



# Annual Report 2015/16

## Our Vision

**'A community inspired and empowered by people of all ages, abilities and differences'**

We will focus on our vision and direct all activities towards its achievement.

## Our Mission

**'To be a leader in quality aged and disability services enabling people to have meaningful connections to their communities'**

## Our Values

**Our values underpin our organisation and provide a framework for our practice.**

**> Respect**

Beliefs, feelings and values of individuals are acknowledged

**> Empowerment**

Person and family directed services recognising individual's strengths

**> Quality**

Professionalism and quality in everything we do

**> New Learning**

Encouraging personal development and innovative thinking



# Who Are We



**For over 40 years Mpower has been supporting families and individuals in south western Victoria to have real and meaningful connections to the communities they live in.**

This year our strategic focus has been on ensuring our organisation is well prepared for the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We have been working hard to ensure we have the right systems and structures in place to ensure strong governance, effective management, streamlined reporting and information and robust financial management.

As a united one 'Mpower' team we look forward to working with our clients and their families – joining with you on your journey.

The organisation was initially formed in Warrnambool in 1975, by families who had children with disabilities but no access to specialist services apart from those provided in Melbourne.

Over the years the organisation has grown to become an accredited agency that has a reputation for being inclusive and highly professional, demonstrating innovative, responsive and contemporary practice in the provision of a range of disability services for people from birth to their senior years who require assistance.

Mpower is committed to being a well recognised agency within south west Victoria. We are dedicated to being a service provider and

employer of choice for aged and disability services.

Centrally based in Warrnambool, our services are provided by quality staff in a respectful and flexible manner and in a way that empowers families and individuals.

A full range of outreach services are provided to people in Camperdown, Hamilton, Portland, Lismore and Geelong and other regional centres. Services are provided in or close to the communities where people live and those that surround them.

We pride ourselves on instilling new learning which encourages personal development, innovative thinking and identifying creative solutions to challenges and change.

We aim to be seen as the place to contact for services, resources and information enabling families and individuals to have real and meaningful connections to the communities they live in.

We work in close partnership with the community, corporate entities and governments to achieve quality aged and disability services that are appropriate and that offer real choice and control to our clients and their families.



## Mr Geoff Handbury AO

Mr Geoff Handbury AO has been Patron of Mpower since 2010. Mr Handbury promotes the mission, values, aims and objectives of the organisation and Mpower is delighted to have him as our Patron.

Mpower acknowledges Mr Handbury's generosity in donating \$100,000 towards the purchase of land for the construction of a new Respite and Therapy Centre.





# Committee of Management



## David Beggs

**President** BVSc MVS

Cert IV in workplace training and assessment,  
Masters in Ed (in progress)

Veterinarian

– Warrnambool Veterinary Clinic;

- Faculty of Veterinary Science, The University of Melbourne
- Member of the Management Review & Staffing Sub Committee
- Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub Committee
- Joined board in 2005



## Neil Ballard

**Vice President** B Ec, Dip Ed

- Rural Access Project Officer – Warrnambool City Council
- Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub Committee
- Member of the Management Review & Staffing Sub Committee
- Joined the board in 2011



## Adam Kempton

**Treasurer** LL. B., B. Ec.

Lawyer, Company Director, Business Proprietor, Not For Profit Board Memberships

- Joined the board in 1997
- Treasurer
- Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub Committee



## Rhys Boyle

B.Bus

Grad. Dip. Health Service Managements

- Member of Finance, Audit and Risk Sub Committee
- Joined the board in 2015



## Helen Bayne

B.Comm;

Cert IV in workplace training and assessment,  
Masters in Ed (in progress)

Senior partnership broker

– South West Local Learning & Employment Network

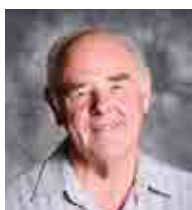
- Member of Management Review and Staff Sub Committee
- Joined the board in 2013



## David Beard

Diploma of Management, Bachelor of Education  
Secondary Teacher – Emmanuel College

- Joined the board in 2013



## Vern Robson

P.S.M., C.P.A.

Trustee and Company Director.

- Trustee for the A.L. Lane Foundation
- Member of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee
- Joined the board in 2001
- Retired December, 2015



## Brad O'Connor

Bachelor of Commerce (Deakin), Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia (ICAA)

Accountant – Wannon Water

- Member of the Finance & Audit Sub Committee
- Joined the board in 2013
- Retired February, 2016

## Life Membership – Vern Robson

Mpower was thrilled to recognise Vern Robson for his longstanding support of Mpower in November, 2015.

Vern Robson has long been a supporter of Mpower. When the group was in the establishment phase Vern through his municipal role, supported and encouraged the early committee in their task of starting out. He actively facilitated a meeting area and activity space for the group to establish Possum's Nest Toy Library (the ECDP building).

Vern joined the Mpower Committee of Management in 2001. His strong commitment to Mpower and the needs of families with special needs was both tangible and enduring.

In particular his willingness to be involved as a member of two sub-committees: the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and Human Resources Committee has contributed to the stability and strength of the organisation.

Over the past five years the COM have been particularly advantaged by Vern's readiness to assist with sourcing a suitable property, engaging stakeholders and assistance with fundraising for Mpower House.

Vern's generosity with both time and knowledge has been of significant value to the organisation through this critical time of advancement. Mpower is grateful for his input over the past 14 years and his skills will be missed.

**Vern joins Life Members Sue Henry, Gail Horne, Judy Jongebloed, Cath Lourey, Phyllis McLeish and Glynis Purcell.**

# CEO & President's Report

**Our vision is "A community inspired and empowered by people of all ages, abilities and differences'. All the services we provide and the work we do is aimed at achieving this vision.**

*"... There is no question the NGO disability sector is best placed to deliver services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. NGO disability services employ highly skilled staff who are critical to supporting people with disability to realise their goals. They are community-run organisations that harness enormous social capital in communities the government could never hope to replicate, and they are ready to meet the demands of the NDIS and offer real choice and control to people..."*

**– David Moody Victorian Manager, National Disability Services.**

Welcome to the 41st Annual Report of Mpower for the 2015-16 year. The year has been one of particular satisfaction with the achievement of three essential tools for our service growth and development. Our Respite and Therapy Centre was completed with thanks to the generosity of the community appeal and funding from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. The purchase and implementation of a new Client Management software system took place early in 2016 and the Committee of Management adopted a Strategic Plan focused on guiding our work for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) commencement in 2017.

