

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a blue and white checkered picnic blanket in a park. The man, in the foreground, is wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt and light-colored cargo pants, looking off to the side with a smile. The woman, slightly behind him, is also smiling. The background is a sunlit park with trees and a path. The overall mood is warm and positive. There are decorative orange and yellow curved shapes on the left and right sides of the image.

# UNISSON

DISABILITY

BUILDING  
CONNECTIONS

SINCE 1924

ANNUAL REVIEW 2017



“ Jimmy is a great role model to the other people who share his home. ”



## 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.

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## THE CHANGE FROM SUNSHINE TO UNISSON DISABILITY

# UNISSON DISABILITY

### FOR FAR LONGER THAN THE RECENT CHANGES TO THE NDIS, WE'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT A NAME CHANGE TO THE ORGANISATION.

We embarked on our journey as an organisation to assess whether the name Sunshine was still the best representation of our values and our place in the disability sector.

Throughout 2016 and 2017 we spoke to our families, our employees and others in the disability sector.

We discovered that:

- **Sunshine gets confused with other disability support providers.**
- **A lot of people don't know who we are.**
- **Our name could be stronger in representing our mature leadership in the sector.**
- **Our clients and employees above all want to be proud of the name.**

As a result of this feedback, we decided to change our name from the Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home (Sunshine) to Unisson Disability. With the support of our staff, clients and families, we completed the successful transition in November of 2017.

**The key message to our staff, clients and families throughout the process was about what will NOT change. This centred on the importance of our relationship with families, the support we provide to clients and the reassurances we wanted to provide to our staff.**

Our 'facelift' means we will now be represented in a way which is reflective of our differentiated approach to creating possibilities for clients to live their best lives. We are not changing anything about our values as an organisation, our processes and the way in which we connect with clients and families.

As Unisson Disability, we will continue to be one of NSW's leading service providers in the disability sector, and as an NDIS provider, we look forward to continuing and growing our support services throughout Sydney, Nepean & Blue Mountains, and as far north as the Central Coast and Hunter regions.

### PURPOSE OF OUR ANNUAL REVIEW

Unisson Disability's annual review isn't just a progress report or a review of our achievements and highlights during the 2016 -2017 financial year. It's also an opportunity to share with you the experiences and stories from some clients and staff. After all, our business is about people and our year in review is about the people we work with every day. We want to show you – our valued supporters, community partners, volunteers, the government agencies whose help we couldn't be more grateful for, the families who give so much of their time and support, and anyone who is considering becoming part of the Unisson Disability story – exactly how your support is making a difference.

### ABOUT UNISSON DISABILITY

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



“ The new name reflects who we have evolved into as an organisation. ”

## OUR HISTORY

**OUR STORY BEGINS IN 1924 WHEN DR LORNA HODGKINSON – A REMARKABLE AUSTRALIAN OF GREAT DEDICATION AND VISION – ESTABLISHES THE SUNSHINE INSTITUTE.**

### 1920s

In 1924 Lorna Hodgkinson establishes the Sunshine Institute. Lorna is the first woman to receive a doctorate at the prestigious Harvard University, USA. As a teacher herself, Lorna is passionate in her belief that people with an intellectual disability should be supported to learn and lead meaningful lives and not be locked up in hospitals for the mentally ill. This is in direct conflict with the policy of the government at the time, and also with the broader social norms of the day. Taking norms into her own hands, Lorna leases (and later purchases) a large house and land at Gore Hill on Sydney's Lower North Shore, naming it the Sunshine Institute.

### 1990s

In the early 90s a number of units and homes are purchased and many of the people we support make the transition to living in group homes.

### 1950s

By the time of Lorna's death in 1951, more than 60 students are living and studying at Gore Hill. Many of the first children to join the school stay with the organisation into their adulthood, and over the years adults with disability become the majority of those we support. Prior to her death, Lorna converts the institute into a non-profit organisation under a board of trustees, to whom she bequeaths the bulk of her estate. At this time, the Sunshine Institute is renamed the Lorna Hodgkinson Sunshine Home. Over the years, the organisation continues to expand, always staying true to Lorna's philosophy of supporting and caring for people as individuals.

### 2000s

In the early 2000s, the Gore Hill site is sold to help fund Sunshine's expansion into community-based living. Sunshine's services expand across Sydney and up to the Central Coast and Hunter region. In 2014, Sunshine celebrates its 90th birthday.

In 2017 Sunshine rebrands to Unisson Disability. We have been known as Sunshine for almost 100 years and we feel strongly that it is time to look for a name that will take us into the next 100 years. The new name reflects who we have evolved into as an organisation and our unique approach to working with those we support. In addition, it is determined that we need a name that will make it easier for people to clearly understand and engage with what we do. After extensive consultation and market testing in the years 2014 to 2017, we choose the name Unisson Disability. It is anticipated that this name will allow us to connect more deeply with the people we support and the general community, and to better represent our values and mature leadership in the disability sector. While our brand name and look has changed, our values, purpose and approach to supporting people with disability has not.





“ In November of this year,  
the organisation launched a rebrand.”

## CHAIRMAN & CEO

### THIS YEAR IN REVIEW IS MOSTLY ABOUT OUR TRANSITION TO THE NDIS. WE ARE EXCITED BY THE OPPORTUNITIES THE NDIS PRESENTS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND THE ROLE OUR ORGANISATION WILL PLAY IN REALISING THESE OPPORTUNITIES.

We recognise it is a time of uncertainty for many people, including clients, families and carers, so the team has been very busy working together to ensure people have all the necessary information and knowledge to successfully navigate the NDIS.

One of the changes made in response to the introduction of the NDIS was a change to the name of our organisation. In November of this year, the organisation launched a rebrand, changing our operating name from Sunshine to Unisson Disability. We arrived at this name following a thorough process and feel it better represents the connection, togetherness, support and progress for which we strive. It emphasises our focus on working together in the interests of clients and family members.

While our name and look might be changing, nothing about our services or the way we connect with our clients and families will change. Together, we will continue to find the common ground that creates a path forward for clients. Together, we find the ‘yes’ that enables people to live their best lives, in a world that is more restrictive for them than for others.

Unisson considers the NDIS to be a world-leading approach to supporting people with disability. It is exceptional in its principles and intentions, although there is no doubt we are still working through implementation and ‘teething problems’. We are excited to be exploring the genuine hopes and dreams of individuals while guiding families through this new landscape.

**Our challenges in relation to transitioning to NDIS are not unique to us, and include pricing, the NDIA Portal, quality and safeguards, housing and workforce shortages.**

