mpower inc

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12



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

Background

Mpower has grown from humble beginnings in 1975 as a support group for families of children with a disability. The organisation emerged to meet the needs of families of children with a disability in the Warrnambool region at a time when only institutional models and metropolitan based services were available.

Since that time Mpower has grown from a small voluntary service to an accredited agency employing in excess of 50 staff and providing a range of support services to more than 800 families.

mpower inc

enhancing abilities,
supporting families,
strengthening communities



..."meaningful connections

Engaging Youth

The Mpower Youth Group in Warrnambool has been a hit with participants and their families. Here is a selection of comments about the program:

"It's great to play games with other people. It's better than playing X-box on your own," Dylan Lau, Mpower youth group participant.

"He's at the age where he wants to be with friends. He doesn't mind what they're doing; it's more about being in a social situation with kids his age," - Kathy Sarra on her 14-year-old Sebastian's involvement in the youth group.

"They enjoy a lot of activities and the food, but it's the social aspect that he enjoys the most," - Therese Kennedy on her son's Jackson's involvement in the youth group.

The school holiday program and youth group were great for Chelsea and also a good respite opportunity for her family according to mum Pam Bennett: "The youth group has been great. They do what the kids want to do and they love it."

Early GOALS

Mpower's Early GOALS program is providing parents with strategies, information and support to help them achieve their goals for the early years of their child's life.

Michelle Love and Rebecca Howard, both of Portland, say the program helped them to more easily identify the trigger points for inappropriate behaviour (usually a sensory issue or change in routine) and put in place strategies to prevent problems around their home and in the local community.

The parents were visited in their home by Mpower's early intervention worker Joy Vicary where they worked through various coping strategies and to look at what can be changed to avoid problems.

Michelle's five-year-old daughter Holly has Pervasive Development Disorder Not Otherwise Specified and is a sensory seeker.

"The program has made a huge impact on us," Michelle said. "Many strategies given in the early GOALS program were very helpful, and I hope it can reach more parents because it simplified therapy concepts that previously seemed too difficult."

"I am now better able to understand what a sensory seeker is and have been able to implement therapies and make changes in our home to adjust for that," Michelle said.

to their communities"

Rebecca said "she had learned how to cope better with four-year-old Cody, who was recently diagnosed with autism as well as a high level of sensory issues."

"Our ultimate goal is to help Cody with his behaviour and his understanding of the world and how to act appropriately in the public eye. It's going to be baby steps initially," she said.

Early GOALS has taught Rebecca to see things from Cody's perspective. "We have now learnt better ways to interact with him in order to understand his needs, and we can start to envisage how he sees the world differently to us," she said.

Support for Carers

Service users of Mpower's Carer Support Program were surveyed during the year to get a better understanding of their needs and opinions and to assist Mpower to address any issues they may have.

A total of 93.5 per cent of respondents said the program was meeting their needs well or very well.

Overall comments were extremely heartening and included:

- 'Support groups are very important to carers and it is good to know that we can refer carers to them'
- 'Contact with the carer staff has been a positive, uplifting encouragement in my traumatic existence'
- 'We so much love the time to get away knowing that our mother is being taken care of'
- 'Whenever requested Mpower have been most helpful'
- 'Please keep the program going'

PATRON

Mr Geoff Handbury AO



In 2010-2011 Mpower welcomed Mr Geoff Handbury AO as the Patron of Mpower.

Mpower is delighted to have Mr Geoff Handbury as our Patron. As Patron he will promote the mission, values, aims and objectives of the organisation. The listing of Geoff as Patron on Mpower's corporate materials will be a great honour and benefit to our organisation. We look forward to formally introducing our Patron to the broader community in the near future.

Geoff and his late wife Helen have four children, 14 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. Geoff served with the R.A.N during World War 2 in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the China Sea from 1943 to 1946. While in the Navy he obtained the rank of Sub Lieutenant RANVR.