"Mpower House" (the Respite and Therapy Centre) was completed at the end of the reporting year to the great satisfaction of families, staff and Mpower Management. Community members who have looked through the center are truly thrilled with the results which provide a quality community resource. Most importantly the children and young people using the house for respite, after school care and Weekend Get Aways absolutely love being there in the warm and home like environment.

The new house has allowed Mpower to accommodate children for out-of-home care as well as offer many hours of after school respite. The new venue has allowed the development of extra programs for pre-teenage children as well as youth group based activities. Our Totally Awesome Parents (TAP) group meets regularly in the living area of the house for their lunch meetings when it is not being used for respite care.

As we have been preparing on a strategic level for the NDIS, Mpower House offers the physical location to provide a wide range of services to NDIS customers along with Mpower aged services clients. Mpower is a registered NDIS provider servicing several families through their NDIS packages with therapy and community access activities of their choice over the past twelve months.

The new Client Management System was the culmination of a successful collaborative approach by five Community Southwest member agencies. Community Southwest conducted a thorough process of due diligence to investigate client management software. The project involved selection, purchase and implementation of software to assist members of Community Southwest with efficient processing of client information for service delivery.

Icon Global - Carelink+ was chosen as the preferred vendor and agreed to deal with the five organisations as a single consortium. This enabled very significant cost savings of sharing the licence fee between the five organisations and reducing the individual user licence fees.

**This software will ensure that Mpower and other members of the Community Southwest alliance are in a strong position to adapt to all changes occurring within the community service sector as it progresses towards the customer focussed NDIS.**

The Mpower Strategic Plan adopted in the last quarter of the reporting year will prepare the organisation for the introduction of the NDIS in October 2017. The plan was developed to meet the recommendations of a report commissioned and received late in 2015. The report examined Mpower's readiness for the NDIS and provided base data on which to develop the strategic plan and a series of strategic projects across 6 areas of the organisation.

This requires whole of organisation transformation from a securely government funded agency to a market driven organisation operating in a competitive financial environment. The change encompasses all internal systems and requires Mpower to move from program based operations to a whole of organisation 'one Mpower' enterprise.

The complexity of the changes required in the timelines covered by the strategic plan are best shown with the use of a 'Balanced Scorecard' plan which is operationalised through the delivery of six projects. The Balanced Scorecard requires interaction between the six projects and facilitates reporting against four essential perspectives across the organisation.

- Clients
- Internal
- Organisational Development
- Financial

Each project has a leader and several dedicated team members and cover the following areas:

**1. Governance** - this project undertakes a skills and capability assessment of the Committee of Management to adapt to the new NDIS environment, establishes 'nominations' committee guidelines for new Committee of Management members and assesses skills gaps in the board, identifying external contractors to supplement staff skills as required.

**2. NDIS transition** - clients and markets project requires mapping of the current services into a benefit risk matrix plus the mapping of potential services into similar benefit/risk matrix including assessment of client type and market coverage. The project will recommend changes to current program and service offer, including assessment of;

- Financial viability
- Resource capability

- Competitive environment
- Client need and benefits

**3. Transformation of workforce and culture project** undertakes a skills and capability assessment of the organisation to adapt to the new NDIS environment. The project will identify suitable culture development programs to support the transition along with suitable customer service training programs. This project, with leadership from a contracted skilled human resources professional will recommend amendments to the organisation structure for CEO approval. This project will also identify successful customer in-take systems and workforce attraction strategies.

**4. Financial plans and modelling project** will develop modelling tools that enable forecasting showing the impact of NDIS on: capital reserves, working capital and program viability.

**5. New systems and modelling** will oversee the implementation of the new Carelink+ client management system and associated internal processes including

- Hardware planning
- Staff training
- Documentation
- Ongoing Support arrangements
- Financial software options
- Management information
- NDIA compliance

**6. Back office cost sharing project**, in line with Mpower principles identify potential strategic partners for cost sharing of back office functions. The project will then review potential models for cost sharing partnerships from Memorandum of Understanding to independent entity. Further to this the project would identify the scope of potential shared services including; IT systems management, financial management, HR Services including payroll, quality assurance, NDIA compliance, marketing services, legal and advocacy, workforce development and training.

National Disability Services (NDS) - the disability services peak body- has played a pivotal role in support and education for its members and the disability sector through the year of constant change and disruption as NDIS moved from trial sites to full roll out.

Mpower has continued to value its membership of NDS which is enhanced with the CEO's continued membership of the State Committee, being



successfully re-elected to a further three year term late in 2015. Mpower staff and Committee of Management members have continued to avail themselves of many opportunities for training and information updates provided by NDS as they have presented throughout the year both locally and in Melbourne and Sydney.

Mpower has proudly embraced the 'Zero Tolerance framework' developed by the NDS over the past twelve months. Mpower's CEO is acknowledged in the 'Safeguarding for Boards' document for her role as a member of the 'NDS working group.' The guide was produced to support Boards of Management in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of people with disability. NDS Victoria was instrumental in the development and rollout of the Zero Tolerance framework which was done in acknowledgement that people with disabilities continue to be at greater risk of abuse and neglect than people without a disability. Mpower has in place policies and preventative measures to ensure that individuals are free from discrimination, exploitation, abuse, harm, neglect and violence.

### **Mpower is also proudly a Child safe organisation in line with Child safe legislation introduced in 2016.**

Mpower continues to be a quality assured organisation having maintained its QIP accredited status for the past 12 years.

An important way of providing quality services sees Mpower continue to ensure staff are continually keeping abreast of new learning which is also one of the values we hold dear. Throughout the year several staff have successfully completed Diploma and Post Graduate studies ranging from management and administration skills to case management. Mpower is very proud of the staff who undertake extra learning at their own volition, with full support from the organisation.