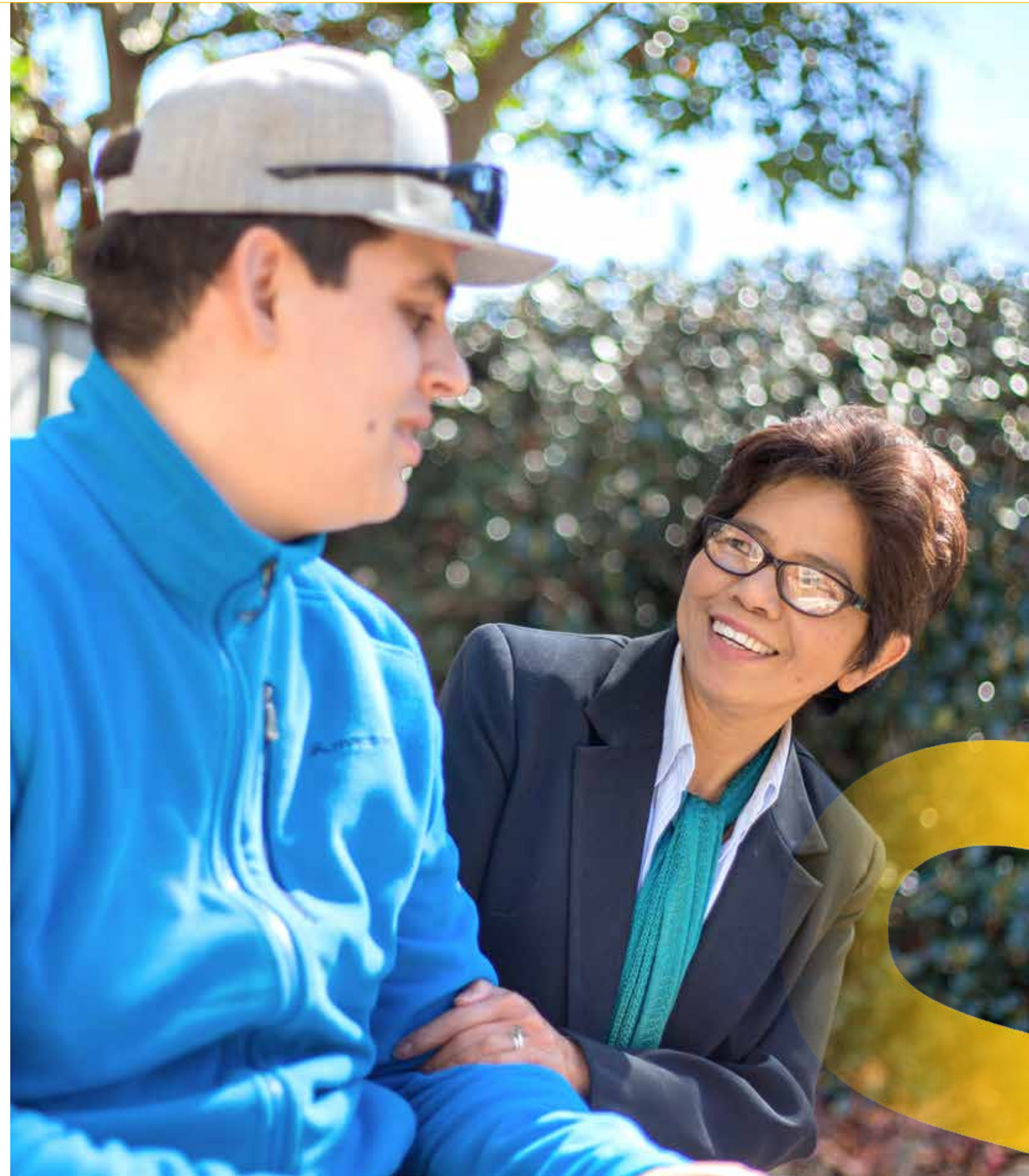
We have been able to mitigate some of these issues by developing a close working relationship with the NDIA team, the planners and the support coordinators. We have also rolled out significant training to our staff to ensure they are up to date with information and changes under NDIS.

Our general approach is that we are all in this together and that we need to continue to work together to make the NDIS a success.



**We’ve used the double ‘s’ to convey the importance of equality, togetherness and connection.**

It speaks to our values of fostering mutually-beneficial relationships to build the best possible lives we can for our clients and their families.



“ With changes in the sector, we recognise that we can no longer solely focus on service. ”

## CHAIRMAN &amp; CEO (CONT)

### WORKFORCE SHORTAGES ARE EMERGING AS A GROWING ISSUE AS DEMAND FOR NDIS AND AGED CARE CONTINUES TO INCREASE.

This is an area of strategic focus and we are exploring innovative ways of attracting high calibre staff to the industry. We also believe that our new brand will give us differentiation in the marketplace and allow us to build a sustainable employer brand and attraction strategy.

One of the key changes from the introduction of the NDIS is the focus on the participant and the ability for them to have flexibility and choose their own service provider. To adapt to this change we've introduced a number of new initiatives, including a bespoke customer service program for all staff, as well as a significant increase in marketing and social media activity. We have also expanded our Client Management System to track achievement of goals.

Despite the difficulties we've all experienced with the initial implementation of the NDIS, we remain positive about its benefits to people with disability. We continue to believe that the fundamental building blocks of the NDIS are correct and that we all need to work together to find a way to maximise the benefits for participants while developing a system that is practical and financially sustainable for providers and for Australia.

**With changes in the sector, we recognise that we can no longer solely focus on service. It is now about creating experiences for clients that have a substantial impact and create a memorable connection.**

The support we provide is WHAT we do, the connection we create is HOW we do it.

the support we provide is  
**what we do**  
the connection we create is  
**how we do it**

It was with this approach in mind that we developed and implemented a program entitled the 'Art of Human Connection'. It is a critical area for us because strong client relationships provide the fuel for our direct business strategy. If we provide outstanding client connections and experiences, people will come. We see this approach as fundamental to our continued growth.

The Art of Human Connection program closely links with our values and our approach to person-centred active support, and is well-supported by the current culture within the organisation. Feedback from frontline staff is resoundingly positive, in particular about the likelihood that these tools will better support them to build more meaningful relationships and result in better long-term outcomes for clients.

Tangential to the roll-out of the Art of Human Connection is the roll-out of "The Employee Experience - the art and the science". Our approach here acknowledges that people experience the workplace first and foremost as a social system and we mirror our Art of Human Connection approach to clients and their families with our staff. We have modelled this approach on David Rock's SCARF® Model, which is a brain-based framework designed to enhance self and social awareness and improve the quality of daily interactions. This model provides a means of bringing conscious awareness to our approach when collaborating with and influencing others. Essentially, we recognise that the employee experience drives the client experience and by enhancing relationships with employees, removing 'threats' and creating a 'reward state' we believe we will generate enhanced and lasting relationships.

**Unisson continues its growth trajectory. In May this year, we opened our first group home support in the Hunter area.**

This brings the total people supported in Hunter to more than 140. Our growth, however, will be measured by quality outcomes and impact while remaining sustainable.

over **140** clients  
supported in Hunter

The year in review marked the first full year in operation of the Lorna Hodgkinson Foundation. It is pleasing to note that we have been able to focus and deliver on the objectives of both companies. Our financial result for 2016-17 delivered a modest surplus with turnover just over \$40 million.

We especially want to acknowledge the significant role played by our 'back-office' staff – Finance, Human Resources, Marketing & Communications, Property & Fleet, and IT – as we successfully transitioned to NDIS. The volume of transactions and tasks required from each one were significant, to say the least. We thank them for their tenacity and grit to stand up to the challenge. Well done, team.

We remain focused on delivering the articulated goals of clients while remaining viable. The year in review saw the restructure of our senior management team to include two Regional Managers. This restructure provides leadership depth and allows us to be better organised to support clients while reducing structural costs.

The appreciation of our clients is reflected in, among other things, our high net promoter score following this year's client survey. Thank you to all who work tirelessly to ensure we provide high-quality support and best impact for clients and their families.

**We are grateful to all Board members for their ongoing contribution, to the tireless Senior Management team led by our CEO, Rebecca Fletcher, and indeed to all staff who have shown such commitment and dedication throughout the year.**

Finally, we would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our valued clients and their families, our many loyal supporters, the State and Federal governments, and the broader community for their ongoing support and affirmation of the work that we do.



FINANCIAL YEAR

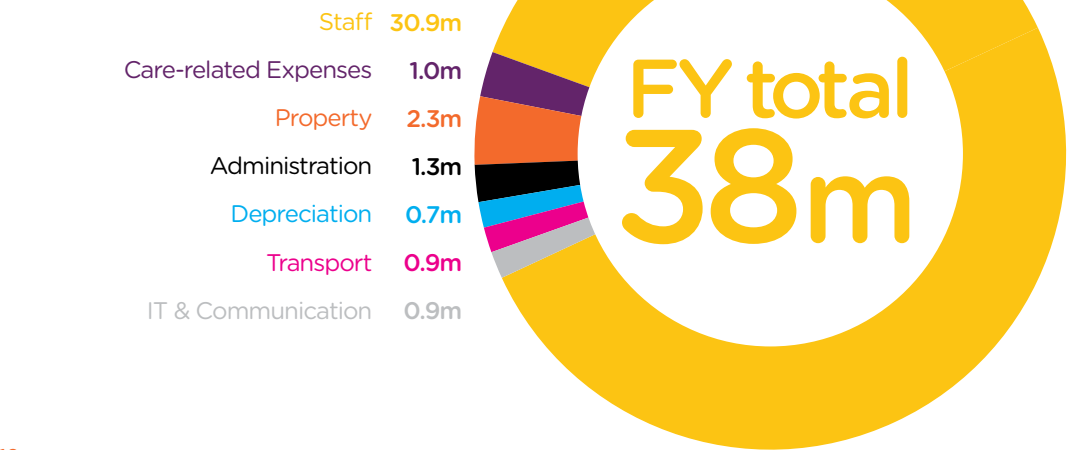
Growth over the last five years

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of Employees	424	489	538	571	655
Total Revenue	26.8m	29.5m	32.7m	37.9m	40.0m
Private Funding Donations	154K	180K	85K	254K	94K
Investment Income	1.4m	1.5m	1.4m	1.6m	1.4m
Net Assets	32.3m	35.7m	38.5m	40.9m	44.6m

Where our funding comes from



How we spend our funds



 **34%** increase in  
TWITTER FOLLOWERS



In 2017, our team grew to  
**665**  
EMPLOYEES

TOTAL REVENUE ROSE TO  
  
**40m**

**1.5** MILLION KM  
travelled by  
UNISSON DISABILITY  
VEHICLES

 **670,800**  
hours of support provided

over **270%**  
INCREASE  
IN FACEBOOK  
FOLLOWERS

**9%** increase  
in  
employee  
numbers

**721**  
ACTIVE SUPPORT  
PLANS DELIVERED  
DAILY  
PERSON-CENTRED

Employee Referral Program  
**19**  
PEOPLE  
employed through our

over **65%** OF  
EMPLOYEES ATTENDED THE  
*the art of human  
connection*  
WORKSHOPS

**242** HOURS  
of volunteer time  
& talent donated



OUR STRATEGIC ROADMAP

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN ACTS AS  
OUR ROADMAP TO SUCCESS FOR  
THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

It also charts how we live our values, and communicate our approach to supporting people who access our services.

