met a lot of wonderful people with keen minds and beautiful hearts. I specially thank our Board of Directors (I know I worked you guys hard). Thank you for your tireless support of Unisson. But I will never stop being in awe of and grateful for the excellent face-to-face staff who support clients every day.

They are the cornerstone of this organisation. To you, our Direct Support Professionals, my absolute and sincere thanks for all the work that you do - simply brilliant. To the Leadership and Senior Management team, you have been the driver, navigator, and cultivator of growth both in clients and in staff. My sincere thanks for an excellent and fruitful journey. To the Executive team who kept me inspired, challenged and focussed, I am proud we maintained our partnership as equals; my sincere and deep gratitude.

**There are many stakeholders to thank but top of mind goes to the amazing clients who trusted us with their goals and aspirations. To the families, friends and advocates who keep us honest and true to our purpose, thank you. To the government and its officers, thank you for sharing our vision and assisting in our quest to deliver positive outcomes to the people we support.**

In closing, the journey will continue so travel light. We need to be nimble and agile, drop the unnecessary baggage, adapt and embrace innovation as a friend, and continue being curious. Finally, thank you for a cumulative 33 years at Unisson. I've made a lot of friends and created wonderful memories. I am truly blessed.

**“We live in interesting times, times of disorder and uncertainty, though with great opportunities”**

# SUNSHINE TO UNISSON: ONE YEAR ON

IN NOVEMBER 2017, WE WELCOMED AN EXCITING MILESTONE IN THE ALMOST 100-YEAR HISTORY OF OUR ORGANISATION; THE LAUNCH OF OUR NEW IDENTITY, UNISSON DISABILITY.

The change to our organisation's name and look is a celebration of who we are and how we have evolved to become a leading provider of disability support, committed to creating possibilities for impact and connection for those we support. Extensive research was undertaken over the years with families, employees and members of the community to reach this decision. We can proudly say Unisson Disability truly represents a team effort and a unified vision.

**Our name has better positioned us for the future, and we are as determined as ever in our pursuit of creating community connections. It represents the togetherness, support and progress that we strive for with the people we support and their families, advocates and guardians.**

This important step has enabled more of our services to be accessed by those who need them. We're giving people more options to choose us as their service provider. We are now easier to find, easier to search for and there is no confusion between us and others in our sector.

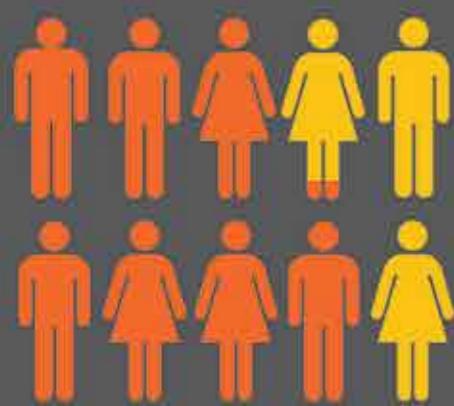
We celebrated the launch of our new look throughout November 2017 with five exciting events across our different regions.

We'd like to take this opportunity to say a special thank you to all of our contributors and speakers throughout the events, including:

- Councillor of Ku-ring-gai Council, Cheryl Szatow
- Councillor of Hornsby Shire Council, Joseph Nicita
- Mayor of Ku-ring-gai Council, Jennifer Anderson
- Mayor of Warringah Council, Michael Regan
- Mayor of Hills Shire Council, Michelle Byrne
- Sir James Hardy
- Unisson family members; William Strachan, Karen Martin, Karen Southgate, Ron and Lianne Wearne
- Unisson clients; Neridah Stephenson, Ty McGill, Jonathan Shapcott, Carol Hutton, Ashleigh Linschoten, Rebecca Dixon, Stephen Hayes
- Unisson staff; Rebecca Fletcher (CEO), Gail Jeltes, Katrina Jackson, Deb Nancovski, Katie Graham, Tom Hobbs, Monika Sondhi

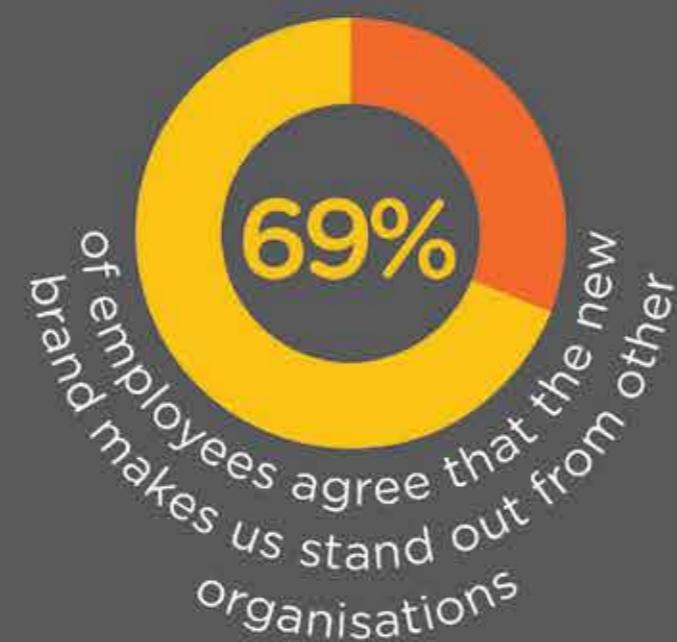
Following the launch, we conducted a series of phone interviews and online surveys with family members and employees. We've been overwhelmed with the positive feedback received in relation to understanding of our new name and what it represents, as well as satisfaction with the way we communicated the change.





**71%**  
of employees feel  
that the new brand  
better reflects the  
work they do

**92%** of employees were  
equipped with enough  
information to  
communicate the  
change, and families  
were happy with how we  
communicated our name change

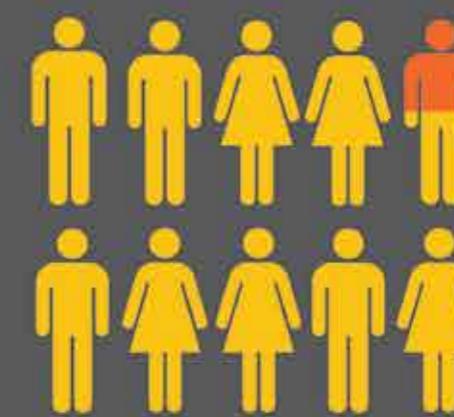


**95%**  
of employees feel that the information they  
received gave them a good understanding  
of the changes, and families were  
adequately informed about what was  
happening and when

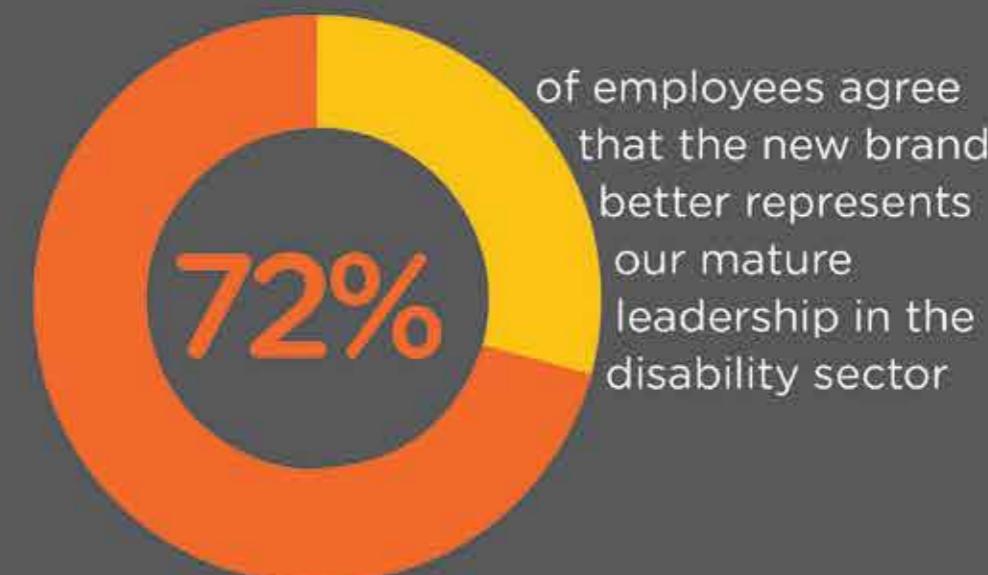
**100%** of employees and  
families were notified  
in advance about the  
rebrand

**84%**

of employees feel that the new brand is  
appealing to anyone considering a career in  
disability



**95%**  
of families have no  
concerns or worries  
about the change for  
their family



over **660** clients

Our team grew to  
**679** employees



\$ Total revenue rose to **47m**

**11** employees celebrated a long-service anniversary

new and improved website

**17** internal promotions

**43** shared living properties

**32** successful employee referrals through our Employee Referral Program

**713,621** hours of support provided

Our employees come from 33 different nations

over **570** employees have completed  
*The Art of Human Connection training*

# CORPORATE SUPPORT & BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

AS THE NDIS EVOLVES AND UNISSON EXPANDS ITS SERVICE OFFERING AND WORKFORCE, WE ARE MORE COMMITTED THAN EVER TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE WAY WE OPERATE.

We have built strong foundations throughout all areas of Corporate Services in order to support the operations of our growing business. These include key initiatives in Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology and Administration Support.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

IT'S NO SECRET THAT THE DISABILITY SECTOR IS FACING CHALLENGES AROUND WORKFORCE SHORTAGES FOR QUALITY SUPPORT STAFF. UNISSON IS ADDRESSING THIS THROUGH HEAVY INVESTMENT IN STAFF ATTRACTION AND RETENTION.

One of the strategic pillars of Unisson Disability is 'a workforce inspired by purpose' which is shaping our approach towards workforce development as a whole. Employee experience is at the forefront of our different initiatives as we recognise that our engaged and happy employees will ensure we deliver a service people want.

### Snapshot of our workforce:

In 2017/18, our team grew by 13%, and we ended this financial year with a total of 679 employees. We currently have 33 nationalities working together, and we aim to strengthen as a team with our differences.

We intend to continue to engage in innovative attraction, recruitment and selection methods to hire the right people.

With the challenges of labour shortage, especially in our sector, we are committed to finding different ways to engage new employees at Unisson. Moreover, retaining the valuable workforce that we already have is also one of our significant focuses for next year.

### Employee experience at Unisson:

Our employees' experience during their employment lifecycle is crucial to us. The experience takes different forms, including engagement with new hires, developing capabilities through different learning opportunities, career growth, promoting an engaging culture, well-being initiatives, and a safe workplace.

With the recent launch of our new performance review and development program, we have started embedding our capability framework throughout the organisation. The program is also enabling us to foster a culture that performs while building great connections. Moreover, with the launch of our new HR Information System 'BOOM', we are ensuring seamless processes with ease, for instance e-learning for our employees, and decentralising processes while keeping it consistent throughout the organisation.