To ensure we provide connected up services to the community we continue to develop and nurture new and existing partnerships across the community sector. Strong relationships with Brophy Youth and Family services, Warrnambool City Council, Lyndoch Living, Bethany, Western District Employment Access, West Vic, STAY Residential services (Hamilton), Kyeema (Portland)

continue to prosper providing the capacity for an extended range of services to people in our communities. Partnerships with STAY Residential Services and Kyeema allow the ongoing provision of holiday and after school respite programs in Hamilton and Portland respectively.

Once again Mpower is thankful for the support of a dedicated group of skilled volunteers providing direction for the organisation on our Committee of Management. This group continue to give their time generously to the ever changing requirements and knowledge levels as the sector moves consistently through and towards major change. Boards today in the disability sector are facing change at an unprecedented level and speed and are to be commended for their dedication to their communities.

We have a number of very generous volunteers providing building maintenance, program assistance and community transport. Mpower is indebted to these people for their generosity and commitment. Mpower's Community Transport program is completely reliant on volunteers as drivers and we offer a special thank you to this group who are extremely important in the lives of those they drive for.

Mpower looks confidently to the future, the dramatic changes of the NDIS and the hope it offered people with a disability for more control over their lives. Mpower's highly skilled staff are energised by the opportunities the changes offer within the system and are anticipating the difference they can make in the lives of people with disabilities.

**CEO – Kerry Nelson**  
**President – David Beggs**



# Harley's Story

## So proud of this boy...

We have been working with Mpower (early childhood intervention) for 18 mths as part of their playgroup program which focuses on behaviours and routines.

The staff there have been a godsend to all of us, teaching us how to manage Harley the best way we can and being a huge support when we've needed help, I could go on about how much help they are to any family who has a special needs child or one that needs to catch up on a specific area.

When we started, getting Harley to sit on a mat and listen to a song was absolutely impossible, over the 18mths things have gotten better, his concentration is improving. Today it took him a bit of courage, he went out of his comfort zone and played "Ted In a box" at mat time...go him!!! He faces every challenge with absolute guts.



## Planning for the Future - 'One Mpower'

### **The organisation continued to prepare for the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.**

In recognition of the need to transform the organisation from a securely government funded agency to one that operates in a competitive financial environment a new Strategic Plan was developed. The Plan covers all internal systems and identifies how Mpower will move from program based operations to a whole of organisation 'one Mpower' enterprise.

The five key objectives of the Strategic Plan are:

- Contemporary Governance, exemplary leadership
- Identify new opportunities in core services
- Systems development, systems utilisation
- Culture, transitioning people and culture
- Improve facilities and resources to support professional delivery of services



# 'One Mpower'

**Mpower staff recently came together to hear and learn more about the various roles and programs within Mpower in an effort to break down the silos and build a 'one Mpower.'**

**This is how Rachel Condon explained her role as a Disability Support Worker at Mpower. Her words were powerful and captured the values she brings to her role every day.**

*"Hello everyone my name is Rachel and I am a disability support worker here at Mpower.*

*I am going to take this opportunity to share a brief picture of what disability support workers do within Mpower.*

*I work alongside adults and children who have a range of disabilities.*

*All of our clients have their own unique histories, their own personalities and their own individual goals.*

*As support workers we have the opportunity each and every day to empower our clients and help develop and maintain personal independence in the community and homes.*

*We do this by providing in home personal care, respite options and also with providing recreational activities, such as Active Oceans, Youth Group and the School Holiday program.*

*Whilst working closely with individuals we have the opportunity to build a strong rapport with them and also their caregivers.*

*There are opportunities to share in remarkable changes to one's life; to witness the progression that one has made, with the assistance of you and other supports in their lives. To see that with a little bit of assistance every person can meet his or her goals. An example of this could be having a*

*client who at the beginning of their respite were not able to go to the shops without a*

*meltdown or trying to collect everything on the shelves, to then developing many different strategies until we found the right one, now they are able to go to the shops and collect what is needed with only the occasional sneaky basket slip.*

*Another example that I would like to share from Active Oceans, seeing a client attend for the first time too scared to go in the water. Being able to cheer them on and encourage them to enter and then seeing week by week the improvement. When they can stand up, you can see the pride in their face- they look at everyone else that is there including people that they have created friendships with, seeing them share in the joy of what they have accomplished.*

*Due to the nature of our job, our hours vary from early mornings to late nights, even sleepovers and anything else in between. We may have one individual client on a daily or weekly basis, others we may see only on School Holidays, Active Oceans or when respite is needed. In reality this means that we may have back to back days where we are extremely busy, where other times we have no shifts for a couple of days. Although we do this job because we have a passion, a passion to participate alongside others, to see how much happiness we can bring to another person. We are helping people that without us may not have the opportunity to live a quality life that they deserve.*





## Major Projects

As one exciting infrastructure project was completed, preparations for more improvements commenced as the organisation planned for the re-development of its existing premises

### Mpower House

Located opposite Mpower's head office at 84-86 Koroit Street, Warrnambool, Mpower House provides a venue for respite and therapy services for people with disabilities. The \$1 million house was completed in May 2016.

Various age groups from preschool to aged people and their carers will be able to access the house, that will include a self-contained studio with fully accessible ensuite facilities for respite

purposes as well as a large open activity/utility space to be used for school holiday programs and youth groups.

Funding for the redevelopment was supported through the continued generosity of individuals and organisations who contributed to the public appeal launched in 2014.