Following his discharge from the Navy he was engaged in soft goods distribution throughout Australia and overseas and in 1964 launched Ansett of Seymour Pty Ltd to take over the entire distribution of Ansett Men's Pure Wool Knitwear. In 1968 he won the 'Distinguished Export Award' for establishing a substantial market for 'Ansett Pure Australian Wool Men's Knitwear' in Hong Kong, Japan, Canada and U.S.A. In 1974 he sold out of his Melbourne based commercial business enterprises to take up farming in the Balmoral district of Western Victoria, concentrating on the production of top quality merino wool.

Geoff Handbury joined Melbourne Legacy in 1956 and was President in 1973 when he was named 'Father of the Year'. In 1974 he transferred to Wimmera Legacy and, since his move to Hamilton, has become a member of Hamilton & District Legacy.

While farming at Balmoral he served as President of the Balmoral R.S.L., Secretary of the Balmoral Branch of the Victorian Farmers Federation and a member of the Balmoral P & A Society. During the 1986 Farmers Fighting Fund appeal, he was the Victorian State Co-ordinator responsible for the collection in the Mallee, Wimmera and the Western District. He served on the Wool Textile Research Committee for 14 years and for 10 years was a member of the Advisory Board for Farm Planning and Land Management of the Melbourne University

In 1984 he was appointed as Director of radio stations 3HA, 3WM, 3CS and 3SH. Geoff and Helen purchased these stations in 1994 when they formed the company ACE Radio Broadcasters Pty Ltd. In 1995 they added 3TR Gippsland and 3YB Warrnambool and in 2005 2AY Albury joined the group. ACE Radio, which is now jointly owned with their daughter and son-in-law, Judy and Rowly Paterson of Willaura, is the largest radio network in regional Victoria. ACE Radio also publishes 'The Weekly Advertiser' newspaper which has a circulation in the Wimmera of 22,000.

In 1999 both Geoff and Helen were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia 'OAM'. Helen died on 22 November 2004.

In the 2005 Queen's Birthday Honours List, Geoff was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia 'AO', and Helen was posthumously awarded an 'AO'.

On 8 May 2009, Geoff was admitted to the Degree of Doctor of Social Science, Honorius Causa by M.I.T University

VISION STATEMENT

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

We will at all times focus on our vision and direct all activities towards its achievement. Our vision highlights the vast group of people it serves, and the fundamental belief that every person has a right to services that will enable them to lead a fulfilling life.

MISSION

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.

Based in Warrnambool, our services are managed from a building which meets the needs of clients, the services it provides and other specific community groups. Services are provided by quality staff in a respectful and flexible manner in a way that empowers families and individuals. A full range of outreach services are provided to people in Hamilton, Portland, Geelong and other urban centres. Services are provided in or close to the communities where people live.

We pride our self on new learning which encourages personal development, innovative thinking and creative solutions to challenges and change.

Mpower will 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 to respond to people's needs. Mpower offers a wide range of services for people from birth to senior years requiring assistance with their daily activities.

VALUES

Respect	- Beliefs, feelings and values of individuals are acknowledged
Empowerment	- Person and family directed services recognising individuals strengths
Quality	- Professionalism and quality in everything we do
New Learning	- Encouraging personal development and innovative thinking



Warrnambool Mayor, Jacinta Ermacora presented Life Membership to Phyllis McLeish (inset) and Gail Horne at 2010 - 11 AGM.

About the Committee of Management

Mpower is governed by a Committee of Management (COM) consisting of nine non-executive members and the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer reports to the Board and the Board secretary provides administrative support. COM members are selected on the basis of skills and experience and are generally appointed for a three-year term, with the option for reappointment.

The COM oversees the strategic direction, financial and operational activities and risk management of the organisation. It makes sure sound business practices are in place to ensure quality human services are delivered.

The COM appoints three sub-committees to oversee the management of policies and procedures, finance and audit duties and human resources. Meetings are held monthly and the Committee organises an annual external review of its own performance.

The 2011-12 COM comprised David Beggs (President), Michael Neoh (Vice President), Phillip Annett (Treasurer), Gordon Curran, Sue Henry, Neil Ballard, Adam Kempton, Gail Horne and Vern Robson.