We are currently focused on working towards an overall well-being and recognition program. This will contribute to our focus on creating a positive employee experience throughout Unisson.

### Leadership that empowers our inspired workforce:

Our leaders play a vital role in inspiring our workforce. This year we rolled out different learning sessions, group and individual coaching for our leaders. These are enabling our leaders to work with different personalities, acknowledge employees' different responses towards change, and empower our Direct Support Professionals to bring a positive outcome for our clients through person-centred active support.

## INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY

HAVING THE RIGHT SYSTEMS IS A KEY PART OF PROVIDING A QUALITY SERVICE AND IT HAS BEEN A FOCUS OF THE ORGANISATION AS WE HAVE TRANSITIONED TO THE NDIS.

Three years ago, we created an IT Roadmap and we remain on track to deliver on that plan. The key elements of that Roadmap are as follows:

- Anywhere, anytime – we continue our focus of using technology which facilitates a mobile workforce
- In July 2016 our Client Management System was implemented and we continue to optimise our usage and roll out new functionality. This year we moved the system to the Cloud to improve performance
- In September 2017, we went live with a new, state-of-the-art HR system which we called BOOM! The system is being used for recruitment and on-boarding, performance management and learning. Next year we will roll out a succession module to help us proactively support internal staff development. At their annual conference, the system vendor, Cornerstone, presented Unisson with the award for 'Biggest impact on Employee Engagement'
- In July 2018, we moved our Finance system to a new software called Netsuite to ensure we are using cutting-edge technology to manage our business

## PROCESS OPTIMISATION AND SERVICE VIABILITY

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NDIS HAS FORCED ALL ORGANISATIONS IN THE SECTOR TO FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE HOW THEY ARE ADMINISTERED.

This is partly due to new processes such as service agreements and invoicing, and partly due to much lower pricing which has put some service areas at risk.

While we are not fully transitioned to the NDIS, we have engaged O'Connell Advisory to review our processes,

systems and business models and to provide recommendations for improvement. This is partly to ensure that our operations are operating as efficiently as possible and partly to identify areas where we need to change our business models to respond to new NDIS pricing frameworks.

O'Connell has completed its review and we are in the process of implementing the recommendations.

## COMPLIANCE – THIRD-PARTY AUDIT RESULTS SHOW UNISSON'S CUSTOMER SERVICE MODEL IS WORKING

IN FEBRUARY 2018, UNISSON CONDUCTED A THIRD PARTY VERIFICATION (TPV) AUDIT.

The auditors did not identify any corrective actions and were very complimentary regarding how our services are operated. Their key findings were:

- Employees can be visibly seen looking for opportunities to connect with and identify strengths with clients
- Employees make a large effort to support people's individual needs
- Clients are heavily involved in community participation and integration
- The Art of Human Connection program is a fantastic engagement tool and well-received by employees
- Unisson's workplace culture is positive with a highly engaged workforce
- Unisson's Human Resources and WHS systems are well implemented
- Unisson is adequately prepared for the NDIS

In November 2017, Unisson's Supported Employment businesses, MailPlus and Mowmentus, were also audited by external auditors. Similar to the TPV, the auditors were very positive about the services and no corrective actions were identified.

# A PERSON CENTRED ORGANISATION

*“A person centred organisation has people at its heart – both people it serves and people it employs.”*

*- Sanderson and Lepkowsky*

**WHEN EMPLOYEES USE PERSON-CENTRED PRACTICES, PEOPLE HAVE MORE CHOICE AND CONTROL IN THEIR LIVES; EMPLOYEES ARE CLEAR ABOUT THEIR ROLE, STRESS IS REDUCED (BECAUSE OF ROLE CLARITY AND GOOD SUPPORT), WORK FEELS GOOD (EMPLOYEES CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE THEY ARE MAKING AND ENJOY USING THEIR INTERESTS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE), AND TURNOVER IS LOW.**

Consistent support from well-motivated and supported staff with a sure sense of purpose and values make it more likely that people will have choice and control in their lives.

The key elements of a person-centred organisation echo what many already know about excellent organisational practices. The difference lies in the relentless focus on what matters to the people whom the organisation supports. A person-centred organisation extends being person-centred to employees who are supported to bring their ‘whole self’ to work, to use their talents and interests to offer the best possible support to people.

Working towards a person-centred organisation, however, demands vigilance with regard to company culture. The culture in a person-centred organisation could be summed up as one of trust, empowerment and accountability. It demands that all of its leadership team have a clear vision and purpose, that its leaders motivate, inspire and ensure

that everything is aligned to deliver on this. It is clearly important that everyone shares, can articulate and, most importantly, demonstrates the person-centred values of the organisation. Everything is oriented to achieving the outcomes people who are supported want in their lives.

A person-centred organisation is also a learning organisation, continuously developing and improving; a place where learning takes place at all levels. Also critical is ensuring that person-centred practices are embedded throughout the organisation. This allows the whole organisation to share a common language and practices to deliver key elements.

Active Support is one of several person-centred approaches, and is an evidence-based practice whereby:

**Staff provide sufficient facilitative assistance to enable service users to take part in meaningful activities and relationships, irrespective of the degree of intellectual disability or presence of additional problems (Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2012).**

Frontline staff practices based on Active Support lead to better quality of life outcomes for people with intellectual disability. Active Support gives prominence to employees providing support for residents to be engaged in meaningful activity and social relationships. It is based on evidence that engagement is the way that many aspects of quality of life are realised. Personal development is only possible if people participate in activities that broaden their experiences. For instance, interpersonal relations and social inclusion depend on interacting with other people; physical health depends on lifestyle and activity.

Active Support also provides the foundation for positive behaviour support. Active Support is not something that is scheduled for set times or with particular residents; it is a way of working for staff that is applicable at all times with all residents.

Although many disability services in Australia have embraced Active Support, it has proved difficult to implement. Unisson has partnered with La Trobe University for several years to investigate how to improve and sustain the delivery of Active Support. The partnership has focussed on:

1. Identifying the organisational structures and processes associated with the successful implementation and sustained delivery of Active Support.
2. Providing annual feedback on staff practices and resident outcomes in each organisation.
3. Promoting collaboration among organisations to improve the level of Active Support provided.

The new knowledge from this study will enable organisations in the disability sector to understand and put in place the elements necessary to deliver and sustain Active Support. Thus, it will provide the type of support necessary for a good quality of life to people with intellectual disability.

From this year’s report, we are delighted to note that levels of engagement have increased. The average percentage engagement of Unisson residents was 86%, which is above the 69% reported by Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2012) as the benchmark for people with an ABS (Adaptive Behaviour Scale measure) of 163. Although there was considerable variability in resident engagement across Unisson’s services, no residents were disengaged for the whole period of observation, and no residents were engaged for less than 5% of the time. The majority of Unisson residents (93%) were engaged for more than 50% of the time.

Data was also collated on the quality of staff support which is gauged by the percentage of time during which residents are observed to receive assistance or contact from staff, and a score on the Active Support Measure (ASM). Assistance is defined as help from other people (e.g. staff, other users, visitors), which appears to be intended

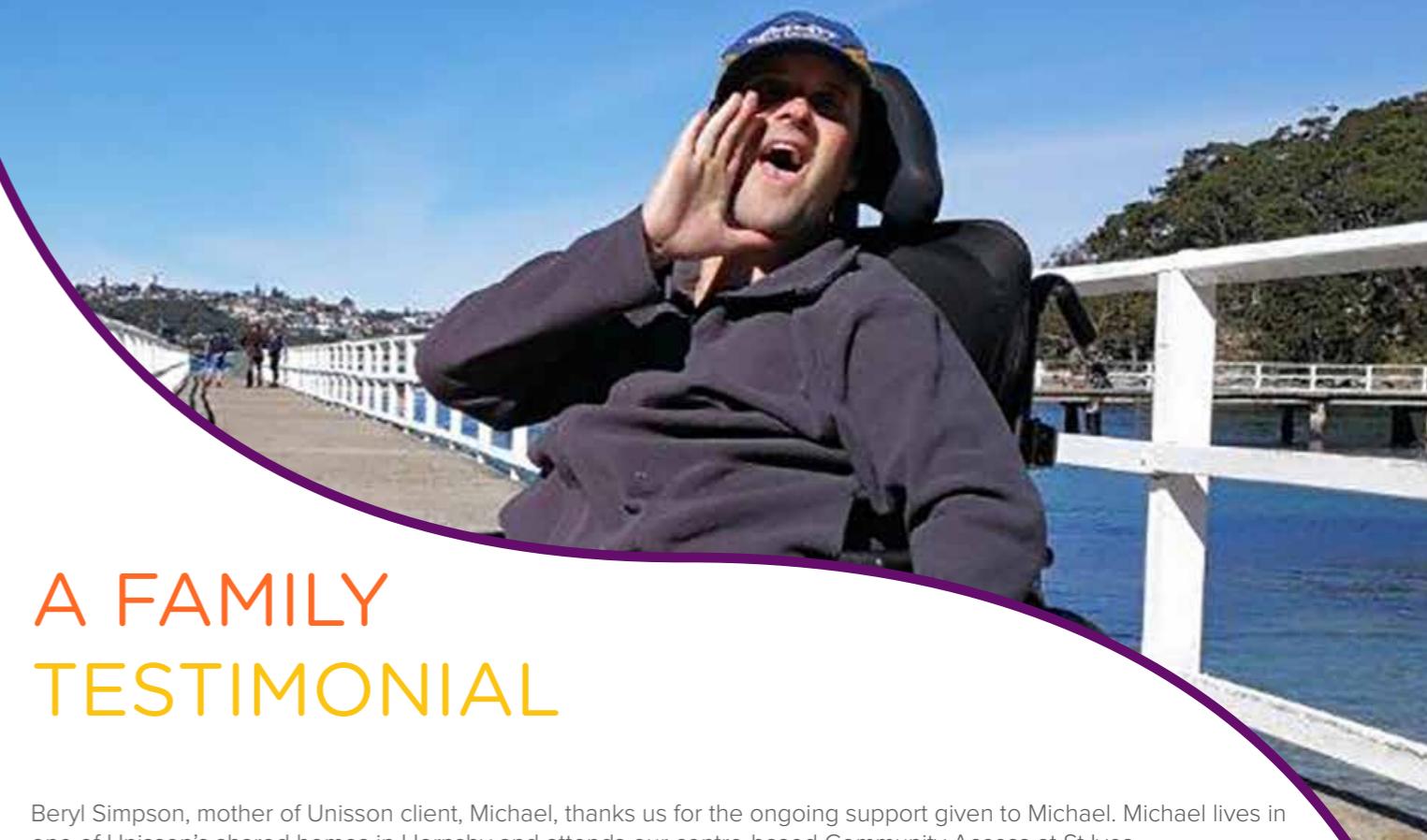
to facilitate engagement in meaningful activity and relationships. Contact is defined as any other contact from people (e.g. staff, other users, visitors) that is not assistance (e.g. pushing someone’s wheelchair, giving medication). The score on the ASM is based on the observer’s overall judgement of 15 items relating to quality of support, with a score of 66% or above indicating good Active Support.