*Our aim is to deliver the best possible outcomes for our clients.*

# The Year in Numbers

388

Hours of  
NDIS services  
provided

149

Children  
provided  
with an ECIS  
service

45

New carers  
joined Carer  
Support  
program

4074

Hours of  
respite for  
older carers  
provided

4858

Hours of  
Integrated  
Family  
Services  
delivered

78

Clients were  
registered for  
the Integrated  
Family Services  
Program

42

New Early  
Intervention  
referrals

370

Families  
supported  
through the  
Parent Support  
Program

2204

Hours of  
counselling  
and support  
provided to  
carers

58

Children  
supported  
through  
Helping  
Children with  
Autism and  
Better Start  
programs

456

Volunteer  
hours of  
Community  
Transport

33

Community  
education  
sessions  
presented by  
deaf Access

49

IFS clients  
provided  
with financial  
support

27

Families  
supported  
with their  
transition from  
kindergarten  
to school

380

Community  
Transport  
trips

5354

Kilometres

2657

Hours of  
Weekend  
Getaways  
provided

62%

of IFS clients  
had exposure  
to family  
violence



# Our Services

## Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS)

ECIS aims to improve the lives of infants and children 0-6 with a disability or developmental delay and their families through the provision of specialised early intervention support.

A range of services are provided including speech and occupational therapy, developmental assessments, family support and co-ordination and support to early childhood and care settings to promote access and meaningful participation.

## Integrated Family Services

Integrated Family Services (IFS) provides a range of supports and interventions for vulnerable children, youth and families experiencing difficulties in their family relationships and environment. IFS aims to enhance the safety, stability and development of children and adolescents by focusing on strengthening the capacity of parents to provide basic care, ensure safety and promote their child's development.

Actions may include:

- counselling
- parent education
- household management
- outreach
- case management

## Disability Programs

These programs are designed to enable participants to take part in both Mpower activities based in the community and other community activities of choice, and are available for families of children, young people and adults with disabilities.

The programs include:

- School Holiday Programs
- Weekend Getaways
- Active Oceans
- Youth Group/High Flyers

## Deaf Access Victoria

The deaf Access program assists community organisations and services to work more effectively with deaf and hard-of-hearing people by raising awareness in the local community about their needs and the problems they experience.

Information relating to deafness or hearing loss is provided for deaf and hard-of-hearing people, their families or carers, services that work with deaf and hard-of-hearing people and for the general community.

## Carer Support Program

The Carer Support Program provides support, information and referral to carers of people who are frail aged 65+, 50+ indigenous, have a chronic illness or disability or people of any age with dementia.

## Sturgeon View Holiday House

Available for rent, Sturgeon View Holiday House has been designed to cater for people with a wide range of disabilities. Sturgeon View is situated at Dunkeld.

## Community Transport

Community Transport provides flexible transport arrangements for those who are disadvantaged accessing transport to allow them to attend health or community support services.

## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Mpower has been providing services for registered individuals and families who moved into the region from NDIS trial sites.

## Toy Library

The special needs toy library provides information for parents and lends play materials and educational toys and equipment to facilitate the growth and development of infants and children with disabilities. Borrowing is available for people of all ages.

## Other Funding

Mpower provides services funded by a range of support packages consisting of different levels of funding to purchase services to meet the individual needs of the client/family. This includes Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) and Better Start services.

*Our aim is to deliver the best possible outcomes for our clients.*



# The Year in Review

**Mpower values underpin our organisation and provide the framework for our practice. Here are some highlights from this year, showing how our values are reflected in all aspects of our work.**

## Reflecting Our Values

### Quality – Professionalism and quality in everything we do.

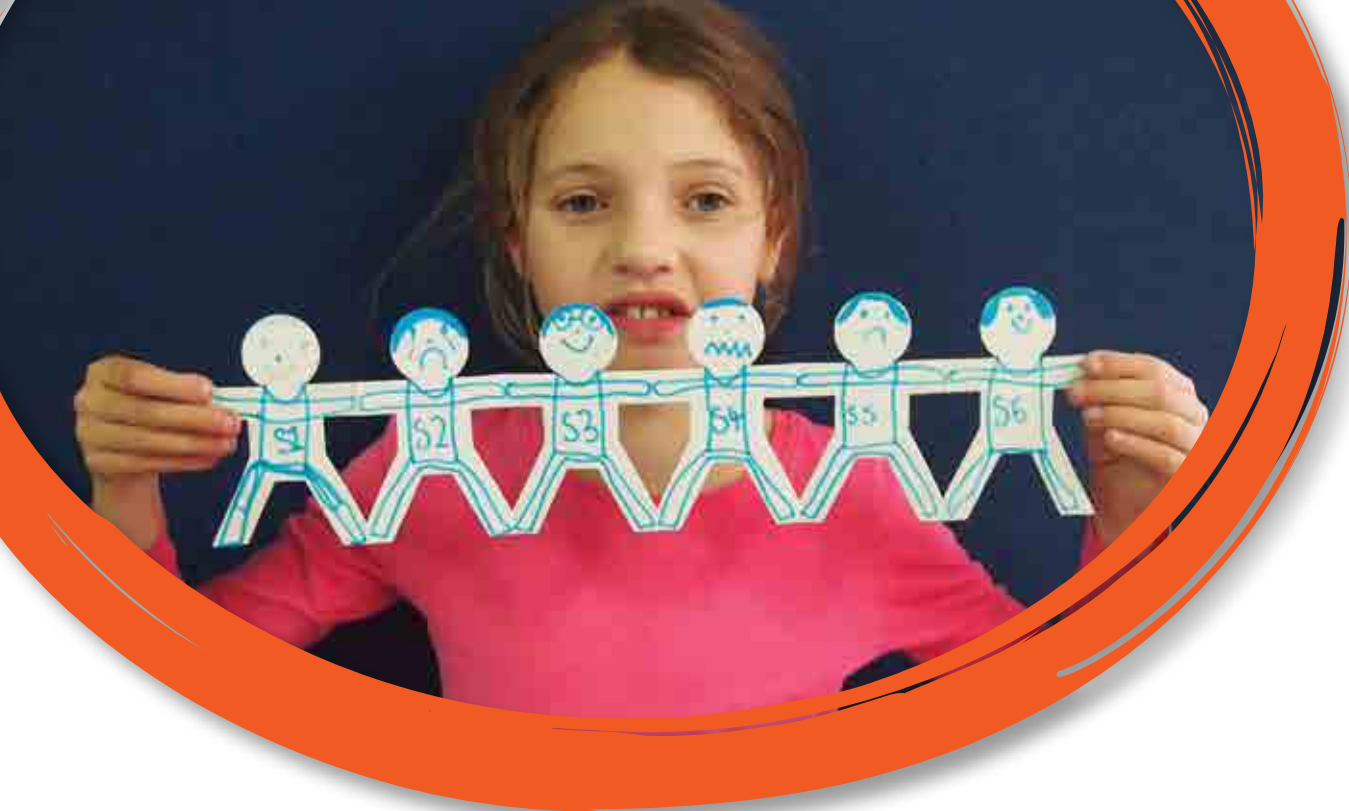
- The ECIS Manager was successfully nominated for the Early Childhood Intervention Association Victoria Working Group – Best Practice.
- The introduction of a new client management system Carelink+ was enthusiastically received by staff. The implementation has seen a variety of changes to administrative processes from the transferring of data from existing data bases to replacing manual systems of HR monitoring and the case noting function. Carelink+ will enable effective NDIS billing to occur.
- The need for an additional speech pathologist with particular experience with school aged children was identified and successful recruitment occurred. This is in preparation for the NDIS environment, where experience from trial sites has shown a spike in requests for therapies in this age group.
- Six children were registered for using their NDIS funding with Mpower early childhood intervention and therapy service. The ECIS Manager has played a key role in ensuring the ECIS Team is prepared for the full roll-out of NDIS and able to provide the range of supports required by children and their parents.
- Mpower were successful in being allocated funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for a Targeted Care Package (TCP) to support the needs of a young person. A TCP is aimed at supporting a child or young person to enable them to transition from residential care when their needs could be better met in an alternative form of placement but the existing models of care or levels of support are insufficient to support a successful transition. It also provides funding for a Key Worker who acts in a case management role.
- Mpower was publicly congratulated at a Targeted Care Package forum on the collaboration between departments and their innovative thinking.
- The introduction of IT program Care Monkey was very successful, enabling parents and carers to regularly update information on their child. This resulted in an increase in the number of people seeking access to our services, particularly Active Oceans.
- As part of the SW Alliance, Mpower was successful in obtaining \$330,621 of additional funding for the West Division-South West from the Child FIRST and Family Services Demand funding submission. As a result Mpower had an increase in Integrated Family Services (IFS) target clients and hours equating to \$25,000. A small proportion of this funding was allocated to Mpower to continue to provide the Totally Awesome Parents (TAP) program and enhance the Supported Playgroup initiative with ECIS services.
- The IFS annual survey gained a 100% satisfaction rate for IFS workers understanding and meeting family needs, respect for confidentiality and privacy, and flexibility in service delivery.