We operate using a rolling three-year plan which is reviewed and refreshed by the senior leadership team and the Board every year.

Below is a snapshot of the projects that have been undertaken in response to our strategic priorities over the last 12 months.



Goals	Objective	Project	Progress
1 A service people want	1.1 MAXIMISE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES	Merger with Jennings Lodge Expanded services to include support coordination Extended service offerings in the Hunter-new group home	✓ ✓ ✓
	1.2 WE ARE A QUALITY DRIVEN SERVICE, DRIVEN BY THE CLIENT	Implement 'Operation Home' guidelines with staff on how we can bring person-centred practice into the surroundings of a person's home Active support research - we have also added a risk enablement perspective to the research and hope to extend this along with supported decision making	● ●
2 A workforce inspired by purpose	2.1 OUR WORKFORCE IS READY TO OPERATE SUCCESSFULLY IN AN INDIVIDUALISED, PERSON DIRECTED SERVICE SYSTEM	Implement a targeted employer branding strategy to attract new talent to the sector Implemented Capability Framework throughout the organisation	■ ✓
	2.2 OUR WORKFORCE IS ENGAGED AND EMBRACE THE ORGANISATION'S CULTURE & VALUES	Implement the culture based initiative of the Art of Human Connection program with delivery to the entire organisation Launch Recognition Program & Succession Planning strategy Expanded the Art of Human Connection to the Art of Science and Employee Engagement	✓ ■ ●
	2.3 OUR LEADERSHIP IS INSPIRING AND OUR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE IS EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE	Reviewed senior management structure and appointed 2 x regional manager positions Rolled out accredited Leadership Training for all Team Leaders and Managers Implement Positive Leadership program	✓ ✓ ■
	2.4 EFFICIENT HR SYSTEMS & PROCESSES ARE IN PLACE	In the process of implementing a new HR information system (BOOM) to bring efficiency in HR processes Implementing a new Performance Review and Development program in line with the Capability Framework and Art of Human Connection program Introducing innovative and efficient Recruitment & Selection processes	● ● ●
3 A resilient organisation	3.1 WE MANAGE THE IMPACT OF GROWTH TO ENSURE IT IS SUSTAINABLE	Acheived growth of 6% while maintaining our operating margin	✓
	3.2 OUR OPERATIONS ARE WELL SUPPORTED BY THE RIGHT SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS	Finalised implementation of our new Client Management system	●
	3.3 WE ARE AN ORGANISATION THAT IS WELL GOVERNED	A number of new Directors recruited for the Foundation and Operating Boards according to agreed skills matrix Board and Management team reviewed strategic plan Underwent a vigorous research & brand development exercise to launch a new name & brand that is fit for market opportunities	✓ ✓ ✓

LEGEND : PROPOSED ■ IN PROGRESS ● COMPLETED ✓



## CLIENT &amp; FAMILY SATISFACTION

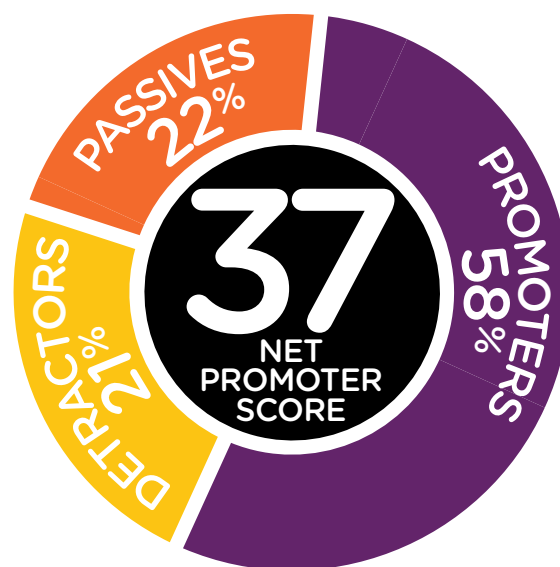
AS WE LAUNCHED OUR PROGRAM FOCUSED ON BUILDING CONNECTIONS WITH CLIENTS AND FAMILIES, THE ART OF HUMAN CONNECTION, WE SET ABOUT TO MEASURE OUR CURRENT IMPACT.

We reached out to families and clients to gain an insight into how we are doing. We received some great

over **84%**  
happy  
with the support  
services received

over **82%**  
pleased  
with our level of  
collaboration with  
family and providing  
positive outcomes  
with clients

feedback, ideas on what we can work on, and some supportive comments for what is working well. Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond, we are always looking for ways we can improve and work collaboratively with clients and families.



over **81%**  
happy  
with the overall  
responsiveness of  
the organisation

## THE STRACHAN FAMILY

## A LETTER TO UNISSON DISABILITY

The following letter was sent to Gail Jettes, General Manager Client Services, from Mr William Strachan. Mr Strachan's son, Tim, moved from the family home into shared living with Unisson.



Dear Gail,  
Isn't time deceptive? 17 June is the first anniversary of Tim's move to Anulla and all things considered his move has gone reasonably well. There were a few settling glitches, but no major meltdowns, at least none known to us. A mutual liking has developed between Tim and his four housemates Josie, Lisa, Patrick and Michael. Indeed, Josie has defined herself as Tim's 'big sister'. Alison and her team of carers are brilliant, doing their very best to understand and do the right thing by Tim, and consulting closely with Lin and myself.

As to be expected with any residential move there were a few other issues at play, apart from my questionable skills at putting together Tim's new IKEA furniture; namely, Tim's obsession with the music on the iPad; the carers learning Tim's special language; some shouting; and some banging of doors. However, and most importantly, when I have dropped Tim off at Anulla after each fortnightly weekend home visit, he has willingly got out of my car and returned eagerly, greeting all in the house.

My prime purpose in writing to you is to thank you, and through you, Alison and her team of Anulla carers for the wonderful support they've given us in Tim's transition to his new supported accommodation. I must also thank Ryan and Alison for their extensive work in putting together Tim's NDIS plan, notwithstanding all of the scheme's bureaucratic obstacles. All at Unisson have provided our family with support, advice and most importantly flexibility and understanding of Tim's needs. The application of your extraordinary expertise and experience has realized such a positive difference to Tim's (and our) lifestyle.

No words can thank you for what you have done for Tim and our family. You and the work of your team is truly an exemplar of the disability sector at its very best.

Yours sincerely,  
Will

...for and on behalf of Will, Lindsay and (of course) Tim Strachan



## LIVE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE

**WITH THE NDIS FULLY ROLLED OUT NATIONALLY, THE INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT FUNDING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY WILL SEE GROWTH IN DEMAND FOR AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE HOUSING IN LOCATIONS WITH GOOD ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND SERVICE.**

This individualised funding could make new living arrangements and housing transitions possible.

For example, with appropriate individually funded support, young adults with disability might be able to move out of their family home to independent living, in line with community norms. Others might transition from residential care into independent living or be able to sustain their existing housing (independently or with family) and avoid transitioning into residential care. These are all exciting possibilities. But there is, of course, an elephant in the room – the massive shortfall in affordable housing supply across Australia is presenting a major barrier to such transitions.

**The National Disability Insurance Agency estimates that the scheme nationally will have**

**410,000 PARTICIPANTS**  
**when fully operational in 2019.**

Of these, 255,000 will be aged 25 - 64 – that is, at an age where we would generally expect members of the community to have left the family home and established their own household. It is estimated that 154,000 to 193,000 of these participants will be on low or very low incomes and may need housing assistance of some description. Based on the current levels of provision of housing assistance for people with a disability, the NDIA believes there is an unmet need for affordable housing for between 83,000 and 122,000 NDIS participants.