The results showed that contact from staff (e.g. social interaction, having tasks done to them, being assisted to walk or pushed in a wheelchair) was on average higher than the previous four years (14 minutes in every hour) and higher than the whole sample. Over half the sample received contact from staff for more than 20% of the time. Assistance from staff came in at 25% of the time (on average), which is above the 14% benchmark used by Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2012). There was, however, some variability across residents.

**Unisson’s score on the ASM of 82% was higher than for the whole sample and is higher than all four previous years. No residents were receiving poor Active Support, and 88% were receiving good Active Support, which was higher than all previous years, and considerably higher than the whole sample.**

In short, the levels of engagement have increased, and there has been an improvement in the quality of support and the range of activities in which people are engaged. The focus now needs to be on supporting the maintenance over time and we have already identified the pieces of work we will be focussing on. They include staff training, staff motivation and practice leadership. But for now, we are thrilled with these results and celebrate these as outcomes for the people whom we support.

“  
Words cannot  
express our  
grateful thanks  
to Unisson, for  
your kindness  
and ongoing  
support.”



## A FAMILY TESTIMONIAL

Beryl Simpson, mother of Unisson client, Michael, thanks us for the ongoing support given to Michael. Michael lives in one of Unisson's shared homes in Hornsby and attends our centre-based Community Access at St Ives.

*Words cannot express our grateful thanks to Unisson, for your kindness and ongoing support.*

*We have been wonderfully blessed especially over the past 12 months when ill health meant our son had to move into a group house as I was not able to look after him.*

*Nothing was too much trouble for all those involved. All the "changeover" was done in a most professional way.*

*We cannot speak highly enough of Unisson, you are a wonderful organisation and we are so pleased. You can all hold your heads up high. Well done!!*

*Beryl Simpson*

# JENNINGS LODGE: A COLLABORATIVE MERGE

**IN OCTOBER 2017, UNISSON DISABILITY MERGED WITH TWO SHARED LIVING HOMES IN BAULKHAM HILLS, RUN BY A SMALL ORGANISATION CALLED JENNINGS LODGE. JENNINGS LODGE WAS FIRST FOUNDED IN THE EARLY 1980S AS PART OF THE MOVE AWAY FROM LARGE INSTITUTION-BASED CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY.**

In early 2017, an opportunity arose for Unisson to collaborate with Jennings Lodge, with the recognition that both organisations shared the same philosophy in regard to delivering individual outcomes to the people we support. Having the resources of a larger and more established organisation, Unisson was able to better deliver this outcome. Unisson had the experience and resources to support Jennings Lodge through the current challenges of the NDIS. This step has alleviated some of the pressure on families and will ensure the ongoing stability for those clients.

**The process was a successful one, with the residents, their families and Jennings Lodge staff welcomed enthusiastically into the Unisson family.**

Philip, Jennings Lodge Chairman and brother of resident, Anne, who was one of the original residents at Jennings Lodge, says his family is very pleased with how things have progressed since merging with Unisson, and views the transition as a positive step for his sister.

He says, "As family members previously shouldering the ever-increasing complexities and regulatory responsibilities required to run an independent organisation providing care for people with disabilities, we have appreciated being able to hand these over to the trained people at Unisson."

For Philip, the transition from a family-run structure

occurred in a gradual and professional manner, minimising any disruption to Anne and her other housemates, who have mostly been together since the 1980s or 90s. Many of the Jennings Lodge staff took up the opportunity to transfer to Unisson, giving continuity for residents and employees.

The person-centred approach at Unisson has been a key change for Anne, and something which Philip has recognised as giving her more choice and control in her life.

**"Since the transition to Unisson in October 2017, the most positive development that we've seen with Anne is the way person-centred care actually happens in practice with Unisson day-by-day, facilitated by the improved support now available through the NDIS. This has given Anne increased opportunities to make decisions about more aspects of her life, such as being able to set aside one day per week to pursue individual activities and tasks. Anne has enjoyed being able to participate in more of the little things that we tend to take for granted, such as using her own card to pay for her shopping or when having coffee at a cafe. As family members, we really appreciate the way Unisson staff try to accommodate Anne's preferences wherever possible."**

- Philip Nicholson

Jennings Lodge employee, Direct Support Professional Parastoo (Paras), who works closely with Anne, has had a positive experience during the transition to Unisson, and has enjoyed collaborating with her new Team Leader and colleagues. Since joining Unisson, Paras has had the opportunity to receive additional training and learn more about person-centred care.

Paras acknowledges the positive differences for her clients since transitioning to Unisson. Anne and the



other residents are free to make their own choices; from selecting what they wear, to deciding what they want to cook, to choosing their preferred activity. "With the right training for carers, clients are able to live a normal life," says Paras.

Undoubtedly, Paras' favourite things about working as a support worker are the clients and the connections she's been able to foster. Paras says, "I have built relationships with all the clients and I feel like they are my extended family. My family are overseas, so the house I look after is like my second home. I understand them, I know them all and we have built great connections."

Paras enjoys getting to know the people she works with, listening to their stories and being able to support their needs.

**"I love making a positive difference in someone's everyday life and it brings me happiness in my life."**



The majority of employees are happy with the way their employment was transitioned and feel well-supported by Unisson's leadership team.

**100%** of employees have had no issues or concerns for themselves or their clients since support commenced with Unisson.



Parastoo Zomorrod, Anne Nicholson, Blessing John and Catherine Ashburn



## INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

IN DECEMBER 2017, NDIS CONSULTANTS, DISABILITY SERVICES CONSULTING (DSC), AWARDED UNISSON DISABILITY WITH THEIR 2017 SECTOR AWARD FOR 'SENSATIONAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT'.

The Award was presented for our exceptional staff engagement and unique customer service program, the Art of Human Connection. The program was described by DSC as a standout program for staff engagement that is an exemplary model for the sector.

As the name suggests, the Art of Human Connection program focuses on building strong and long-lasting connections between our frontline staff, clients and their families. At Unisson, we believe human connection is the key to delivering the highest possible standard of customer service to the people we support. Our service model is based on key principles that guide our employees and give them the tools to build experiences with clients that have a substantial impact.

Unisson Marketing and Communications Manager, Katrina Jackson, says, "The successful rollout of the Art of Human Connection program could not have been possible without the enthusiasm and commitment from all of our leaders and direct support staff. We are incredibly proud of this program. To be recognised with this award is reassurance that our approach is giving us a clear differentiator from other providers and contributing to the positive impact we strive for with clients and families."

**As of June 2018, over 570 employees have completed the Art of Human Connection training with overwhelmingly positive feedback on the effect the program has had on individuals.**

**"THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE IS WHAT WE DO; THE CONNECTION WE CREATE IS HOW WE DO IT."**



Scott Buchanan and Tim Strachan

## A CAREER WITH UNISSON

### A PROFOUND CONNECTION - SCOTT'S UNISSON STORY

FOR MOST PEOPLE TODAY, A CAREER WITHOUT MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS AND GENUINE HUMAN CONNECTIONS CAN LEAVE YOU WANTING MORE FROM YOUR DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE AT WORK. THAT IS EXACTLY HOW SCOTT BUCHANAN FELT WHEN HE DECIDED TO TAKE ACTION AND MAKE A CAREER CHANGE.

Having worked in a variety of other roles that never felt quite right, Scott was speaking with a close friend who recommended he apply for a role as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) with Unisson. Scott took the plunge, applied for the role, and secured a position that would profoundly affect him in the most positive way.

"I always loved working with people and supporting them to reach their full potential, and this seemed to match up perfectly with what Unisson could offer me within a career as a support worker," says Scott.

"I really value connecting with different people and building genuine relationships with others on a day-to-day basis," says Scott. "That's the best thing about what I do each day as a DSP. I've been able to develop deep bonds with both clients and staff."

Scott's passion for his work shines through in the strong relationships he has formed, one of which is his inspirational connection with Unisson client, Tim.

"Tim was one of the clients I was employed to support on a one-to-one basis, and he's simply one of the most incredible people I've ever met. He's a real character with

an amazing heart. We bond over our love of music and singing old school rock songs together. I've also been able to encourage Tim to be more active and try new activities like swimming," says Scott, who attributes their strong bond to their shared interests.

While Scott acknowledges he provides important support to Tim, he also asserts that by no means is the relationship one-sided, "Each day I spend with Tim, I learn something new and he brings me so much joy. It's most definitely a two-way street."

Scott also highlights the rewarding nature of his role when he reflects on the development he has seen in Tim over the time they have spent together.

"Tim's language and communication skills have really developed during our time together, and it's heart-warming to know that Tim feels truly comfortable with me, and that together we can progress his skills across a range of areas."

As Scott continues in his role as a Direct Support Professional with Unisson, he's looking forward to forming more authentic connections with the people he supports. "I only wish I knew about this career path sooner, I can't imagine myself working anywhere else."