- Employment contracts were updated for all staff and additional pre-employment safety screenings implemented.
- Identifying the important role a webpage plays in effective communication work began on the re-development of the Mpower website midway through the reporting year.
- To reflect 'Customer Service Excellence' a new telephone answering process was developed.

*'real choice and control for our clients and their families'*





## Reflecting Our Values

### Respect – Beliefs, feelings and values of individuals are acknowledged

- The Parent Support program offered a number of activities designed to support, assist and provide information for parents/carers of infants, children and young people with disabilities.
- The Parent Support Program supported families to participate in Key Word Sign Basic Workshops and also the NDIS 'Planning for the Future' Forum.
- Emergency care was provided for children on occasions and seven weeks of emergency in-home care for one family in need. It was pleasing to see how quickly and effectively Mpower were able to respond to the needs of these families, pulling a care team together with very short notice.
- A program was developed to address the discrimination that many Seeing Eye dog owners experience in the community, demonstrating and promoting the rights of guidance dogs.
- Deaf Access responded to the recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence that stated that community awareness and prevention programs and activities use language, imagery and messaging that reflect the diversity of the Victorian community. A wallet sized flip card was developed that provides simple information on family violence and abuse and two local contacts for anyone seeking help.
- An Auslan performing arts event was arranged in Geelong that brought together deaf community together to celebrate the richness of their deaf culture and language.
- Significant and complex family issues including drug and alcohol, mental health and financial hardship were the common trends of the families supported through Integrated Family Services, with numbers in all these categories increasing this year.

*"My son has made so much progress in the group this year".*

# Reflecting Our Values

## Empowerment – Person and family directed services recognising individuals' strengths

- Three places in which to deliver services in regional towns were identified and arranged - STAY Residential in Hamilton, Manifold Place in Camperdown and the Lismore campus of South West Healthcare. This allowed workers to provide services from community hubs and meet the needs of clients living outside of Warrnambool.
- A new Thursday Play and Learn Group commenced and opened up to Mpower Integrated Family Services families as well as ECIS families from the region. This provided a soft entry point into other programs (particularly ECIS), for families requiring additional parenting support and also promoted the concept of the 'one Mpower'. Attendance at the Friday Play and Learn Group has seen up to six families participate and positive feedback from clients and staff reinforced the value of running such groups.
- The Transdisciplinary Key Worker model in the ECIS was extremely well received by parents. Changes to the frequency of key worker contact with families was implemented successfully and well received by new families. This is in line with evidence based practice in ECIS and in preparation for the NDIS.
- NDIS clients received ECIS services including speech pathology, occupational therapy, key worker behaviour consultant and physiotherapy. They also received support for inclusion in community participation activities.
- Nine people were supported via Individual Support Packages (ISP). Support is individualised to meet the person's goals and requirements, including support to access the gym, maintain the family home and develop independent skills. Support was also provided to two clients who are funded through ISPs but who elected to self-manage their funding.
- Mpower became a member of the South West 'I Can Network' that empowers and supports young people with autism through a mentoring program and camps.
- Exploring new service partnership models included researching shared service opportunities for setting up a social enterprise in conjunction with Lyndoch. If viable this would create 'real' work opportunities for school leavers eligible for disability employment support/NDIS funding.
- Support continued to be provided via TAC/ Workcover funding in response to clients requests, services are provided on weekends allowing real choice and control inline with NDIS principles.
- 120 hearing screenings were conducted during Hearing Awareness Week.
- deaf Access assisted clients in Geelong who requested training in how to use ipads they had been given as part of their NDIS packages.
- Attendances at the Totally Awesome Parents (TAP) group increased following a return to weekly sessions.
- deaf Access worked in collaboration with the Southern Grampians Rural Access program to devise complimentary activities and resources for the Student Teacher Awareness Resources (Star) boxes. The four boxes, which can be borrowed by kindergartens and primary schools, contain resources that can be used to raise awareness of disabilities and the different learning styles of children.
- Carers from across the region registered with the Mpower Carer Support program were provided with many opportunities for social connection, respite and education through a variety of activities and events. Over 40 carers attended a Christmas Extravaganza in Warrnambool.