**Rather than specialist housing, most NDIS participants will prefer ‘mainstream’ housing that is affordable, meets adaptability or accessibility design standards, and is located with good access to services, shops and public transport as well as to their families and informal support networks.**

Some people with disability (particularly those with high or complex support needs) are currently compelled to live in institutions in order to access the support they need. This framework is underpinned by a view that people with disability need specialist types of housing and support options, and so provision of housing and support becomes focused on the development of special-purpose care facilities. This is obviously contrary to the notion of choice, control and the human rights obligations of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as it restricts a person's rights and opportunities, segregates and isolates them from the community, and often limits access to independent and person-centred advocacy and support.

**It is also true that the housing choices of people with a disability are often constrained by income.**

Additionally, they often experience disadvantage in applying for private rental tenancies due to their low income and the lack of rental history and references, as well as discrimination by real estate agents and landlords and, certainly, difficulty in gaining finance for home purchases.

To truly commit to the principles enacted for the NDIS, government must refrain from supporting it through, for instance, grants of land or funding the promotion and redevelopment of institutional models that diminish the choices of people with disability to select their own supports and housing. We need to avoid strongly endorsing one specific type of housing or design, and instead embrace flexible responsive design that can maximise independence of residents and be adapted with ease according to needs and diverse preferences.

We need a diverse range of accommodation based on the diverse needs of people with a disability. This means we need to consider the following:

People with a disability are often housed together in groups, where they have a roof over the head. Do they feel safe and secure and have they chosen who they live with?

Similarly, people living at home with their parents have a roof over their head, but the arrangement might not be secure or safe, particularly when parents are older – in many cases well over 70 and 80 years of age.

We are committed to achieving the right mix of safety, appropriateness, design and property amenity, security and individual support from the right mix of services. This is to ensure we are involving the person with disability in order to meet their needs and aspirations.

**At Unisson we support**  
**160** **people**  
**IN 39 GROUP HOMES**  
**& 40 IN THEIR OWN HOMES**

At Unisson Disability, we support 160 people in 39 group homes and 40 in their own homes. Home sharing enables people with disability to reduce the cost of housing while also pooling their support packages and enhancing their social participation opportunities.

We know that many participants are willing to share when they have had meaningful choice about with whom they share. Housing size and design that maximises privacy in living areas – in addition to shared spaces for socialising – is also an important factor influencing the success of a home sharing environment.

So, for us going forward it is critical that there is sufficient support to make decisions about preferred housing arrangements, and to search, apply for, and maintain housing. These need to be factored into the participants' plans. Additionally, there is a need to build and strengthen capacity in participants' formal and informal support networks, including helping to connect potential flatmates or establish relationships with local real estate agents and social housing providers.



“ In 2017 our team grew to 655 employees. ”

## OUR PEOPLE

### UNISSON DISABILITY IS CONTINUING TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL OF A WORKFORCE INSPIRED BY PURPOSE.

We believe employee experience is the core of achieving this goal. This will also drive our clients' experiences and allow us to continually offer a service that people want.

In 2017, our team grew to 655 employees which is an increase of 9% from the previous year. While the industry is facing a shortage in the workforce, we are trialling innovative recruitment and selection methods to attract the right people. For instance, we introduced an incredibly successful 'Individual Recruitment by Client' model. We also rolled out an Employee Referral Program (ERP) to engage more employees by using the connections from our existing staff members.

So far, we are delighted to report that the success rate of the ERP is 40%. Our goal is to reduce dependency on external agencies and employ our staff to bring further consistency to the service delivery and maintain sustainability across all recruitment initiatives.

### HR INITIATIVES

Last year we launched the Capability Framework to bring uniformity across the whole organisation by articulating the behaviours that lead to effective performance. With the foundation of the capability framework, this year we focused on launching other HR initiatives like a Performance Review and Development Program, Leadership Program, and Recruitment & Selection Process.

We are continuing to work towards an even more positive employee experience and, as part of this initiative, ran an employee engagement survey this year to gauge how our people are feeling.

While we scored above benchmark in the survey, we also gathered recommendations from our staff which suggested improvements are needed in career progression, succession planning and communication.

### BOOM

To achieve further efficiency in the work we do, Unisson Disability is in the process of implementing a new HR Information System (HRIS) called 'BOOM'.

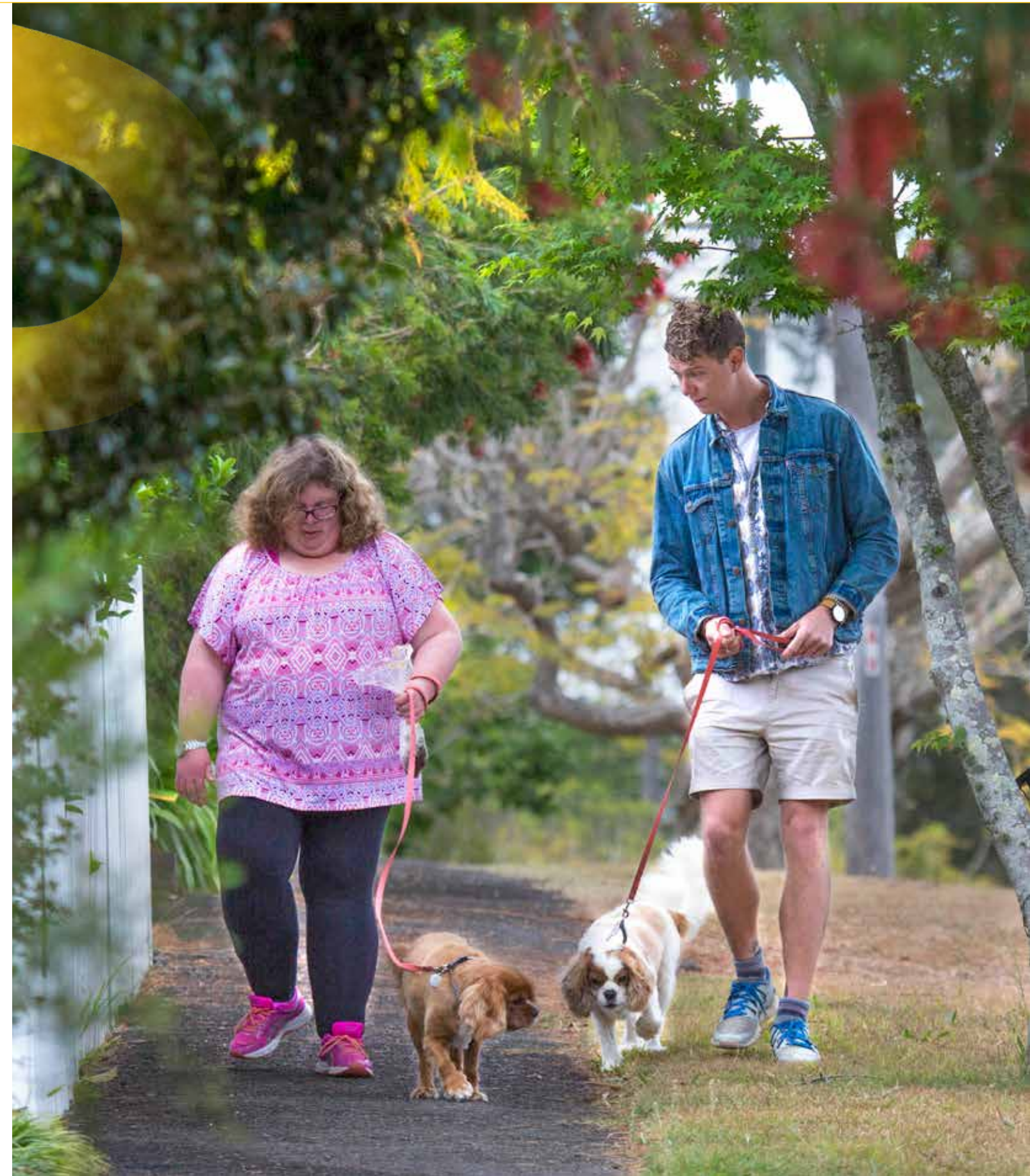
We started the project in April 2017 and are slowly rolling out different components of the system. We plan to complete the roll-out by mid-year 2018.

### LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

This year we rolled out an extensive amount of learning and development opportunities across the whole organisation. Some of the topics include the Art of Human Connection, Capability Framework Awareness, Person-Centred Support, Positive Behaviour Support, and Awareness on Bullying & Harassment. We also rolled out an Accredited Training Program for our leadership team.

### WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

In 2017, we experienced a reduction of workplace injury by 8.5% compared to last year. Our commitment to early intervention following a workplace injury has allowed us to manage claims more efficiently while supporting our injured workers. We are planning to launch a health and well-being program in the coming year to embrace overall well-being at work.





## TAHLIA ROWE

## A BROTHER'S LEGACY



### GROWING UP, TAHLIA AND HER YOUNGER BROTHER, JACK, HAD AN INSEPARABLE BOND.

Being only eighteen months apart in age, they were the best of friends who adored one another and spent most of their time joined at the hip.

Jack had an intellectual disability and required a high level of support, but Tahlia never saw him as any different, **“Jack was just Jack. He brought a sparkle into my life and he made me a better person each and every day.”**

But when Jack was diagnosed with terminal leukaemia, Tahlia and her mother were devastated. **“Our whole world changed but we had to make the most of Jack’s time and so my mother and I spent two years giving Jack the best possible life that we could. We didn’t let fear stand in our way, and we decided we would do everything and anything that Jack wanted to do.”**

When Jack passed away, Tahlia knew she wanted to make a difference in the lives of people with disability, and wasn’t happy working in hospitality and retail. **“From a very young age I have always had a drive to help people, and I’ve always had a passion for helping people achieve their goals in life. I knew that working in the disability sector would allow me to do that.”**

It was then that Tahlia decided to apply for a job at Unisson Disability as a Direct Support Professional at the Frenchs Forest Community Access Centre. Since then, she hasn’t looked back.

**“Working at Unisson has made me so much happier. I feel like I have truly found myself and I feel proud of the work I am doing. My team leader is so amazing, and she has supported me every step of the way. When I lost my brother, I lost that sparkle he gave me, and working at Unisson with all of the participants I’ve found that sparkle again.”**

**“It’s indescribable, I didn’t think I would ever find that love and happiness again. I knew I had to carry his legacy on and find a way to honour everything he taught me about life. I know he would be so proud of me and the work I am doing.”**

“From a very young age I have always had a drive to help people.”



BUSINESS SERVICES

ONE OF THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE NDIS IS TO PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION.

Our Business Services team is delivering on this aim by providing opportunities for our clients to engage in meaningful employment that makes a contribution, encourages personal development and creates a lasting network of friends and colleagues.

BUILDING A STRATEGIC FUTURE

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NDIS HAS CHANGED THE WAY THE DISABILITY SECTOR OPERATES AND PLACED ADDITIONAL DEMANDS ON NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS.

At Unisson, we have used this as an opportunity to transform how we operate but, at the same time, we have been mindful not to lose the soul of the organisation in the process.

Below are some of the key initiatives we have focused on to build an organisation that is fit for purpose in the NDIS environment.

- creating the right corporate structure, including establishing the Lorna Hodgkinson Foundation
- implementing a brand that speaks to the organisation's strengths and is relevant in the NDIS world
- building a client-focused culture through the introduction of our home-grown initiative, 'The Art of Human Connection'
- embedding leading client support philosophies, including the Active Support program
- putting in place the processes required to operate under the NDIS, including establishing Service Agreements, new invoicing processes and client intake processes
- ensuring we have the right systems in place, including:

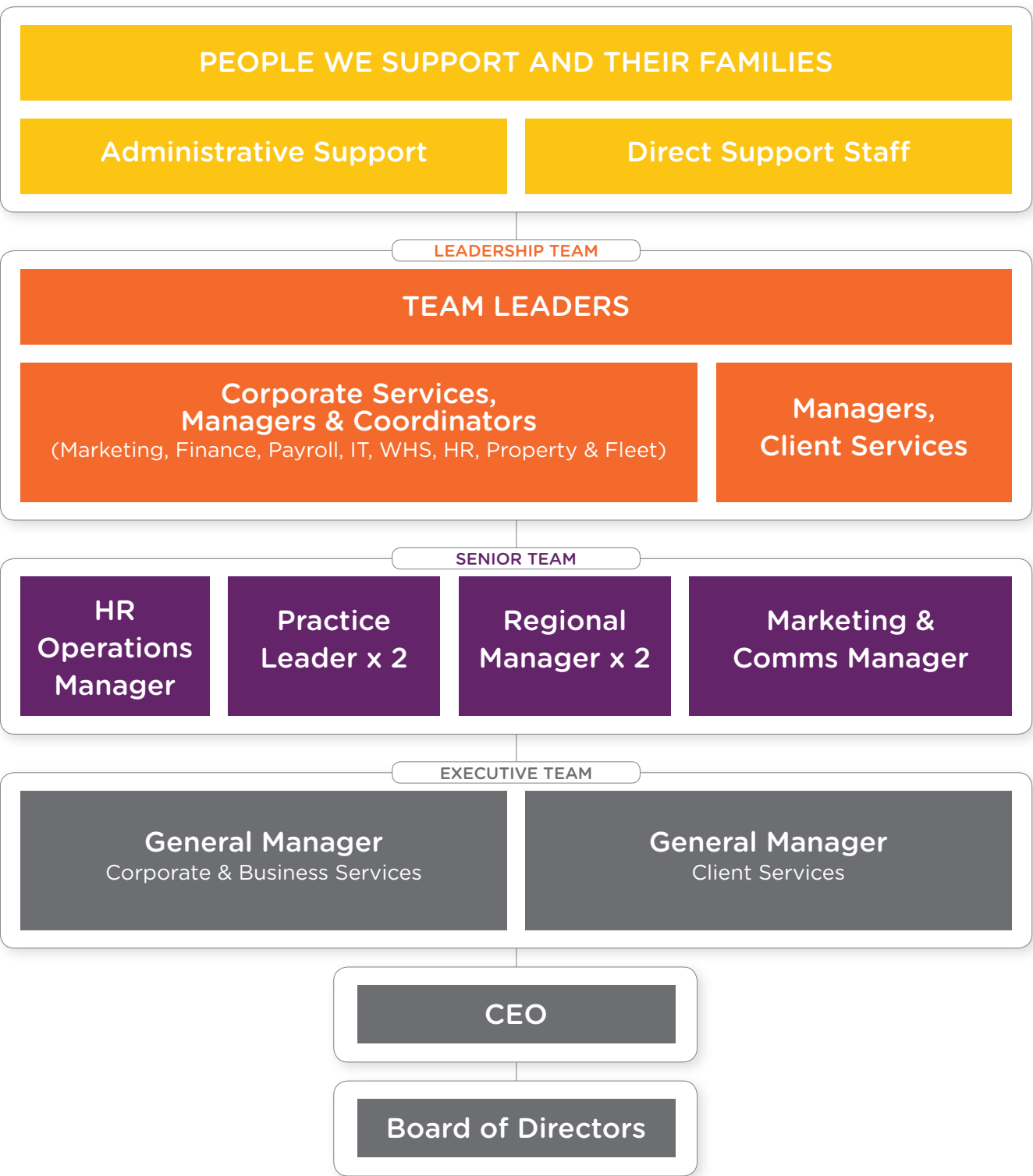
While the revenue generated by our two Business Service units is a relatively small part of our organisation, we believe they play an important role in the lives of our clients, many of whom receive other services from Unisson.

We are focused on finding appropriate work opportunities that are value for money for our business customers and deliver quality outcomes. We have been working with many of our customers for a number of years and, over that time, have developed strong relationships.

- Client Management System – already in place and used to keep client information, to measure progress against client goals, roster staff and invoice almost 3,000 separate shifts every fortnight.
- Human Resources System – we are implementing a world-class system to manage the recruitment, onboarding, development, training and succession planning of our staff.
- Finance – we are selecting a finance system that will enable us to deal with the processing demands of the NDIS and give us the information we need to make informed decisions.
- Building on our pool of trusted advisors for areas such as Information Technology, Marketing, Human Resources, Training, Workers Compensation and Property.

Like most organisations in the disability sector, we experienced our fair share of teething problems caused by the roll-out of the NDIS. However, after a year of full operation in the NDIS environment, we're confident that we have the right strategies in place, that we're making good progress against implementing those strategies, and that we're well-placed to provide outstanding support for participants in the NDIS future.

ORGANISATION CHART





“ I love cooking,  
it’s a real passion of mine.  
”

## JING TAN

### COOKING UP A BRIGHT FUTURE



#### THERE’S NO WAY TWENTY-YEAR-OLD JING TAN WAS EVER GOING TO LET ANYTHING STAND IN THE WAY OF ACHIEVING HIS DREAM JOB.

An avid cook, his ambition is to work in a kitchen. Filled with enthusiasm and passion, all he really needed was a helping hand.