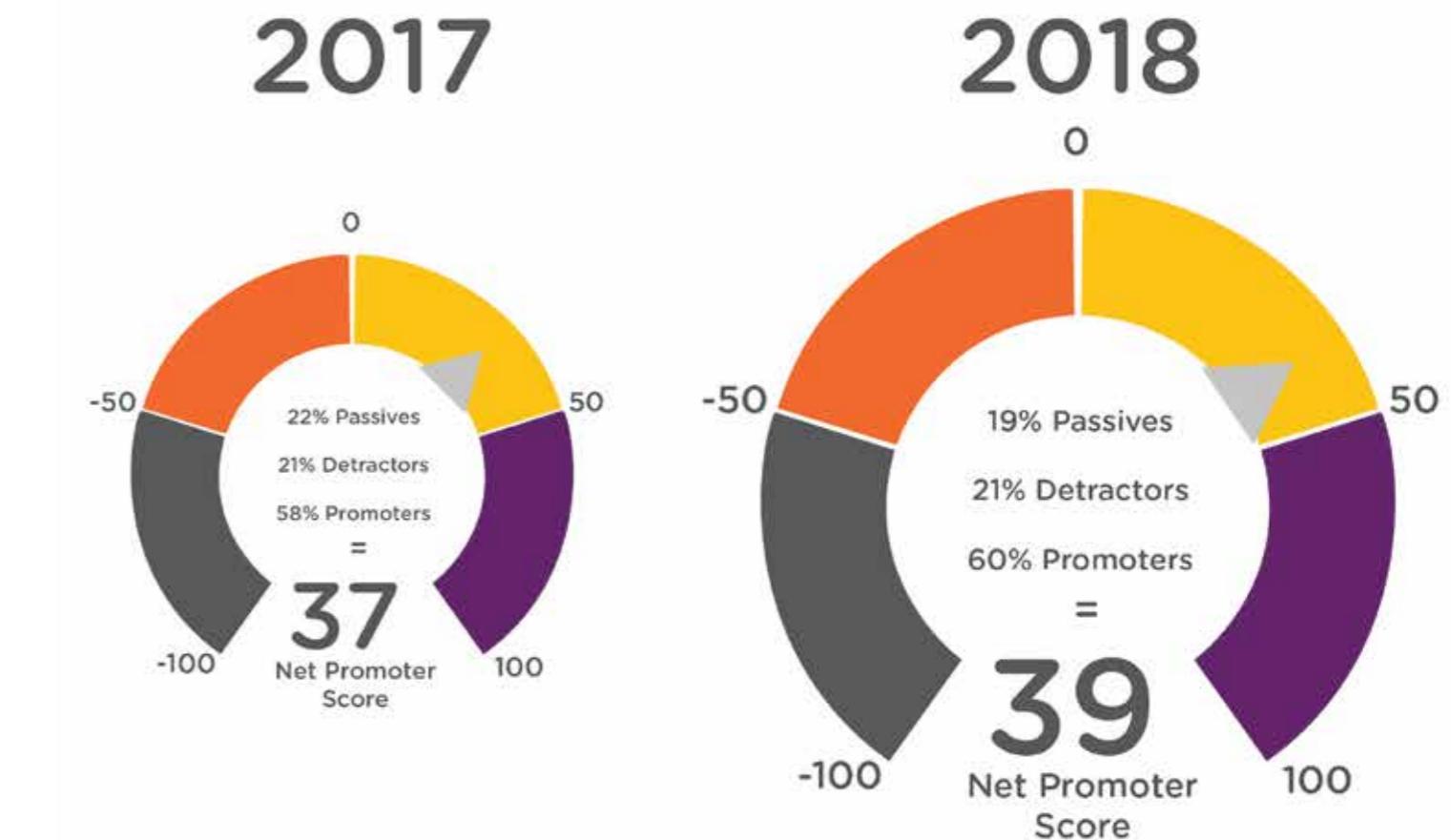
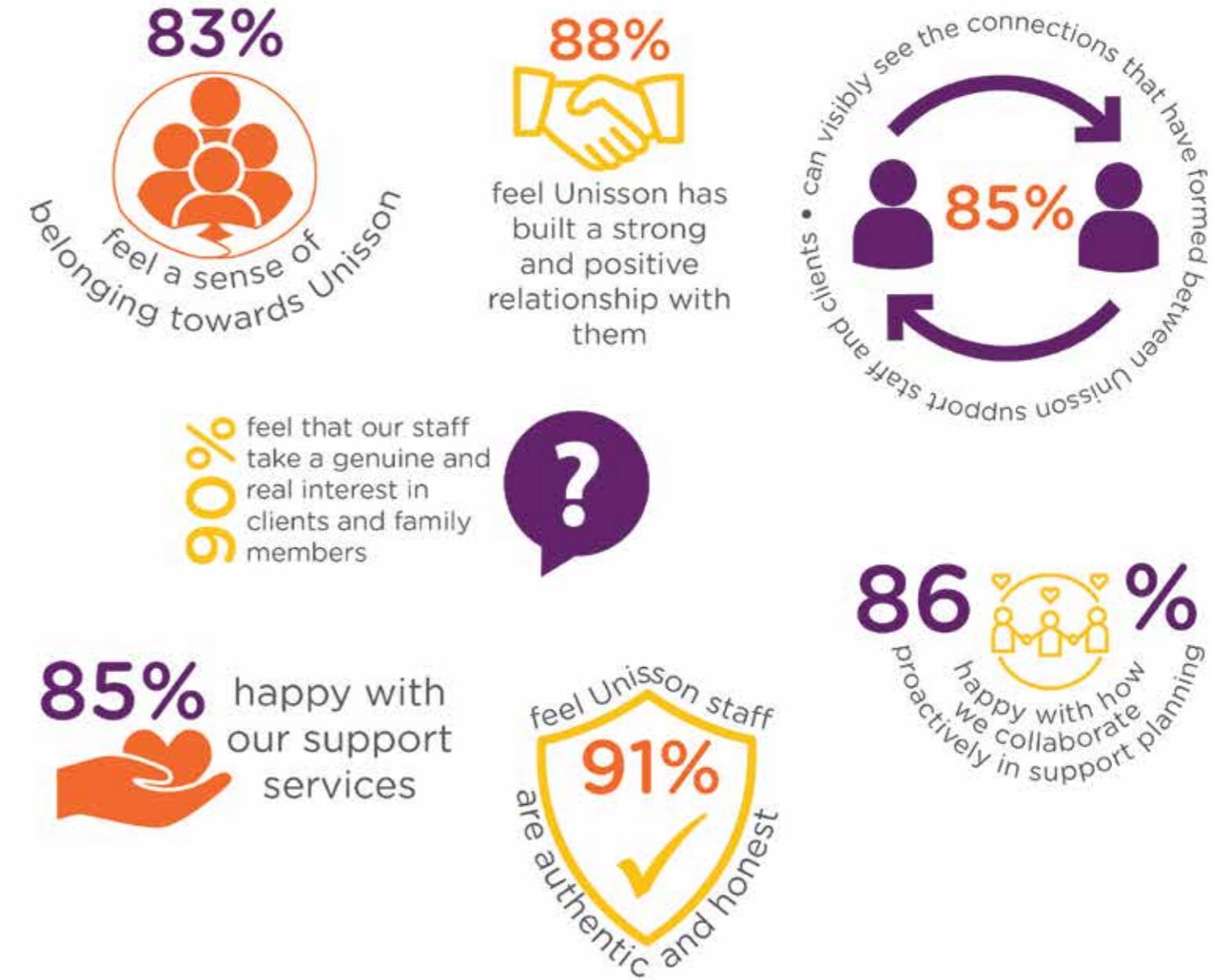
**“I can’t imagine myself working anywhere else”**

# MEASURING CLIENT SATISFACTION

THE PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR, WE LAUNCHED AN ANNUAL SATISFACTION SURVEY TO BENCHMARK THE SUCCESS OF OUR NEWLY LAUNCHED CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INTERNAL TRAINING PROGRAM, THE ART OF HUMAN CONNECTION.

The survey is designed to ask questions that relate specifically to the tools provided in our training model. This form of measurement will assist us in evolving and improving the Art of Human Connection model each year.

We want to thank all of our families for taking the time to provide such valuable feedback, with 30% of families and clients completing the survey. We understand how important collaboration and transparency is, and so are sharing some of our survey results here.



# WORLD FIRST RESOURCE: TALKING END OF LIFE

**UNISSON DISABILITY HAS ALWAYS LED THE WAY IN ADVOCATING FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY. PART OF THAT ROLE IS TO PARTNER WITH ORGANISATIONS DOING IMPORTANT RESEARCH INTO ISSUES RELATING TO OUR SECTOR.**

We're proud to have launched in May 2018 a world-first online resource to support people with intellectual disability understand end-of-life (EOL).

Researchers from the University of Sydney, Western Sydney University, HammondCare and Flinders University, in partnership with Unisson Disability and CareSearch embarked on a landmark project to ensure Australians with intellectual disability understand the concept of death and their own mortality, and are appropriately supported to comprehend and cope with EOL issues.

**The Talking End of Life (TEL) project has been developed as a research-based online toolkit to support staff and carers to deliver EOL information to adults with intellectual disability, and discuss EOL planning in everyday contexts.**

TEL reflects 10 years of Australian research on EOL and people with intellectual disability, with research demonstrating that, currently, many people with intellectual disability encounter death without understanding what is happening, both when loved ones die or when they themselves approach death.

General Manager for Client Services at Unisson, Gail Jeltes, says, "People with intellectual disability already make important decisions about employment, relationships and living arrangements. So, with assistance, they can be supported to understand and plan for death and dying." The free toolkit can be accessed at:

[www.caresearch.com.au/TEL](http://www.caresearch.com.au/TEL)

The Dying to Talk partnership with Sydney University, Keele University in the UK, and others, began in 2013 and concluded in 2017. The research objectives were to:

- Determine EOL understanding by both adults with intellectual disability and disability staff
- Use these findings and our knowledge of clinical best practice to design a training toolkit for disability staff to assist adults with intellectual disability to better understand EOL
- Trial the toolkit over a six-month period in which trained staff will deliver individual intervention to clients through discussion of death and EOL planning in everyday contexts.

The final objective was to evaluate the impact of using the toolkit on both staff and adults with intellectual disability with respect to (a) understanding EOL, (b) knowledge of planning for EOL, (c) documented EOL plans (adults with ID only), (d) emotional distress, and (e) fear of dying and death.

The project had the following major outcomes:

- Objective evidence that many, but not all adults with intellectual disability have difficulty fully understanding (a) the concept of death, and (b) EOL planning.
- Development, implementation and psychometric evaluation of important EOL instruments suitable for use with adults with intellectual disability to assess (a) knowledge of and self-determination about EOL planning, and (b) fear of death.
- Demonstrated the feasibility and acceptability of using these instruments with adults with intellectual disability.
- Several lines of evidence showing that adults with intellectual disability are willing and able to engage in discussion and planning for EOL without undue discomfort. Moreover, and contrary to common concern, we found clear empirical evidence showing no negative consequences for (a) fear of death, (b) anxiety, or (c) depression, even after six months of

discussions about dying and death.

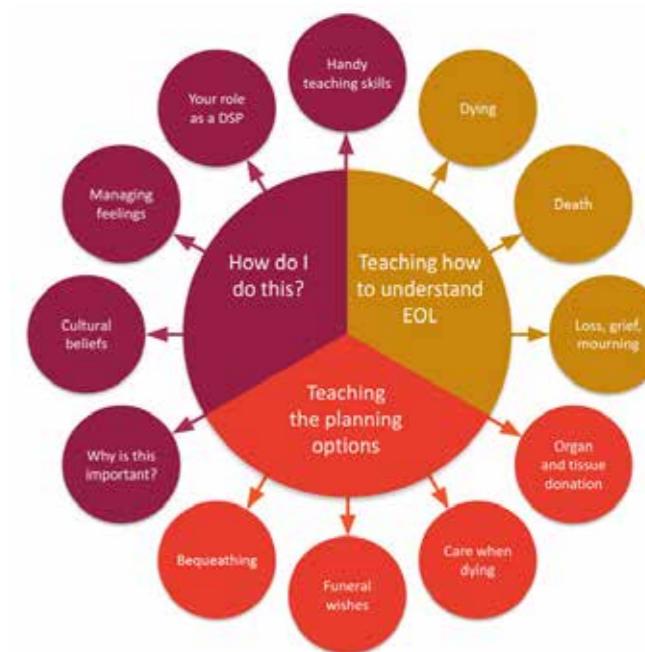
- Development and delivery of excellent staff training materials on EOL, including the award-winning Dying to Talk video.
- For individual participants, a number discussed, developed and documented their bequeathing preferences and funeral wishes.

The staff training materials on EOL, and the Dying to Talk video, are being used as the basis for a new project and a new partnership. Using funding from the Commonwealth Department of Health, the research team is partnering with A/Prof Jennifer Tieman (Flinders University CareSearch Director) and staff from CareSearch to adapt the staff training toolkit from the project for widespread dissemination online.