- Mpower co-facilitated Carer Support Groups in Terang, Hamilton and facilitated the Warrnambool Carers Group.
- There was a marked increase in the provision of emergency relief in the form of fuel vouchers reflecting the complex needs of our clients.

*'The ability to talk to other Mums in a relaxed environment knowing they understand what you are going through was great'*



# Reflecting Our Values

## New Learning – Encouraging personal development and innovative thinking

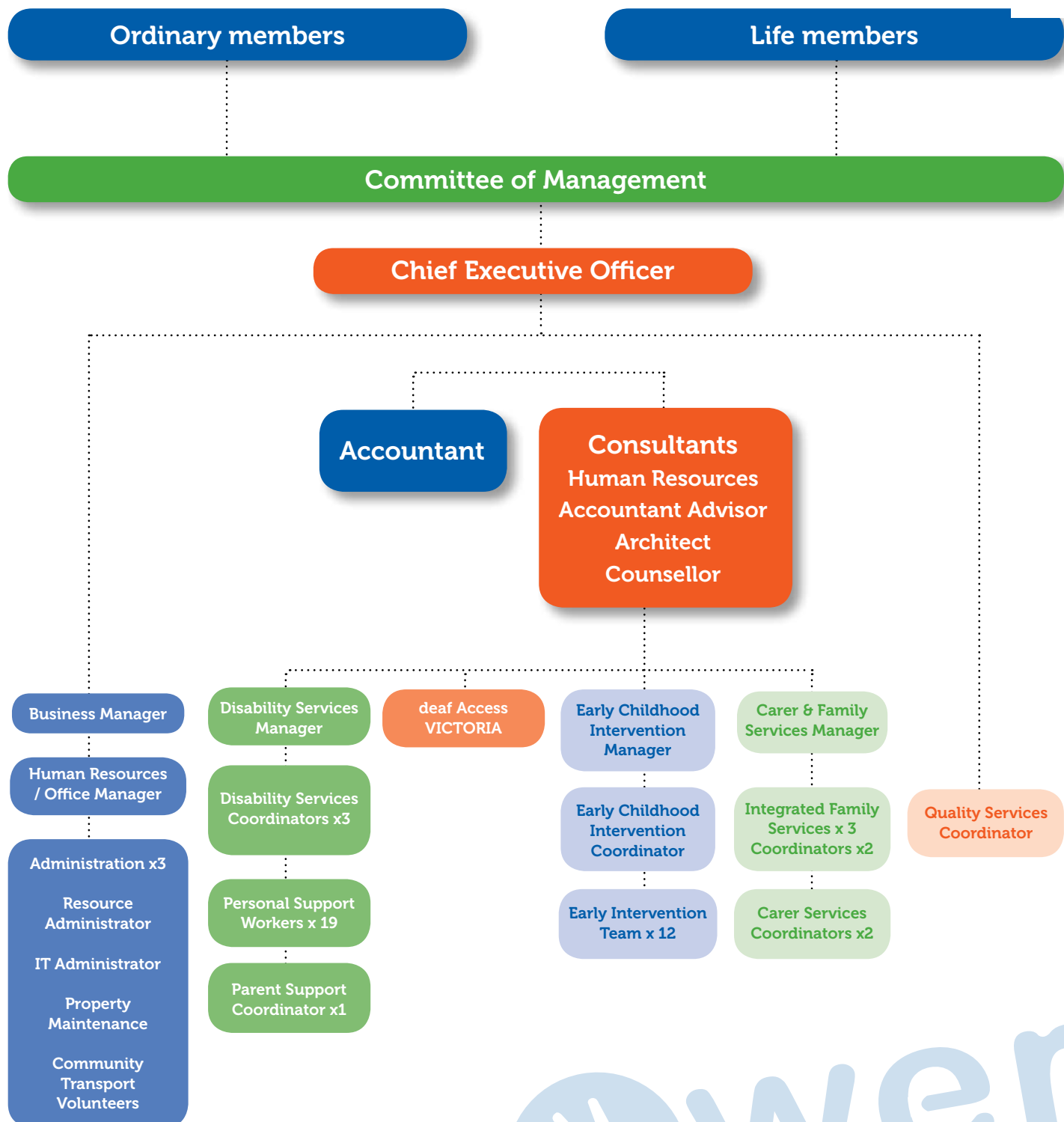
- Mpower staff were able to take advantage of a range of new learning opportunities including Noah's Ark Key Worker training, Toxic Stress and Trauma in Young Children, Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma, Critical Incident Management, Guardianship and Power of Attorney, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills, Managing Challenging Adolescent Behaviours, the NDIS Forum, the SW Disability Network Conference and Gender Equity training.
- Nineteen training sessions were provided to staff in aged care facilities on hearing loss and hearing aid management.
- Five information sessions on how to communicate effectively with deaf or hard of hearing people were delivered to Home and Community Care staff at Glenelg Shire Council.
- Carer Support Groups were provided with a range of educational opportunities including Power of Attorney, Home Safety and Fire Safety Awareness and Consumer Directed Care.
- The following staff successfully completed the following qualifications this year.
  - Donna Newell – Diploma in Human Resources
  - Patricia McLean – Diploma of Business Management
  - Jason Gilmour – Graduate Certificate in Community Service Practice (Client Assessment and Case Management)
  - Fran Pearson – Graduate Certificate in Community Service Practice (Client Assessment and Case Management)
  - Yvette Wilkinson – Diploma of Management

## Future Goals

- Consider how to deliver more outreach services
- Expand playgroups
- Develop 'Mpower Presents' education offerings for families and professionals.
- Develop a suite of services which promote community access and participation.
- Create a range of skills development group to boost inclusion and participation.
- Provide a seamless entry for all people.
- Streamlining intake services to make expanding into other areas of community services such as strengthening our capacity to provide out of home care.
- Enhanced referral process to support expansion into 'out of home' care.