Throughout the year, two longstanding COM members Gail Horne and Phyllis McLeish were awarded Life Membership in recognition of long service and dedication to the organisation. Phyllis retired from the role of Treasurer and Committee of Management following 10 years of service and her enthusiasm and positive attitude was greatly appreciated.

Gail continues on the Committee having held the executive role of President and Vice President during her 22 years of service.



L to R : Adam Kempton, Gordon Curran, Neil Ballard, Michael Neoh, David Beggs, Vern Robson,
Front : Gail Horne, Phillip Annett, Sue Henry.



During her visit to Mpower, Minister Mary Wooldridge took time from her busy schedule to meet 'Zara' the Lions Hearing dog.
Photo courtesy of The Standard

Commitment to Leadership



David Beggs
President

The 2011-2012 year has seen further growth in service provision, internal changes to meet the future demands of the sector, new partnerships developed and a focus on developing Mpower's culture.

A highlight for the year was the visit of Minister Mary Wooldridge to our agency to share afternoon tea and meet the participants of our highly successful Totally Awesome Parents (TAP) group. An overview of the Parents with Intellectual Disabilities program and the TAP group was provided to the Minister by the developer of the group Angela Alexander, Mpower's Family Services Co-ordinator. While spending time with us, Minister Wooldridge gave very positive feedback to staff on the excellent programs being provided to families and took time to speak with each of the participants of the TAP group who were delighted to be invited to share the Minister's visit.



Kerry Nelson
CEO

Early in the reporting year, the impetus to design and implement a staff structure change in accordance with strategic plan arose as our Quality and Services Manager, Paul Lougheed secured a position with Warrnambool City Council. The new structure has set us in a secure position for managing the ongoing changes envisaged in the sector, with a small executive team to allow expediency in decision making and a larger management team representing all program areas.

We welcomed Tonia McMahon to a new position created as part of the staff restructure. Tonia is the Executive Manager of Programs and Quality with responsibility for quality, risk management and client service provision. All service managers report to Tonia who is supported in her role with a dedicated administration position. Tonia brings a wealth of skills and experience from many years of practice in the community sector in the UK, having newly settled in Australia over the past two years. Tonia's position is second in charge to the CEO and is a great support at the executive level of the organisation.

In the newly appointed role of Executive Manager Business Operations, Dianne McFadden became part of the new executive team including the CEO and Executive Manager Programs and Quality. The role is responsible for the management of administrative, financial services and business operations of Mpower. Dianne brings 21 years of service at Mpower and a wealth of skills and information to the Executive Team.

The year has seen a changing service provision environment with the tendering of several south west based state funded services, culminating in Mpower successfully tendering as part of a consortium to deliver a new model of Integrated Family Services to a large part of south west Victoria. The new tender arrangements involve Mpower increasing its Integrated Family Services delivery by two thirds of the existing service. Two new full time staff positions have been appointed to this program.

The outcomes of other tendered services has seen the emergence and/or increased presence of four new service providers to the region. Mpower welcomes the new agencies and has sought to establish collaborative working relationships with those providing ancillary/complementary services to Mpower clients.

Mpower has a partnership with Bethany Community Support as part of the Integrated Family Services program and is proposing to work collaboratively with Gateway Support Services to provide well planned respite services that complement each other. This level of planning allows best use of funding to the widest number of families and decreases 'over servicing' that is apparent when communication between agencies is not well developed.

We have a positive history of working well with other agencies in the best interests of the families we service, demonstrating our strategic value of *working collaboratively with other providers*. Our collaborative relationships with Brophy Family and Youth Services, Warrnambool City Council, STAY Residential Services (Hamilton), and Kyeema (Portland) continue to prosper. Meanwhile the very successful partnership with Gateway Support Services to provide the Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultancy Project is to be extended due to its success over the past 12 months.

Mpower actively maintains and values its ongoing membership with Community Southwest which is a platform for CEO and executive level networking, knowledge sharing and support which has been successfully led by Executive Officer, Allan Bassett and more recently Richard Zerbe following Allan's retirement. The value of the relationships developed through this collaboration cannot be underestimated, nor can the shared learning and enhanced outcomes for our local communities.