*This activity was supported by the following grant:  
Stancliffe, R. J., Wiese, M. Y., Clayton, J., Jeltes, G., & Tieman, J. (2017). Online toolkit for carers and practitioners helping people with intellectual disability understand dying and death. Department of Health, Public Health and Chronic Disease Grant Program.*

**The TEL project is the result of the adaptation of Dying to Talk and offers a world-first, freely available, and sustainable online resource.**

TEL contains 12 modules organised into three topic groups as depicted in the figure on the right. Each module contains a variety of types of content (video, case studies, etc.).



## WORLD FIRST RESOURCE: TALKING END OF LIFE

An online launch of TEL commenced on Friday 18 May in the lead up to National Palliative Care Week (20 to 26 May 2018). Since launch date, the dissemination of TEL has continued strategically with systematic dissemination planned for the remainder of 2018 and into 2019.

In summary, the following dissemination activities have been completed to date.

- Communication kit disseminated through 11 agencies nationwide who distributed the kit through their own media networks
- One promotional video <https://vimeo.com/263270357>
- Estimated 300 personal emails by our own team members' networks
- Two media interviews
- One webinar
- Two presentations
- Flyers disseminated in satchels at one conference
- Listed on three websites
- Advertised in five electronic Australian newsletters
- Advertised in two electronic international newsletters and one international Facebook page
- Symposium chaired by Gail Jeltes at Western Sydney University.

There are a host of other dissemination activities planned for the remainder of 2018 into 2019.

The research also highlighted the basic gaps in research about EOL and people with intellectual disability. For example, there is no available research data showing where people with intellectual disability die, e.g. hospital/health facility, home. To address this gap, the project researchers have initiated a new project collaborating with researchers from Western Sydney University (Dr Nathan Wilson) and from the Centre for Disability Studies (Dr Seeta Durvasula). The new project involves analysis of five years of data from the NSW Family & Community Services Client Death Notification Database, which includes data on all

deaths of people with intellectual disability in care during that period. This new project is supported by funding from the NSW Family & Community Services and Western Sydney University.

*Details of the research grant are as follows.*

*Wiese, M., Stancliffe, R.J., Durvasula, S., & Wilson, N. (2017). Analysis of NSW Family & Community Services Client Death Notification (CDN) Database. NSW Family & Community Services and Western Sydney University.*

The project further highlighted potential challenges for the disability sector when engaging with health-based palliative care services. The project researchers are currently conducting a study with specialist multidisciplinary palliative care teams, exploring the challenges when caring for people with intellectual disability who are dying under the auspice of disability sector community-living services. This project was made possible by the Western Sydney University Women's Fellowship Award and engages researchers from Western Sydney University (Dr Michele Wiese, Dr Nathan Wilson, and Professor Tanya Meade) and the University of Sydney (Professor Roger Stancliffe and Associate Professor Josephine Clayton).

We are incredibly proud to have been a key participant in this important piece of work.

## TRAINING RESOURCE: EPILEPSY & DISABILITY

**UNISSON CONTINUES TO PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES THAT WILL IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT.**

Partnerships are such an important form of collaboration, giving us the opportunity to combine our strengths to achieve a common purpose.

In August 2017, Unisson was contacted by Stephanie Kain from Epilepsy Action Australia. She wanted to share with us the work they had planned around the development of an e-learning training resource for supporting people with an intellectual disability with epilepsy.

Epilepsy Action Australia recognised that supporting people with an intellectual disability who also experience epilepsy can have some additional complexities, and saw the importance of developing a series of online training resources. Unisson staff completed a survey that contributed to the content of the training resource, and over time have provided feedback that has been able to contribute to the ongoing development of this resource.

Epilepsy in Action has now launched its new initiative 'Living with Epilepsy and Disability Training Course' with the first event held on 2 August 2018.

# ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

EACH YEAR, WE SHOWCASE INCREDIBLE WORKS FROM THE TALENTED ARTISTS WHO ATTEND UNISSON'S ART STUDIO.

In April 2018, we celebrated the Of Land, Sea & Sky exhibition at Grace Cossington Smith Gallery in partnership with Abbotsleigh School. The official opening was a celebration of diversity and creativity, and had the support of the local community and council dignitaries who attended on the evening.

The exhibition showcased artworks in paint, paper and ceramics which were inspired by the natural environment and reflect the diversity of creative expression, with each artist portraying a unique interpretation of their subject.

Just under 40% of the beautiful artworks were sold on opening night, with sales continuing for the remainder of the exhibition. Congratulations to the talented artists as well as everyone involved in ensuring Unisson's Art Studio provides a rich, nurturing and supportive environment for individuals with disability to express their creativity.



Frances Scott and her water colour painting **Busy Spring**

# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF REBECCA

**ON 22 MAY 2018, UNISSON ACKNOWLEDGED A SPECIAL MILESTONE FOR OUR INCREDIBLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, REBECCA FLETCHER. REBECCA CELEBRATED AN IMPRESSIVE 30 YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT WITH UNISSON DISABILITY.**

Rebecca's Unisson story began in January 1982, when she responded to an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald for the position of Accounts Clerk at Sunshine. The Financial Controller wanted Rebecca to start immediately, however, Rebecca was flying to the Philippines to get married and couldn't commence work for another six weeks. Unfortunately, it was not going to work, and so she had to decline the role. A couple of months later, in early March, she noticed the position advertised again. Rebecca called up, went in for an interview the following day, was told to "stay", and so her Unisson story began.

Three years on, Rebecca left Unisson (then Sunshine) to work at the Sydney Adventist Hospital (The SAN) as she wanted to learn more about computers and work with a computerised system. After a stint at the hospital in Payroll,

she was asked if she would be interested in surgical assessments. So, with clipboard in hand, she went into the operating theatre with open-heart surgery as her first assessment.

During her time at the hospital, Rebecca worked casually as a Direct Support Professional in the then Morgan House, supporting frail aged clients. Her goal was to raise funds for an autoclave for a clinic in India. After a few years at The SAN, she started getting calls from her former employer, the CFO at Unisson. She probably received some three or four calls before she relented and accepted the position of Accountant. It was 1988 and her trajectory was set. A few months later she was promoted to Manager of Accounts & Human Resources.

A decade on, in March 2005, Rebecca became the CEO, taking the helm as Unisson closed its institution and moved completely into the community. Throughout her time as CEO, she has transformed Unisson from a small campus-focused organisation based in Gore Hill into who we are today; a leading NDIS service provider with operations and services throughout Sydney, the Central Coast and Hunter region. From a turnover of just on \$9M, Rebecca has led

the organisation's growth grow to an annual turnover of just under \$47M, with net assets in excess of \$48M.

In June 2018, Rebecca announced her retirement from Unisson. We cannot conclude this article without congratulating Rebecca on her years of service and saying thank you for her amazing contribution to the culture that drives this organisation. Rebecca has made an outstanding contribution to Unisson spanning three decades and we are extremely grateful.

Her Unisson story isn't over yet. Rebecca will become a non-executive director of both the organisation and the Lorna Hodgkinson Foundation. She will continue to assist the Board with development opportunities and projects, and will become a Brand Ambassador for Unisson Disability.



## A DAY VOLUNTEERING AT UNISSON

A GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM BRIGIDINE COLLEGE ST IVES SPENT A MEMORABLE DAY WITH UNISSON CLIENTS WHO ATTEND OUR CENTRE-BASED COMMUNITY ACCESS IN ST IVES.

Brigidine College History Teacher and Year 11 Coordinator, Nyree Lovett welcomed the opportunity for her students to volunteer with Unisson. As part of the Year 11 Pastoral and Spirituality Program at Brigidine College, all students participate in a volunteer placement. The focus of the placement, which forms part of a Retreat, is about reaching out to others who are less fortunate in their community.

Nyree says, "The Retreat is an integral part of the College's Religious Formation and Pastoral Program and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the personal and spiritual growth of each student."

The students found their experience at Unisson incredibly rewarding, writing to us afterwards to say that everyone they met during their placement touched them on a personal level. Year 11 student, Jasmin, was grateful for the opportunity she was given to spend the day with people with disability, something which she wouldn't normally get to do. Jasmin tells us about her experience at Unisson.

Community Services Team Leader at Unisson, Hanna Krawczyk, encourages student placements, explaining the benefits of forming a connection with someone with a disability.

"Spending a day at Unisson opens opportunities for young people in our local communities to understand the benefits of supporting a person with a disability. People with disability live rewarding lives when encouraged and supported appropriately and, from this, you are able to form beautiful friendships which have a huge impact on clients and those that support them."

"We were greeted in the morning by friendly, smiling staff and equally happy members of Unisson. We were briefed and then told we were there purely in the essence of helping out and making a difference, bringing joy and a smile. I think I almost smiled more from the experience than they did! I'll always remember dancing and singing with everyone and the happiness it brought us all. Reading stories together, and simply just getting to know everyone, made it a truly rewarding day. Although at times you are out of your normal 'comfort zone' it pushes you and makes the time at Unisson a very valuable and educational experience. I would recommend this opportunity to anyone and after my one day I felt I had made some beautiful connections. I got so much out of the experience and would like to thank Unisson for the opportunity and all the amazing work you do."

**“ Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to experience the immense love and dedication that is in your welcoming community. ”**

- Jas, Bianca, Kat and Nadia - Year 11, Brigidine College St Ives



Henry Kelaita at Erina Men's Shed and top right Daniel Warman and Henry



## MY UNISSON STORY: HENRY

### BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

AS A CAPABLE AND CREATIVE MAN, HENRY KELAITA FOUND HIMSELF FEELING ISOLATED AND LIMITED IN TERMS OF HIS INDEPENDENCE WHILST LIVING WITHIN A NURSING HOME, SHARING A ROOM WITH FIVE OTHER INDIVIDUALS.

However, with the support of Unisson, Henry has been able to transition into a home that feels truly his through Unisson's Shared Living Accommodation. Henry now lives with a flatmate in a two-bedroom unit on the Central Coast and, as a result, his independence and ties to the local community have flourished.

While living at the nursing home, Henry was not accessing the community and felt very limited in his opportunities for choice and control over his own life. One of Henry's key Unisson support workers, Toni, began working with Henry and assisted him to access the community and rebuild his independence.

"Living in his new home has given him the opportunity to get out and participate in his local community so much more than when he was in the nursing home. Henry especially loves being involved with the Erina Men's Shed," says Toni. "He gets to socialise with everyone there, form bonds with the other men, and he's found a real passion for hand-crafting pens and other woodwork on the machinery."

The secretary of the Erina Men's Shed, Bob, says that having Henry involved in their local community and participating in woodwork each week is a win-win for everyone involved. "We love having Henry with us at Erina Men's Shed," says Bob. "Seeing Henry slowly but surely open up to the other men and feel comfortable has been a

real privilege, and all the guys love having him around."