With his family’s support, Jing got in touch with Unisson and joined our Transition to Work (TTW) Program. From there, we helped him identify his goals, write his resume, and learn budgeting and money handling. He was also given job training and help with catching public transport independently.

Jing has now completed a number of Middle Eastern cooking courses, and spends two days a week being cooking up a storm with Unisson staff. Jing and his Direct Support Professional (DSP), Dorine, also work on meal planning and independent grocery shopping. With the support of Dorine, Jing has even been putting together a video resume to send to potential employers – a creative and unique way to stand out from the crowd while at the same time avoiding the need for a sit-down interview, something which is often difficult for people with autism.

**“I love cooking, it’s a real passion of mine,”** says Jing. **“I’m currently working on my prep work on vegetables at the moment. I really like it!”**

With the hopes of securing a kitchen-hand position at an RSL or a local restaurant for a few hours a week, Jing is continuing to work on new recipes and experimenting in the kitchen.





“ I love being creative  
and being with everyone.”

## ASHLEIGH LINSCHOTEN

ASHLEIGH'S CREATIVITY AND SOCIAL LIFE SOARS



**ASHLEIGH LINSCHOTEN IS A 24-YEAR-OLD WOMAN WHO VALUES FRIENDS, FAMILY AND FUN.**

Bright and bubbly, she radiates enthusiasm in all that she does. So, it's no surprise that she is at her best when she is in an environment where she can be social, outgoing, creative and independent.

Ashleigh attends Unisson's Community Access Program in Frenchs Forest five days a week, and has found herself thriving in the social atmosphere. **"It's great coming here to Frenchs Forest,"** she says. **"There are so many different activities happening and I love going out with everyone – and I love getting the time to chat with each person here."**

Ashleigh especially enjoys her time within the in-house ceramics studio, where she can express her creativity and continually meet new people. **"Spending time in the ceramics studio is great,"** she says. **"It's so relaxing, I'm being creative and getting to spend time with my friends. One of my other favourite things is playing tricks on the staff! I love making people laugh, and every day we always do something funny together."**





## MCLEAN SCOTT

MCLEAN MAKING LASTING IMPRESSION AT TOP SYDNEY LAW FIRM



**MCLEAN SCOTT, 19, FROM DURAL, IS JUST LIKE MANY OTHER YOUNG AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL LEAVERS; TRYING TO PUT HIS BEST FOOT FORWARD WHEN IT COMES TO ENTERING THE COMPETITIVE SYDNEY JOB MARKET.**

However, when you take into account that Mclean lives with high functioning autism (formerly known as Asperger's), you'd be forgiven for thinking the odds are stacked against him.

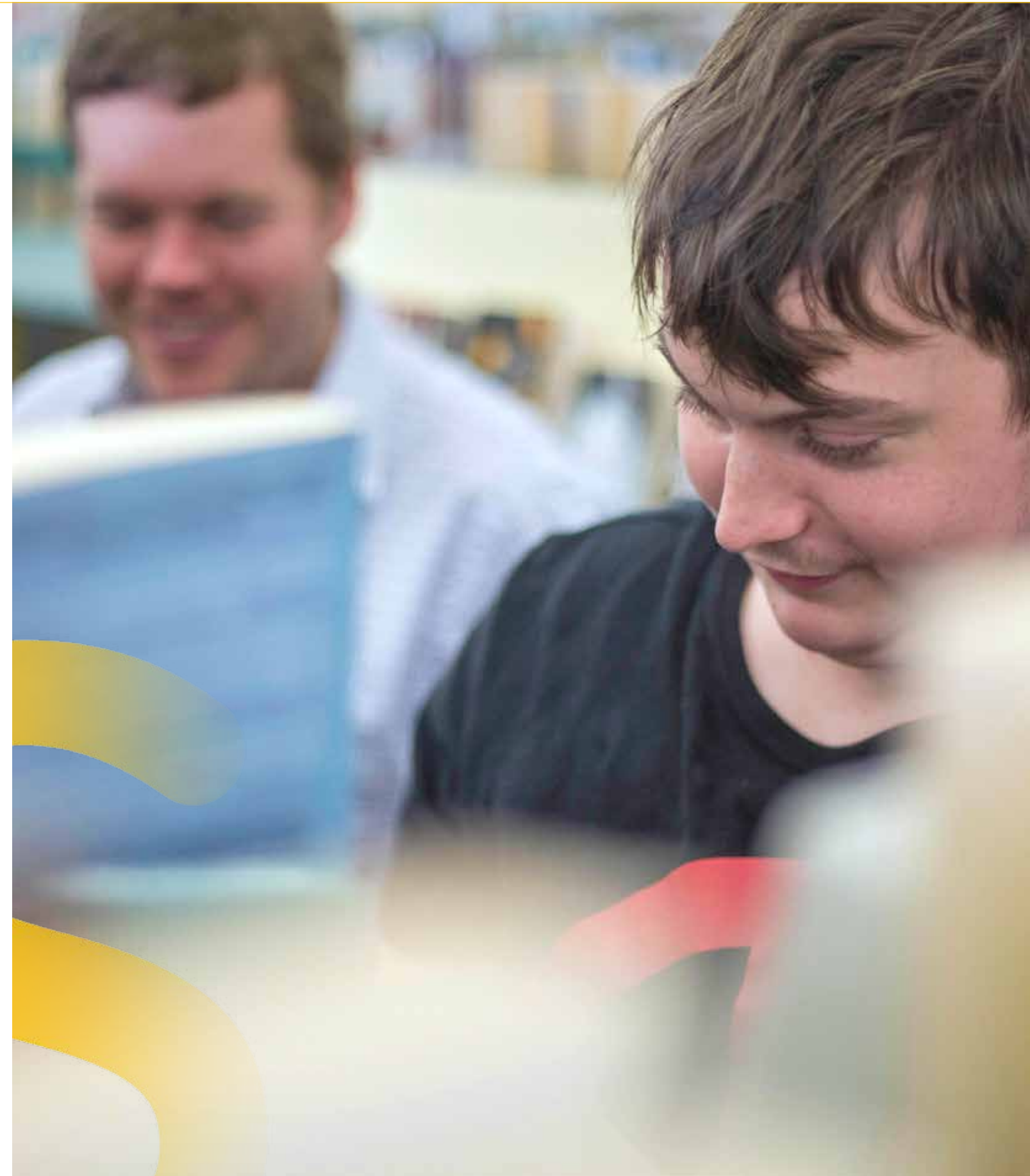
Despite the challenges he faces, Mclean is breaking down the barriers to accessing open employment with the support and guidance of our Transition to Work (TTW) program. In fact, he's now secured a work placement at DibbsBarker – a leading Australian law firm with offices in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

In his new role, Mclean has been undertaking various office and admin tasks, like data entry, scanning, photocopying, email management and stocktaking of promotional materials. **"There is a lot of variation,"** says Mclean, **"and I'm learning new skills which I'm excited to put on my resume. The people here are great, everyone has been really friendly and welcoming."**

Karen Huntington, People and Development Manager at DibbsBarker, says, **"When we were given the chance to participate in Unisson Disability's transition to work program and provide placements for school leavers with high-functioning autism, we were delighted. It's a great opportunity to be able to support these young school leavers and provide them with invaluable work experience in a corporate environment."**

Karen and the team at DibbsBarker have seen first-hand the benefits for Mclean. **"We've been able to see how important it truly is to focus on someone's ability, rather than their disability."**

**"...I'm learning new skills which I'm excited to put on my resume."**





## STEPHEN PUGH

### STEPHEN MEETS JOHN CENA



#### WRESTLING SUPERSTAR JOHN CENA OFTEN HAS SOME CHOICE WORDS FOR HIS OPPONENTS IN THE RING.

However, one of his inspirational mottos, 'Never Give Up', is something that has resonated with long-time fan and Unisson Disability participant, Stephen Pugh, from Hornsby.

Stephen lives with a flatmate in Hornsby. With his Direct Support Professional, Jess, on hand to help three times a week, he is working on managing his anxiety through regular exercise, meditation and breathing techniques.

When Stephen and Jess recently attended 'An Evening with John Cena' at The Star Casino, Stephen was understandably excited to see his wrestling idol up close. But he had no idea of the impact he would have on the superstar and the other fans attending that night.

After enjoying the first half of the show, Stephen lined up to take part in the audience questions portion of the evening. With overwhelming crowds and public speaking a trigger for Stephen's anxiety, he and Jess practiced their relaxation and breathing techniques until Stephen was called upon to ask his question.