*"My child would not have many of the skills he now has without early intervention".*

# Organisational Structure



mpower



# Staff

## Staff as of 30th June 2016

\*represents staff members not active in 2015/16

Mark Barling  
Rhianna Bourke  
Lyndy Boyle  
Robyn Carroll  
Emma Chittick  
Heather Clue  
Rachel Condon  
Helen Conheady  
Jillian Crighton\*  
Betty Dwyer  
Herlinda Eykels  
Abby Fraser  
Janine Gapes  
Jason Gilmour  
Rachael Gladman\*  
Erin Gleeson  
Jennifer Gleeson  
Mark Gravalin\*  
Eileen Green\*  
Fiona Gurney

Debbie Harman  
Trent Harman  
Catherine Howarth  
Wesley Isles  
Louise Jellie  
Wendy Jones  
Sandy Joyce  
Jessica Lambert  
Kelly Lynch\*  
Rachel Malady  
Claire Manson  
Patrina McConnell  
Dianne McFadden  
Cheryl McKinnon  
Patricia McLean  
Jenny McMahon  
Barbara Moore  
Nicole Nield  
Kerry Nelson  
Donna Newell

Emma O'Brien  
Frances Pearson  
Rachel Peters  
Joseph Purtill\*  
James Reid  
Wayne Rogers  
Isaac Rothman\*  
Melissa Rush  
Penny Ryan  
Erica Smith  
Tracey Tanner  
Edda Thomson  
Mathew Turner\*  
Joy Vicary  
Shona Waller  
Lil Ward  
Yvette Wilkinson  
Michael Wright

## Volunteers

Volunteers are a highly valued and essential part of the Mpower workforce, particularly through the Community Transport program.

Mpower staff and management would like to thank all volunteers contributing throughout the year including:

Gail Rutter  
Roy Clarke  
Paul Hanlon  
Avis Patten  
Judith Brian  
David McDonough

Chris Carroll  
Merilyn Johnston  
Gary Ryan  
Dina Selman  
Zoe Evans\*



# It's Magic

**The first night Tom Bertrand supervised a group of young rowers with disabilities at Dennington he found himself wondering why he'd taken on the challenge.**

One climbed a tree, another kept rolling down the hill and Tom admitted he had no idea how to talk to a group of kids with disabilities.

And then he saw a twinkle in the eye of the young rowers and he was hooked.

"They were like little kids and don't know how to lie," Tom said. "If they don't like it they tell you, but when there's a smile and a twinkle in the eye you know that it's good."

Tom started the Rowing for the Disabled program for Mpower, at the time it was the first of its kind in Victoria, and is still involved today.

The first session attracted about 12 participants and despite a few hiccups it was a hit,

"We'd send out a disabled rower with two of the regular club kids sitting on the pontoons helping them through the strokes. We started with the Nestles Rowing Club where I'm president and then the South West Sports Assembly and Active Oceans came on board.

"It's just a program that works."

Tom said the young people were quick to learn.

"We've had six Australian championships from two rowers, Chris Murray and Aaron Skinner."

Tom was also quick to learn that he needed to adjust his teaching style.

"I had to put things in a way for a person with disabilities to learn and understand. What I'd say to a person with autism wasn't what I'd say to someone with Down syndrome. You had to talk to everyone in a different way."

It didn't take long for his young charges to learn the ropes and start having fun.

"When they go up the river it's freedom to them. You can see how much it means."

Now known as Dis Row, the program runs over summer and is part of the South West Games. Members also attend other events around the state.

The program has won state sport and recreation awards and rowers have won individual sports star awards.

The success and happiness of participants makes it worthwhile for Tom and other members of the club.

The Dis Row program has taught other members of the club that everyone should be on an equal playing field.

The participants might continue to benefit from taking part, but so does Tom.

"It's magic," he says.





# Representation in the Disability, Community & Business Sector

## **Committee Member**

### **Vice Chair**

### **Chair**

### **Executive Member**

### **Steering Committee**

### **Steering Committee**

### **Chair & Governance Member**

## **Working Group**

### **Direct Service Member**

### **Vice President**

### **Facilitator**

### **Co-facilitator**

Victorian State Committee

– National Disability Services (NDS)

Community South West

Lyndoch Living Inc.

South West Carer & Respite Network

South West Disability Network

Warrnambool Neighbourhood House

Everybody's Business

Hampden Hurricanes

South West Child & Family Services Alliance

– Service Development

Alzheimer's Australia (VIC) Dementia Reference Group

Deaf Access Statewide

Industry Advisory Committee – South West TAFE

Great South Coast Early Years Network

ECIA Early Childhood Professionals

– Expert Advisory Group

Barwon South West Educational Network

DHHS Community building Network

Geelong Hearing Awareness Week Network

South West Community Inclusion Network

Southern Grampians Community Services Network

Family Violence Working Group

South West Child and Family Services Alliance

Combined Health Services Network

Warrnambool Carer Support Group

Parkinson's Support Group

Terang & Mortlake Carer Support Group

Hamilton Carer Support Group



# Financial Report

## The Year in Review:

Mpower Inc. is pleased to present a strong financial result for the 2015/16 financial year. With continued revenue growth and the introduction and consolidation of some new services Mpower has reported a surplus for the year of \$345,540. In addition, the management team has diligence in its management of costs which has also contributed to this result. This surplus will be used to invest back into Mpower's services including its transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It is worth noting that Mpower is already a registered provider for the NDIS and is actually providing services to several participants.