The change that Toni has seen in Henry throughout his transition has been immense. "I've definitely seen a significant change in Henry and his demeanour since we started working together and accessing the community," she says. "Henry is now more free and independent to do what he wants, and to be the person he wants to be. He now does his own grocery shopping, participates in cooking his own food, and he is thriving living with a housemate."

For Henry, he could not be happier when it comes to his new living arrangement, "It's very good. I like having my own room and the freedom to choose what I want to do or what I want to eat," he says. "I have gotten used to everyone here and it really feels like my new home. It is good living with my housemate, Jim. He even lets me play games on his computer when he isn't using it."

However, the connections Henry has made in his local community and, in particular, at the Erina Men's Shed are the real highlight for Henry. "I really love going to the Men's Shed. I like making pens and I enjoy being creative and using my hands to make things," he says.

With his independence and creativity now in full force, Henry looks forward to continuing to live in his unit and accessing his local community for many more years to come.

**“ I enjoy being creative and using my hands to make things ”**



Babak Bolourchi and Steven Turner

## MY UNISSON STORY: STEVEN

### A WELLNESS APPROACH

WHEN IT COMES TO CHANGING UNHEALTHY HABITS AND TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND FOR THE BETTER, IT HELPS IMMENSELY TO HAVE A STEADY AND DEDICATED CIRCLE OF SUPPORT TO ASSIST YOU ALONG YOUR JOURNEY.

When Unisson client, Steven Turner, 30, from Western Sydney knew that his lifestyle had to change, he was met with the encouragement and dedication of his Unisson support team, made up of the staff and Team Leaders who support Steven where he attends Unisson's Community Access centre in Beaumont Hills.

For Steven, years of an unhealthy lifestyle and a severe dependency on soft drink had left him feeling unmotivated and withdrawn when it came to actively participating in his community and following a healthy routine. Steven was struggling to engage with his peers and support staff, and he knew that he needed to lose weight in order to improve his overall health and well-being.

Unisson staff worked with Steven, his family, and the people with whom he shares a house to develop a personalised program to help him be more active, adopt healthy behaviours and actively engage in his local community.

Steven, along with his key Unisson support worker, Babak, began to undertake a healthy exercise routine, worked towards decreasing his dependence on soft drinks and built up his desire to actively participate in his local community.

The results spoke for themselves, with Steven losing an impressive 25kgs, all while gaining a passion for sport and

the outdoors and finding new connections within his local community.

"I love doing exercise with Babak and other staff and being out in the sunshine," says Steven. "I love going for long walks, using the gym equipment at nice parks and going ten pin bowling in Windsor with my friends. The staff and my friends have been very patient with me and put in a lot of time and effort to improve my health. I like routine and doing exercise and being healthy became a big part of my routine."

The change in Steven has been far greater than just physical. "Steven is now someone that everyone else wants to be around," says Babak. "He is so much more positive, and his motivation is significantly higher, it has been so rewarding to have been a part of that."

In what has been a truly collaborative effort between Unisson, Steven, his family, and other support services, the future is looking bright for Steven as he continues his healthy lifestyle.

"I am really proud of improving my health," says Steven. "I feel healthier and going out doing healthy things with Babak and the other staff is a nice way to spend my day."

**“ I am really proud of improving my health ”**



Caroline Tyler and Melinda Connolly

## MY UNISSON STORY: MELINDA

### GIVING BACK IN STYLE

UNISSON CLIENT, MELINDA CONNOLLY, HAS ALWAYS BEEN A THOUGHTFUL AND KIND INDIVIDUAL WITH A BIG HEART. SO, WHEN SHE WAS LOOKING FOR A CHARITABLE ORGANISATION TO DONATE HER TIME TO, IT WAS NO SURPRISE TO HEAR SHE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED WHERE SHE COULD BEST ASSIST.

Melinda lives in one of Unisson's shared living houses in Hornsby, and loves accessing her local community, being social and spending time with her Direct Support Professional (DSP), Caroline. Together, they have been exploring some of Melinda's passions and finding ways to weave these into her daily life.

The duo has formed an inspiring connection and always look forward to their time together. "I met Melinda over a year ago and from the time we first met, it felt like we had been friends for years! We are similar in age and enjoy a lot of the same hobbies," says Caroline.

"Our relationship is very easygoing and we always have lots to talk about. Melinda and I spend a lot of time laughing, there's never a dull moment."

Throughout their time together, focusing on accessing the community and achieving Melinda's goals has been a priority. "One of Melinda's goals was to volunteer some of her free time to a worthy charity," says Caroline, "and volunteering at the op shop seemed like a perfect fit because it combines Melinda's love of fashion, books and meeting new people."

Caroline has seen Melinda flourish during their time together, and credits this to her regular participation in

the local community and her time spent volunteering at the op shop. "Volunteering has really given Melinda a confidence boost and a great sense of purpose. She takes her role very seriously and gives one hundred percent of her effort each time she goes to volunteer."

Melinda's passion for her role and about giving back shines through. "I love greeting customers and always meeting new people," she says. "I love helping the other volunteers, sorting items and working on visual displays."

As well as volunteering her time at the op shop, Melinda also enjoys looking around the store for books and clothing items to purchase for herself; just another way she gives back to the charity.

"It's great being part of the community," says Melinda. "I like to say hello to all the people I know when I see them."

With their shared love of fashion, Melinda and Caroline continue to spend time together volunteering; showing that giving back is always in style.

**“ It’s great  
being part  
of the  
community ”**



Philip Reilly and Shane Doowage

## MY UNISSON STORY: SHANE

### FOSTERING THE SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

HAVING FULFILLING AND MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH AN IMMENSE SENSE OF OPTIMISM, AS WELL AS STRENGTHEN YOUR TIES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN WHICH YOU WORK. UNISSON CLIENT, SHANE DOOWAGE, IS A DEDICATED EMPLOYEE AT UNISSON'S SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT BUSINESS MAILPLUS, AND IS BUILDING THE SKILLS FOR SUCCESS EACH DAY.

Shane feels a great sense of pride when he gets ready for work each morning at his family home in Pennant Hills, with his father, Daya, expressing how much the job means to Shane. "MailPlus is much more than just a job to Shane, he looks forward to going there every day. There have even been instances on public holidays where we have had to take Shane to work just to show him it was closed," says Daya. "That's how much he enjoys his time at work and wants to be there."

Daya adds, "We've seen Shane mature over his time working at MailPlus. He has developed into a reliable adult with the responsibility of doing his job and, as his parents, we love seeing his social skills and communication progress, too."

As well as building up his skills and experience at work, Shane's employment has meant his independence and community connections have grown, with Shane now using public transport to get to work, and independently going to the local café for his coffee break.



"Shane is a very willing worker, who is keenly interested in building his independence," says Tom Hobbs, MailPlus Coordinator at Unisson. "His participation in the local community has grown, alongside his skillset within the workplace."

Shane's passion for his job is clear to anyone who meets him, with Shane often telling others proudly about his job and what he loves about it. "I love finishing my daily tasks and going to the coffee shop and having a coffee with my friends," he says. "I like being independent."

The Doowage family are incredibly proud of Shane and how far he has come since finding meaningful employment at MailPlus. Their gratitude towards the people who support Shane is heart-warming.

"They are a bunch of very caring staff, they consistently go out of their way to assist and support Shane in his job, with his communication, and his independence," says Daya. "This job means the world to Shane and, for our family, we love seeing him so happy."

With the support of his colleagues, supervisors and family, Shane is continuing to foster the skills for success each day, both within the workplace and his local community.

**“This job means the world to Shane”**



Darrin Pryor and Jake Gudgad from Chefs That Care

## MY UNISSON STORY: DARRIN

### SPECIALIST SUPPORTS SEE DARRIN FLOURISH

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR NDIS PLAN CAN BE A COMPLICATED AND CONFUSING TASK TO TACKLE ON YOUR OWN. HOWEVER, THROUGH UNISSON'S SUPPORT COORDINATION SERVICE, DARRIN PRYOR FROM HORNSBY, IS CONNECTING WITH NEW SUPPORT SERVICES AND SEEING POSITIVE OUTCOMES.

For Unisson client, Darrin, connecting with his Support Coordinator, Ros, has meant a whole array of new opportunities have become available. Using her in-depth understanding of NDIS funding and extensive industry contacts, Ros is dedicated to assisting Darrin to find the right providers and services to best support him.

For Darrin, a key goal was increasing his independent living skills, particularly developing his skillset, knowledge and confidence in the kitchen. With the help of Ros, Darrin connected with the Chefs That Care program, and he is seeing great results.

"It's really rewarding being able to collaborate with various service providers, in order to find the best possible programs, services and supports for Darrin," says Ros. "When I found the Chefs That Care program, I knew it would be a great fit for Darrin, and help him to reach his goals and increase his independence."

Chefs That Care is a specialist NDIS service provider running adapted in-home cooking classes for people with disability. Chefs That Care founder, Jake, is a former professional chef and has been visiting Darrin in his home for their one-on-one cooking classes each fortnight.



"Darrin is such a friendly and capable man," says Jake. "We've been working on the importance of healthy foods, learning achievable recipes, learning how to safely use sharp knives, graters and other cooking tools and utensils. We also focus on how to safely operate a hot stove and oven, as well as increasing Darrin's knowledge of food safety."

The collaborative partnership has seen Darrin's skillset and confidence improve within only a few short weeks, and Darrin's love for the kitchen is ever apparent. "I love cooking with Jake," says Darrin. "I like being able to make my favourite foods and also learn new recipes."

As Darrin continues to work with Jake and Chefs That Care to increase his independent living skills, he's also excited about looking for employment. "I really want to get a job," says Darrin. "I think I might like to try working at a café because I'm good in the kitchen."

"I've seen Darrin really improve his skills, independence and confidence in the kitchen over our time together, and it's only the beginning," says Jake. "I think he'd be a real asset to any workplace. I'm looking forward to seeing where this takes him."

Ros continues to look for opportunities to collaborate with specialist providers and is working behind the scenes to assist Darrin with his next goal of finding meaningful employment. "It's a great feeling to know that I'm making a difference by connecting Darrin with the right people," says Ros. "Working together to achieve great outcomes is what it's all about."

**“I love cooking with Jake ,”**



Emily De Sousa and Frances Scott

## MY UNISSON STORY: FRANCES

### EMPOWERING FRAN'S CHOICE AND CONTROL

**UNISSON CLIENT, FRANCES SCOTT, 49, FROM EASTWOOD IS A FIERCELY INDEPENDENT INDIVIDUAL WITH A PASSION FOR HER WORK, HER FRIENDS AND HER SOCIAL LIFE. SO, WHEN IT COMES TO FINDING SOMEONE TO SUPPORT HER WITH DAILY LIFE, IT'S IMPORTANT TO FRAN TO FIND THE RIGHT SUPPORT WORKER.**

Empowering an individual's choice and control is something for which Unisson stands steadfast. By assisting Unisson clients to interview and hire their own support worker, it allows people like Fran to be in the driver's seat when it comes to their own day-to-day support.