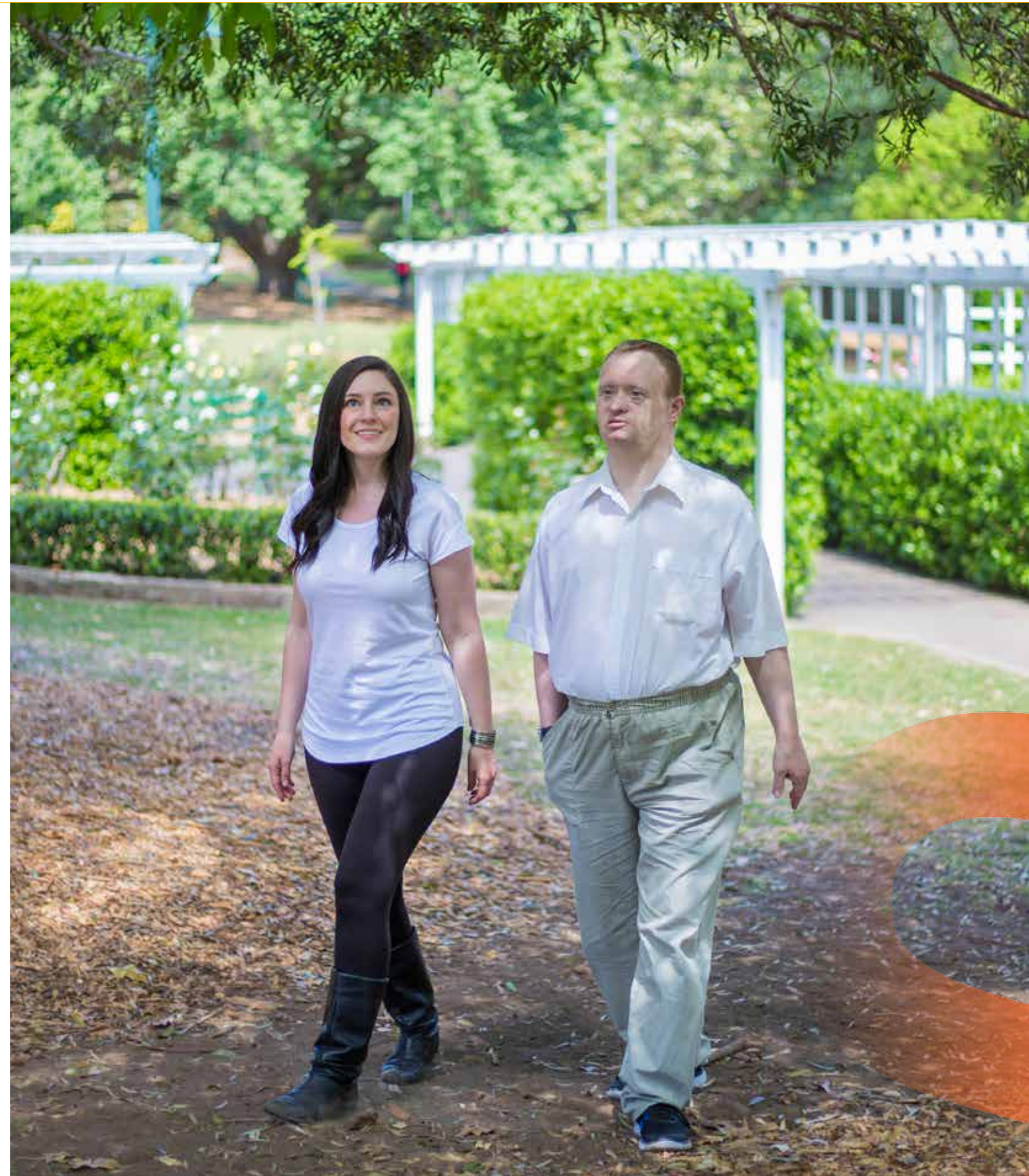
Stephen held the microphone and stated, **"I'm Stephen, and I have Down Syndrome and anxiety,"** upon which John Cena decided to come down from the stage and stand next to Stephen while he asked his question. **"Do you have any advice for dealing with anxiety?"** Stephen asked. Cena put his arm around Stephen and said, **"Always take a deep breath, try to relax, and never give up."**

After the show, Stephen was invited back stage where he had the chance to chat with John Cena and pose for photos with the king of WWE. Cena's team arranged for Stephen to go home with some promotional items, and a very touched member of the public stopped him to congratulate him on his achievement and give him a signed poster.

Overwhelmed with their evening, Stephen headed home on an absolute high. **"Jess is very supportive and she helps me a lot, especially with my anxiety,"** he says. **"I was so happy about the night."**

Jess has seen Stephen progress immensely over the last 10 months. **"I've seen a lot of change in Stephen. Previously, he wasn't participating in the community and his anxiety was overwhelming. Now he's really a part of the local community, people often recognise him and say hello. He's now going out to social activities regularly and getting ready to start a job."**

“ Always take a deep breath, try to relax, and never give up. ”





“Moving into my own place was amazing.”

## SIOBHAN CLEARY

### SIOBHAN'S PLACE TO CALL HOME



#### MOVING OUT OF THE FAMILY HOME AND INTO YOUR OWN HOUSE CAN BE DAUNTING.

However, it can also be a wonderful step for an individual's independence and personal growth. For Siobhan Cleary, 34, from the Central Coast, the experience has seen her confidence flourish.

Siobhan moved into Unisson's shared living house in Wadalba on the Central Coast six years ago, and hasn't looked back. **“Moving into my own place was amazing,”** she says. **“I was so excited to decorate my room and to hang my photos up. Living with friends is great.”**

Siobhan has especially enjoyed being able to plan and cook meals with friends, and expand her skillset in the kitchen. **“It's nice when you are cooking with a friend and eating a meal together and having a chat,”** she says.

Siobhan also loves being able to make regular plans with her family now that she lives independently. **“I love babysitting my nieces and nephew. We organise to go out and see each other a lot, and they really like my place which makes me proud.”**

She thoroughly enjoys having the independence and support to go out and attend various activities during the week and on weekends. **“I love going out to the movies, and I really enjoy volunteering at the RSPCA and helping the puppies and dogs,”** she says. **“I'm hoping to get some part-time work helping animals. I'd really love that.”**





## COREY ATKINSON

### NO BARRIERS FOR COREY



**LIKE MOST 22-YEAR-OLDS, COREY ATKINSON, LOVES HIS INDEPENDENCE AND HEADING OUT TO EXPLORE THE CITY.**

So, he wasn't going to let his disability get in the way of his freedom!

Corey was matched with Harry, a Direct Support Professional from Unisson, and together they have been undertaking travel training. Twice a week, they head out on a new adventure.