## Income:

Mpower's total income for the year totalled \$3.76M compared to \$3.56M the previous year, an increase of 5.5%. 2015/16 saw Mpower embark and grow some new funding streams through the Department of Health and Human Services with Targeted Care Package Funding and Out-Of-Home Care Funding. These two streams contributed an additional \$154K on the previous year. For comparison purposes, it is worth noting that in the 2014/15 figures Out-Of-Home-Care funding to the value of \$92K was classified as Fee For Service.)

The year also saw an increase in the number of NDIS services provided as evident in the funding.

Non-Department funding was down on the previous financial year due to reduction in Fee for Service income, interest earned on term deposits and the expiration of wages recovered classification from last year. Though \$26k less than last year, donations received for Mpower House throughout the year were pleasing given the time elapsed since the launch.

## Expenditure:

Expenditure is monitored against budget at each program level and at the organisational level by Committee of Management.

Total costs for the year were \$3.41M up on last year's \$3.15M or 8.3%. The main variance recorded against the previous year related to staff costs – up \$223K. Staff costs reflected growth in wages due to increased staff hours with the additional services provided in Out-Of-Home-Care services, Targeted Care Package Services and Individual Support Package services. These increased hours were all offset with additional funding. Additional superannuation costs and workcover costs flow on from the increased staff hours. Staff training expense was notably lower than last year but this was the result of some training provided at no cost or minimal cost to Mpower.

As planned, NDIS transitional costs were up on the previous year with Mpower gearing itself for the new environment. Staff training has been a priority for Mpower to build up a level of expertise to enable it to position itself in a new competitive market.

Growth in costs for Maintenance and Repairs is due to the maintenance support now provided for the expanded IT infrastructure. As we transition for the future, Mpower recognises that IT infrastructure is vital for a reliable and efficient system useful for all stakeholders.

It is also noted that some one-off expenses were incurred for the Mpower 40th Anniversary celebrations and redevelopment of the Mpower website.

## Balance Sheet Position:

Mpower has maintained its strong financial position with Net Assets in excess of \$3.8M and cash reserves in excess of \$2.6M at the end of the financial year. All funds not required for day-to-day operations are invested into term deposits with South West Credit and set aside for employee entitlements and future building development. The Committee of Management has a clear policy that these funds are not to be used to meet day-to-day operational needs and budgets are set accordingly.

The complete redevelopment of Mpower House has been underway for most of the 2015/16 financial year and the aggregated costs for this are contained in the WIP account.

## Financial Management:

Mpower applies a disciplined approach to financial management. The Management Team review their program results monthly and the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee review detailed financial results and policies on a quarterly basis. Financial reports are submitted to and reviewed by the Committee of Management on a monthly basis. Program managers are involved in the preparation of budgets and monitoring of costs and this has been reflected by the strong performance recorded in 2015/16.

Mpower now sets its sights on the challenge of transitioning to the NDIS with early transitioning from December 2016 and full roll-out in October 2017. Mpower has been fortunate to have had some small exposure to what lies ahead as it already has some participants who have chosen Mpower to provide them with NDIS services.

Mpower members can be confident that this work will be done thoroughly, diligently and with empathy for all involved.

**Helen Conheady B.Bus (Acc)**  
**Mpower Accountant**

*Note: The full Financial Statement is enclosed in the back cover of this report.*

# Acknowledgements

**Mpower acknowledges the generosity of individuals, businesses, community groups, trusts, grants and government departments who support our work to assist children and families and strengthen the community.**

## **Federal Government**

- Department of Social Services

## **Victorian State Government**

Mpower acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government



- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Health and Human Services

## **Local Government**

- Warrnambool City Council
- Corangamite Shire
- Glenelg Shire
- Moyne Shire
- Southern Grampians Shire
- Surf Coast Shire
- City of Greater Geelong
- Colac Otway Shire

## **Community program partners**

- Nestles Rowing Club
- Port Fairy Yacht Club
- Warrnambool Angling Club
- Warrnambool Netball Association
- Warrnambool Surf Lifesaving Club
- South West Sport
- Lifeline
- Daktari Surf School
- Bunnings
- Let's Dance

## **Key business and community partners**

- Darrian Office Choice
- Enhanced Resources
- Gunners Office Equipment
- McLaren, Buzolich & O'Keeffe (MBO)
- SED Advisory
- South West Credit
- Star Printing
- Tasty Plate
- Warrnambool Toyota

## **Donors towards redevelopment of 84-86 Koroit Street, Warrnambool**

### **Trusts, foundations and estates**

- The Vedmore Foundation
- The GM & EJ Jones Foundation
- The Ray & Joyce Uebergang Goundation
- The AL Lane Foundation
- The Ern Hartley Foundation

### **Individuals and Businesses**

- Heywood Agircultural
- Rauert's Shoex
- Sue Sicely & Norm Garner
- Cooper Hardiman
- Belfast Cottages
- Cattleya Thai Restaurant
- Richard Zerbe
- Inner Wheel Club of Warrnambool
- Serina Skinner
- Vern Robson
- Margaret Malseed
- JJ & JL Mahony
- Warrnambool Toyota South West Auto Group
- Allansford CWA



# Other Disclosures

**The Carers Recognition Act 2012 promotes and values the role of people in care relationships and formally recognises the contribution that carers and people in care relationships make to the social and economic fabric of the Victorian community.**

Mpower has taken all practicable measures to comply with its obligations under the Act.

Mpower has promoted the principles of the Act to people in care relationships who receive our services and to the wider community by:

- distributing printed material about the Act at community events or service points
- providing links to state government resource materials on our website
- providing digital and/or printed information about the Act to our partner organisations.

Mpower has taken all practicable measures to ensure our staff have an awareness and understanding of the care relationship principles set out in the Act by:

- developing and implementing a staff awareness strategy about the principles in the Act and what they mean for staff
- induction and training programs offered by the organisation include discussion of the Act and the statement of principles therein.

Mpower has taken all practicable measures to consider the carer relationships principles set out in the Act when setting policies and providing services by:

- reviewing our employment policies such as flexible working arrangements and leave provisions to ensure that these comply with the statement of principles in the Act
- developing a satisfaction survey for distribution at assessment and review meetings between workers, carers and those receiving



enhancing abilities • supporting families • strengthening communities