"It's so important to us to work collaboratively with our clients, and through their involvement in interviewing and hiring a support worker, we are able to provide them with choice and control over who is involved in their lives," says Kate Bryant, Fran's Team Leader at Unisson.

So, when Fran needed to arrange a new support worker to assist her with her day-to-day activities, Kate arranged for Fran to attend all interviews and to share her opinions on who she felt she connected with best.

Fran thoroughly enjoys reading, creating art and going out and participating in her local community; all common interests which she wanted to share with any prospective support worker.

For Fran, being involved in the hiring process of her support worker has meant that she has found people who offer her more than just support. They are people who also share common interests and connections.

"I picked Lucy because she treats me nice, she reads books and I feel good about her. She helps me with budgeting, helps me with my lunch and takes me in the car," says Fran.

The experience has been rewarding for everyone involved, with Kate expressing how well the genuine bond between Fran and Lucy has been developing. "They connect on so many levels because of their shared interests and, without involving Fran in the recruitment process, we may not have known how well suited they were to one another."

Fran also says she enjoys choosing her own support people and appreciates the fact that Unisson staff treat her with respect and support her to make her own decisions. "I like Unisson because they treat me nicely and respectfully and always help me out," she says.

As Fran and Lucy continue to spend time together, Unisson continues to help people with disability to make important and personal connections with the people who provide support for them, day in and day out.

**“Lucy and Fran connect on so many levels”**

# OUR PEOPLE

## PEOPLE WE SUPPORT & THEIR FAMILIES

Administrative Support

Direct Support Staff

## TEAM LEADERS

Corporate Services, Managers & Coordinators  
(Marketing, Finance, IT, WHS, HR, Property & Fleet)

Managers & Coordinators  
Client Services

LEADERSHIP TEAM

HR Operations Manager

Practice Leader x 2

Regional Manager x 2

Marketing & Comms Manager

Enquiries Manager

SENIOR TEAM

General Manager Corporate & Business Services

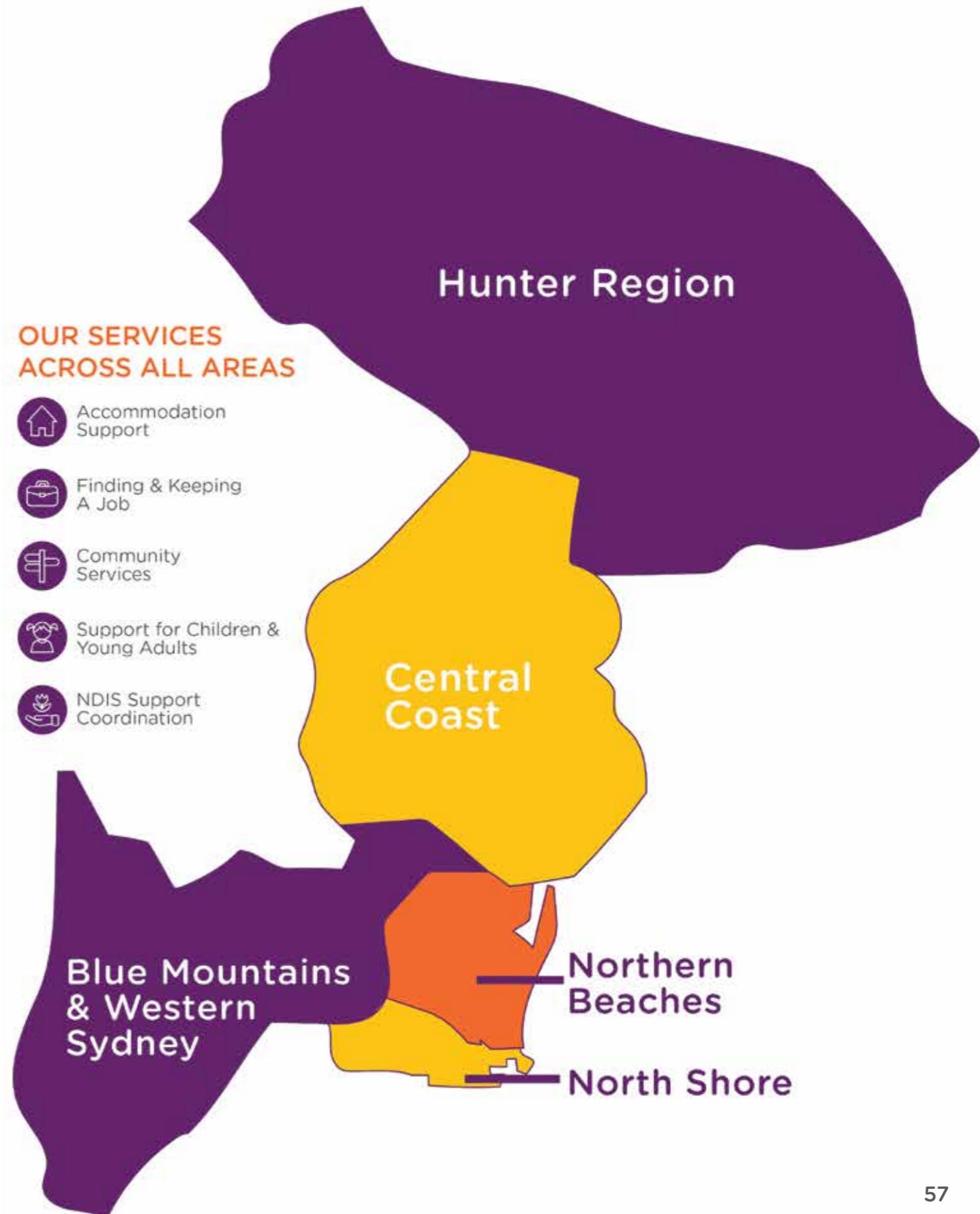
General Manager Client Services

EXECUTIVE TEAM

CEO

Board of Directors

# OUR LOCATIONS



## FINANCIAL YEAR SNAPSHOT

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of Employees	489	538	571	655	679
Total Revenue	\$29.5m	\$32.7m	\$37.9m	\$40.0m	\$46.6m
Private Funding Donations	\$180k	\$85k	\$254k	\$94k	\$140k
Investment Income	\$1.5m	\$1.4m	\$1.6m	\$1.4m	\$1.5m
Net Assets	\$35.7m	\$38.5m	\$40.9m	\$44.6m	\$48.3m



Courtney Pont and Ellen Dickinson



## EXECUTIVE TEAM



**REBECCA FLETCHER**  
**CEO**

*Retiring October 2018*

Rebecca Fletcher is Unisson Disability's energetic and talented CEO, a position she has held since 2005.

As CEO, Rebecca is responsible for developing and communicating Unisson Disability's strategic direction, and for leading and guiding its operations. She acts as the key point of contact between the Board of Directors and the Senior Leadership Team and is responsible for bringing to life Unisson Disability's vision, purpose and values. Rebecca has extensive experience across a number of industries including banking and finance, manufacturing and the disability sector and has worked in both Australia and the broader Asia Pacific region. Rebecca holds formal tertiary and post graduate qualifications in Accounting, Human Resources Management, Company Director, NFP Management and Teaching. She is a Fellow with the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Rebecca also serves as a Director of an Aged Care facility based in Sydney. Rebecca is passionate about continuing the legacy of Dr Lorna Hodgkinson by working to enable people with disability to access the opportunities that allow them to be integrated in their communities and live their best lives.



**DAVID KNEESHAW**  
**GENERAL MANAGER, CORPORATE & BUSINESS SERVICES**

*Appointed as CEO October 2018*

David has more than 20 years' experience in both technical and commercial finance management roles.

He has had significant international experience, having worked in the UK, USA and Australia, with long tenures in a top-4 professional services firm and a top-100 listed global organisation.

David brings to Unisson exceptional skills in balancing high-level strategy with operational responsibilities, and has extensive experience developing strong relationships at all levels of complex and diverse businesses.

David has a strong passion for the people we support and ensuring exceptional business practices are in place to support the sustainability of the organisation.



**GAIL JELTES**  
**GENERAL MANAGER, CLIENT SERVICES**

Gail has formal qualifications in Psychology and Habilitation and has worked in the disability sector for some 30 years.

Starting as a direct support worker in accommodation, after a previous career in motivational training and sales, Gail moved on to establish and manage one of the first individual supported jobs agencies for people with intellectual disability in the west of Sydney.

She went on to become one of the founding members of ACE (Association of Competitive Employment Agencies) and spent several years lecturing part-time in disability. Since then, Gail's roles have focused on operational and strategic directions. She joined Unisson Disability in 1994, specifically to close the institutional accommodation and move the organisation into a community-based service model. Apart from the rights of people with intellectual disability, Gail is particularly passionate about organisational culture and how it affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with other stakeholders.

# SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



**KATRINA JACKSON**  
**MANAGER, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

Katrina has a Bachelor's degree in Marketing and Business Management and ten years' combined experience across the commercial and NFP sector.

Having worked across a variety of industries, Katrina has developed a broad set of skills that she now brings to Unisson Disability to support strategic planning, digital strategy, brand management, copywriting and understanding the customer journey.

She is passionate about influencing customer decisions through innovative storytelling and encouraging engagement between a customer and the brand.



**RASHIKA ISLAM**  
**MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES OPERATIONS**

Rashika is passionate about developing workforce capability and employee engagement and influencing organisation culture with a pragmatic and consultative approach.

Currently pursuing her Masters in HRM and IR at the University of Sydney, Rashika has a Bachelors Degree in Human Resources Management (HRM) and Business from the UK and is a member of the AHRI (Australian Human Resources Institute). With over eight years of experience in the field of Human Resources, and having worked across industries from manufacturing to professional services and NFP, she has adopted a broad set of skills and cultural knowledge that are invaluable to Unisson Disability. Rashika values building relationships and having a laugh whenever she can.



**CATHY GAUCI**  
**PRACTICE LEADER**

Cathy first began her career in early childhood education and continued her studies in the areas of Community Welfare and Social Science.

After gaining experience working with people with disability in employment as well as accommodation settings, Cathy joined Unisson Disability in 1996 to manage our first satellite office, Hornsby Lifestyles. This office was established to support the first group of clients who left the institution to start living in the community. Cathy's current role at Unisson Disability revolves around leading the practice of how we provide quality services to our clients. Cathy is inspired by the people Unisson Disability supports and she loves being with people and hearing their stories. It is important to her that her work has value, and that through it, she's making a contribution not just to Unisson Disability, but also to the wider community.



**JENNIE BROADLEY**  
**PRACTICE LEADER**

Jennie has formal qualifications in Teaching and Management and has worked in the disability sector for over 30 years.

She started her career teaching independent living and life skills to children, and later adults, with disability. Jennie also worked in the UK, primarily in accommodation and employment services for people with disability. In the late 1990s, Jennie worked with Unisson Disability coordinating a joint employment skills development project. She re-joined the organisation in 2009, in order to lead our supported and open employment programs. Jennie is inspired by the people we support as they overcome their personal challenges and community barriers to achieve wonderful things for themselves. She is excited to be working in the disability sector at this time of change and looks forward to a time when people can access the support they want from a diverse range of flexible services.