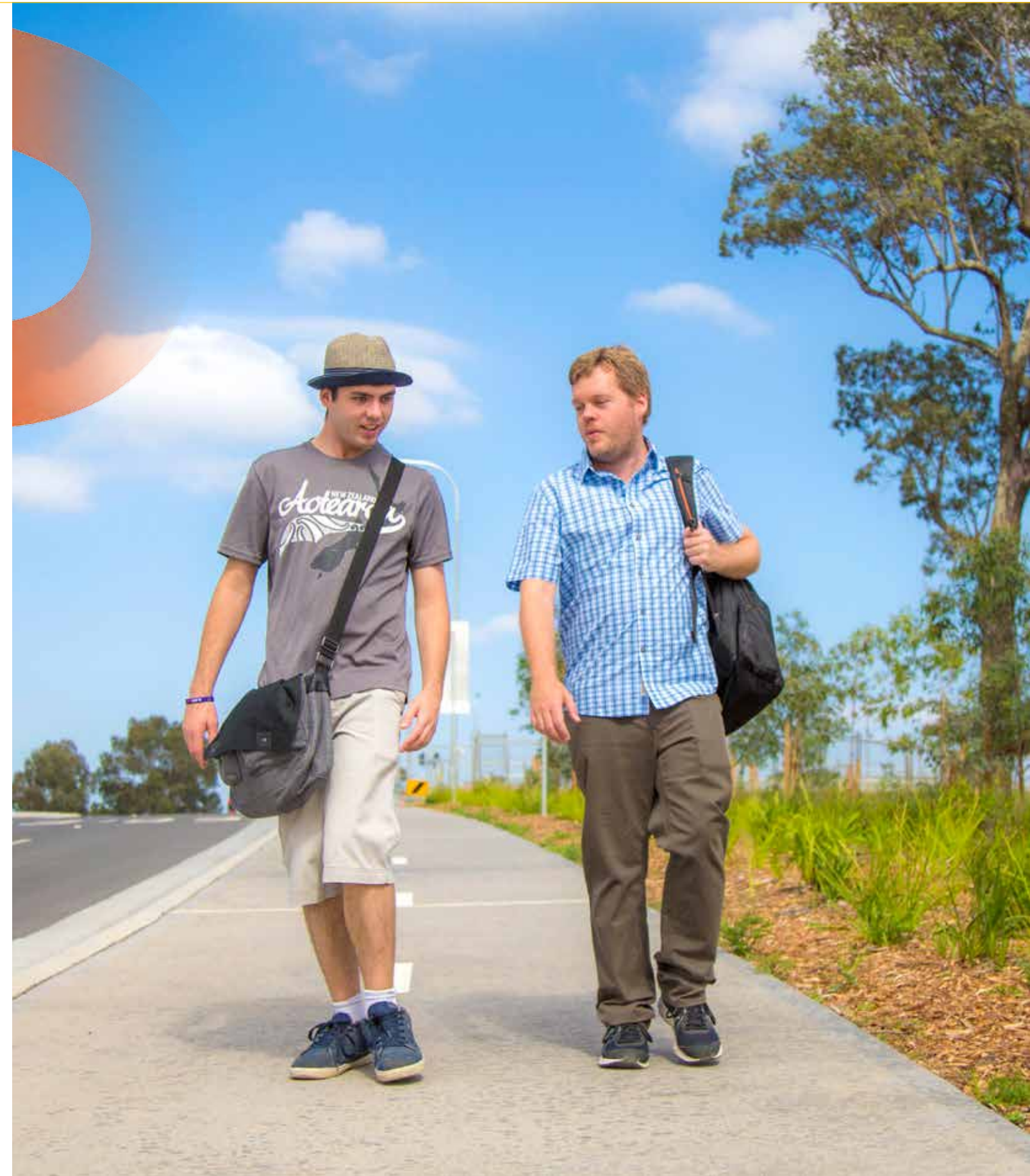
It's been a heart-warming experience for Corey, whose progress and independence has grown immensely.

**"I love doing the travel training with Harry, I feel more confident,"** he says. **"We go out to all types of places and he's a really kind and helpful person."**

Harry believes the travel training has also improved other areas of Corey's life. **"I've seen such a growth in Corey's ability to have conversations with other people, and he's much more confident in social settings. He's come such a long way since we first started working together. He used to be very nervous and that's no longer the case."**

Corey is now looking brightly toward his future. **"I'm excited to be able to go out on my own."** says Corey. **"I love being independent."**

**"I love doing the travel training with Harry, I feel more confident."**





## LENDLEASE COMMUNITY DAY 2017

SMALL ACTS, BIG REWARDS



### UNISSON DISABILITY'S SHARED LIVING HOME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE CENTRAL COAST, IS HOME TO THREE YOUNG RESIDENTS WITH COMPLEX SUPPORT NEEDS AND HIGH-LEVEL MEDICAL CARE.

The home seeks to be a caring and comfortable environment where the residents, all of whom have spent lengthy periods of time in hospital, can receive the support they require but also enjoy the social and fun aspects of being young individuals living together.

With their unimpeded passion to enjoy life to the fullest and overcome challenges, the residents and staff of Friendship Place were the inspiration behind Lendlease nominating the property to be the beneficiary of their time and efforts on the company's annual 'Community Day'.

Community Day, one of the Lendlease Foundation's most popular programs, is an initiative which enables employees to nominate a cause of their choosing and volunteer their time and skills to make a meaningful and positive contribution to the local community.

It was an honour to welcome a team of 20 Lendlease employees from Erina Fair Shopping Centre to the Unisson shared living home for young people.

The team kicked off the day's project early in the morning, and worked tirelessly for a full day revitalising the property's gardens and outdoor pergola area, building a herb garden, creating sensory gardens, providing fresh coats of paint, undertaking internal building repairs and AV upgrades, and even a collaboration with renowned local modern indigenous artist, Grant Molony, to create a 12-metre-long mural in the garden.

According to Lendlease representative Tarita Potestas, **"Our Community Day is all about giving back to our local community. When we heard about the amazing work being done at Unisson's shared residence for youth, and the inspirational residents, we knew this was a worthwhile cause. We were thrilled to volunteer our time to this project, and we can't wait to hear how the residents and staff enjoy the new additions and improvements."**

“ Our Community Day is all about giving back to our local community. ”





## EXECUTIVE AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



Rebecca Fletcher



Gail Jeltres



David Kneeshaw



Cathy Gauci



Jennie Broadley



Katrina Jackson



Rashika Islam



Charlie Doane



Karen Bird

### UNISSON DISABILITY'S SENIOR LEADERS ASSIST IN FORMULATING OUR OVERALL STRATEGIC DIRECTION, AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION ALONG WITH MANAGING RESOURCES AND OPERATIONS.

Our Senior Leaders are highly skilled individuals from a variety of backgrounds, each of whom is passionate about creating opportunities for the people with whom

we work. During the last year we appointed two Regional Managers to the senior team. This addition to our structure provides leadership depth as well as the capacity to be even better organised, in order to support our clients while reducing structural costs.

Supported by more than 60 like-minded and capable leaders throughout the organisation, Unisson's success is a true collaborative effort.

#### REBECCA FLETCHER Unisson Disability CEO

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 was recently accepted as a Fellow with the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In her spare time, Rebecca 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.

#### 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.

#### DAVID KNEESHAW General Manager, Corporate & Business Services

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

He brings to Unisson Disability 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 had significant international experience, having worked in the UK, US and Australia, with long tenures in a Top Four professional services firm and a top 100 listed global organisation.

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.

#### 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 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, which 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 improving and growing our accommodation services to ensure the organisation maintains its place within the disability sector. Cathy gets her inspiration from the people Unisson Disability supports and she loves being with people and hearing their stories. It's 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. More recently, Jennie has taken on the Transition To Work and Community Justice 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.

#### KATRINA JACKSON Manager, Marketing & Communications

Katrina has a Bachelors 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 Bachelor Degree in Human Resources Management (HRM) and Business from the UK and is a member of the AHRI (Australian Human Resources Institute). With over seven years of experience in the field of Human Resources, and having worked across different industries including manufacturing, 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.

#### CHARLIE DOANE Regional Manager

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 managed accommodation facilities of 33 residents and a cluster model of individual units on one site. 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.

#### KAREN BIRD Regional Manager

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, feeling excited about the future and what it holds for the people Unisson Disability supports and their families.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Steven Gregg

David Hardy

Peter Horton

Janet Kneeshaw

Alex Gelman

Associate Professor  
Roberta Ryan

Dr Gillian Brooks

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

Steven is a highly experienced investment and commercial banker with extensive Australian and international executive experience with ABN AMRO (as Senior Executive Vice President and Global Head of Investment Banking), 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, consultant to Grant Samuel and Director of William Inglis & Son 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.

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

Initially training as an infants' 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.

**ALEX GELMAN**  
**M COMM**

Alex brings over 25 years of practical business and technology experience to clients who want to leverage technology to grow or rationalise their business.

Currently Lead Partner in Technology Advisory and Solutions at Grant Thornton Australia, his focus on strategic technology advice, business technology transformation and cloud solutions has enabled his clientele to grow and compete in the digital age. Previously Director and Founder of c9 Solutions and Consult Point, Alex's expertise covers a large range of business technology transformations including technologies across ERP, CRM, projects, Case management, intranet and collaboration, unified communications and supporting infrastructure.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**  
**ROBERTA RYAN**

**BA (Hons), B.Soc.Sc( Hons),**  
**Grad.Dip**

Associate 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.

**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.



## 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, and
- 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. In addition, the Board encourages and stimulates the generation of new ideas, creativity and innovation that can benefit the organisation.

## WHEN THE BOARD MEETS

The Board meets eight times each calendar year, or as often as 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 44-45 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 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, IT 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 Disability'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

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 organisations 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.

## OUR FUNDING SOURCES

The innovative projects mentioned earlier in this report would not have happened without the support of our funding sources.

We acknowledge the support of the State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies listed below in delivering our services to the people we support.

## NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT

Family & Community Services - Ageing, Disability & Home Care (ADHC)

## COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)

Department of Social Services

Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA)





6 West Street, Pymble NSW 2073

**T** 1300 266 222

[unissondisability.org.au](http://unissondisability.org.au)