**KAREN BIRD**  
**REGIONAL MANAGER, CLIENT SERVICES**

Karen has tertiary qualifications in Social Science and Community Sector Coordination and has been working in the disability sector on and off since 1998.

Karen is passionate about building positive relationships, getting to know people and understanding their story. In 2002 she traveled to the Middle East and Africa, where she lived for a few years. In 2005, Karen returned to Unisson Disability, as part of the leadership team. Karen is motivated by the ongoing changes in the disability sector. She feels excited about the future and what it holds for the people Unisson Disability supports and their families.



**CHARLIE DOANE**  
**REGIONAL MANAGER, CLIENT SERVICES**

Charlie has formal qualifications in Psychology, Filmmaking and Training and Assessment. Born in the USA, he has been working in the disability sector on and off since the 1970s.

Initially working as a manager in a sector going through enormous change from institutionalisation and isolation to a disability model of community living and engagement, Charlie went on to gain experience managing a variety of accommodation facilities. In the 1980s Charlie began practicing Psychological Counselling with mental health clients in a hospital setting. At that time Charlie made a short fictional film about a disabled artist which garnered a number of awards in the US. After working for 24 years in the USA and Australia as a feature film producer, Charlie's strong sense of social justice and desire to make a difference brought him back to the disability sector in 2010. Charlie recently oversaw the roll out of the NDIS for 300 mental health clients living in the community. He is particularly excited to be in the disability sector at a time when clients have an unprecedented opportunity to plan their own supports and live fulfilling lives.



**TRACEY SHERWIN**  
**ENQUIRIES MANAGER**

Tracey joined Unisson in March 2005 and has had several leadership roles throughout this time.

With a Diploma in Community Welfare, Tracey has a positive approach to customer service and is passionate about providing the correct service delivery and knowledge to others. She strives to keep up to date with industry trends in order to maintain a positive and consistent approach, and focus on ongoing growth for Unisson Disability.

# BOARD MEMBERS

Unisson Disability's Board is made up of a team of talented people united in their passion for creating possibilities for the people our work touches to live their best life.

Our Board members bring significant and wide-ranging skills and experience to their roles. Together, they are committed to helping Unisson Disability continue to grow as a provider of high quality disability services whose key difference lies in the extraordinary connections we make with those we support and their families.



**STEVEN GREGG**  
**CHAIRMAN**  
**B COMM**

Steve is a highly experienced investment and commercial banker with extensive Australian and international executive experience. He held various positions with ABN AMRO including President and Global Head of Investment Banking, UK. He was also employed at Chase Manhattan, Lehman Brothers and AMP Morgan Grenfell. His most recent executive role was as Expert Partner at McKinsey & Company in Australia and the US. His current non-executive roles include senior advisor with McKinsey & Co and as senior consultant to Grant Samuel.

Steve has been the Chairman of Caltex Australia Ltd since August 2017 and he is the Chairman of Lorna Hodgkinson Foundation and Unisson Disability Limited. His former roles include Chairman of Austock Group Limited and Chairman of Goodman Fielder Pty Limited. He serves as a Trustee of the Australian Museum Trust, and as a Non-Executive Director of Challenger Limited, Challenger Life Company Limited, William Inglis & Son Ltd and TabCorp Holdings Limited.



**DAVID HARDY**  
**B COMM, MBA, MA**

David's 25 year career in corporate strategy development spans many industries.

He was Head of Strategy for the Insurance Australia Group, holding leadership roles with the consulting firms Accenture and McKinsey & Co prior to that. Currently mixing consulting and teaching, David is on the adjunct faculty of the Australian Graduate School of Management where he leads a strategic consulting project class. He has worked on a broad range of strategy and operations improvement projects in many industries across Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Europe and North America. David's involvement with Unisson Disability has also been of a personal nature, as his brother Richard has been supported by the organisation for 45 years. David is constantly impressed with Unisson Disability's leadership and the passionate commitment of all its staff to helping people with disability lead their best lives.



**PETER HORTON**  
**B BUS, A.C.A**

Peter has had over 40 years' experience in accounting and finance roles.

He previously practiced as a Chartered Accountant, retiring as a partner from KPMG in 2001. This was followed by roles as Director of Finance & Accounting for Event Hospitality and Entertainment Limited and CFO and Company Secretary for Carlton Investments Limited, where he still serves.

Peter joined the Board of Unisson Disability in 1999 as Treasurer. He enjoys using the skills gained throughout his career to assist Unisson Disability in meeting its objectives of providing support to people with intellectual disability. Through his close involvement with the organisation, Peter has developed a great admiration for the families and employees involved in our work.



**ROBERTA RYAN**  
**BA(HONS), B.SOC.SC(HONS),**  
**GRADDIP**

Professor Roberta Ryan from the University of Technology Sydney is a leading social policy, program evaluation and stakeholder engagement practitioner and researcher, with over 30 years' experience in academia and consulting across Australia and internationally. A qualified social worker, Roberta has specialised skills in large multi-service evaluations, service development, delivery and applied policy research. She has also worked for a number of non-government agencies in direct practice and management roles and has designed and undertaken a range of complex government and non-government policy advisory and applied policy projects. Roberta's extensive experience includes working with people with disability and their families in applied policy, service review, evaluation and service management. Her work in the disability field includes projects for government, non-government agencies, peak and advocacy organisations, including the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, the NSW Disability Council, Family Advocacy NSW, Centacare, Burnside, Jewish Welfare and UnitingCare. Prior to joining UTS, Roberta was a director of a private consulting firm.



**ALEX GELMAN**  
**M COMM, MACS, CPA**



**DR GILLIAN BROOKS**  
**BA (PYSCH), MBBS HONS,**  
**FRACP**

Dr Gillian Brooks is a specialist paediatrician and Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians (Paediatrics and Child Health). She has extensive experience in community child health and developmental paediatrics, general paediatrics and paediatric rehabilitation.

As Senior Staff Specialist Developmental Paediatrician and Team Leader for Children's Hospital Westmead (Parramatta Early Childhood Assessment Team), Dr Brooks leads a multidisciplinary team in the service of paediatric patients and their families. She has extensive experience across the assessment, diagnosis and management of children and adolescents with developmental disabilities. Dr Brooks strongly supports a holistic approach to the treatment of children, which takes into consideration their family environment, as well as their social, cultural and linguistic needs, and revolves around taking a partnership approach with families. She has a special interest in quality improvement projects and in research related to service delivery and building the capacity of individuals with a disability to lead a full life.



**JANET KNEESHAW**  
**GRAD DIP HEALTH SCIENCE**  
**(GERONTOLOGY)**

*Retirement from Board 30 June 2018*

Initially training as an Infant Teacher, Jan had an extensive career working with children with intellectual disability. She

then went on to train as a Diversional Therapist, working in retirement villages and achieving her Graduate Diploma in Gerontology.

Jan's contact with Unisson Disability began in 1949, when her then three year-old brother Peter came to live in what was then the Sunshine Institute. Jan and Peter's father, Howard Grigg, was the first President of the Parents' and Friends' Association, giving Jan an early and close involvement in Unisson Disability's events and operations.

# THE BOARD

## ROLE OF THE BOARD

Unisson Disability is governed by a Board of Directors who are appointed by our members. The Board is responsible for:

- Unisson's governance, broad policy and strategic objectives
- Approval of the annual budget and strategic plan
- Ensuring the availability of adequate financial resources
- Selecting, appointing, supporting and reviewing the performance of the CEO
- Ensuring compliance with regulation, constitutional law and contractual agreements

Each Director shares ultimate responsibility for the organisation's overall success and accepts legal responsibility for Unisson Disability.

The Board is also responsible for ensuring significant risks are identified and appropriate controls and responses are implemented within the organisation.

The Board encourages and stimulates the generation of new ideas, creativity and innovation that can benefit the organisation. It plays a key role in determining the efficiency and productivity of the organisation and works to enhance the performance of the organisation by developing improved ways of working, discovering innovative solutions, embracing technology, and implementing modern business processes.

## WHEN THE BOARD MEETS

The Board meets six to eight times each calendar year on the last Tuesday of the relevant month, or as often as is required to effectively carry out its governance. The Board also meets with our members and stakeholders at the Annual General Meeting.

## WHO IS ON THE BOARD

The Board is comprised of Directors who are individual volunteers with an interest in supporting people with disability, and who bring to Unisson Disability skills and expertise in their various fields and professions.

The Board is made up of voluntary Directors, who are independent and free from any other business or relationship which could affect the business of Unisson Disability. The names and details of each of our Board Members are on pages 64-65 of this review. Many of Unisson Disability's Directors have had a long-standing relationship with the organisation before commencing as a Director.

## HOW NEW DIRECTORS ARE RECRUITED

The power to appoint and dismiss Directors is conferred on the Board by the Constitution of the company. The process of choosing Directors to invite to the Board is a considered process, with particular attention given to assessing the skills matrix across the Board as to which area of expertise the Board feels would most benefit Unisson Disability.

Upon identifying a suitable candidate for Directorship, and after necessary meetings and interviews with the Chairman and selected Directors, and the consent of the individual to act as a Director of Unisson Disability, the potential Director is either appointed as such by the Board or elected to the position at the company's Annual General Meeting.

At any one time, the skills that the Directors bring to the Board and consequently to the organisation span the areas of business finance, law, governance, strategy and health.

## BOARD COMMITTEES

The Board is empowered by the Constitution to appoint advisory committees consisting of members of the Board and such other members as the Board thinks fit. Unisson's committees act in an advisory capacity and conform to any regulations given by the Board. Unisson Disability has three formal committees within the following areas:

- Governance and Operations Risk Review
- Strategic Planning
- Finance, Audit and Investment

The objectives of the committees are to review the performance of the company and to ensure operational efficiency and effectiveness within their designated areas. To this end, the Directors on the sub-committees pay particular attention to acquaint themselves with the operations within the area of their specific sub-committee based on reports provided by the CEO and the executive team, and offer constructive input and strategies with a view to augmenting the performance of the company in those areas.

## ETHICAL STANDARDS

Unisson Disability is guided by and aligns its service provision closely with the NSW and National Standards for Disability Services – the doctrines of which are embedded in the Policies and Procedures that govern every area and division of Unisson Disability. This vigilance reflects the organisation's overarching objective to provide quality services, fundamental to the shift to person-centred service delivery and individualised funding, where people will enjoy more choice, portability and flexibility in their funding and supports.

Unisson Disability also maintains membership and involvement with peak industry organisations to ensure awareness of policy and procedure across the disability sector.

## COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)  
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) Australian Disability Enterprises  
Department of Social Services  
Department of Health (DOH)  
Home and Community Care program (HACC)

# UNISSON

DISABILITY

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*James Spicer*