A series of recently released Productivity Commission and Commonwealth Government aged care, mental health, disability, hospital and health, allied health and not for profit reports herald a new paradigm in which client focus, funding and choice will be paramount. This is set to become the strategic environment in which Mpower and other community services organisations operate within.

It will bring significant challenges and potentially great opportunities for organisations that understand and adapt to and operate in this new environment. This is under pinning the focus we have on the need for the new staff structure. All growth and achievements are driven by our values and strategic aims of *enhancing abilities, supporting families and strengthening communities*.

Mpower's management has continued its in-principle support to the *Every Australian Counts* campaign during the year as well as actively supporting local forums and activities relating to the cause. This campaign seeks to raise awareness of the need for a National Disability Insurance Scheme which will cater to the needs of people with a disability or those who sustain a catastrophic injury.

Throughout the year we continued to pursue access to more space for our service provision base. The Committee of Management, after much deliberation, decided to revert to the plan of building an Early Childhood Intervention Centre close to the existing office building. This will provide considerable extra space in the existing building for added growth of services and staff while allowing Early Intervention staff easy access to the administration block and vehicle pool for everyday use.

Our successes have included gaining extra funding to meet growing service demands and accreditation of two major programs. We successfully tendered for new funding to provide innovative respite programs and extra school holiday sessions. The new *innovative respite dollars* allowed us to reinstate the very popular youth group previously run as a pilot with seeding funding. Extra school holiday funding allows an extra week of programs during the long January holidays and additional days/hours during other school holidays in Portland, Hamilton and Warrnambool. Further to these successes we were also selected as providers for the Better Start program.

We have also been successful in gaining generous financial support from several philanthropic trusts during the year allowing for the provision of many extra resources with excellent outcomes.

Early in 2012 Mpower's Disability Services and Family Services were successfully accredited through external contractors. This accreditation is a commendation to the agency and our quality staff. At the same time our Early Intervention Services were involved in a pilot to develop accreditation for that sector.

Another important achievement has been a focus on professional development of the Mpower management teams with an emphasis on values and culture. We engaged the services of Garry Trotter, organisational psychologist, to work closely with executive and management teams individually and as a whole. The value of this work is pivotal to building a shared understanding of Mpower's values and deepening the commitment to our culture. Mpower strongly believes in the need to build and support a culture that is understood and adhered to by management and staff. This shared culture will be the strength that supports the organisation as we move towards 2020 and the new service paradigm.

The fact is culture eats strategy for lunch. You can have a good strategy but if you don't have the culture and enabling systems to implement that strategy, you will fail.
Dick Clark CEO Merck, Financial Review March 2006

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. We also have a number of volunteers providing building maintenance, program assistance and community transport. Mpower is indebted to these people for their generosity and commitment.

The management of Mpower is confident as it looks to the future to embrace new growth and challenges in a changing sector, primarily because of the outstanding calibre of its committed and dedicated staff. With this as its operating platform, Mpower looks ahead to the 2012-13 year and beyond with positive expectations.

Kerry Nelson, Chief Executive Officer
David Beggs, President



Quality Service Delivery

Mpower is committed to being a well-recognised agency within the south west of Victoria. Mpower is dedicated to being a service provider and employer of choice for aged and disability services.

Mpower continues to provide quality services to clients and has in place stringent control mechanisms to ensure excellence of service provision.

Disability Services accreditation was achieved in January, 2012.

Success in this field was illustrated by the three-year accreditation achieved by Disability Services and Family Services. The accreditation for the Family Services program was completed at the end of March 2012. Following feedback sessions with auditors, recommendations were made and were received with positive enthusiasm as the program moves forward.

Quality reviews were conducted within the Early Intervention program twice during the year. Many changes were made as suggested by parents, including levels of support in inclusive settings, program changes to accommodate growth in referrals and letters to kindergarten staff to clarify roles. A further Early Intervention survey helped to identify times of year that parents prefer to receive services. This will be used to guide the delivery of services in the way families desire, an important part of quality service provision.

Mpower participated in the quality framework pilot for Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) throughout the year. This involved organisational self-assessment, aligning ECIS quality framework standards with those from other quality management systems and completing a module in line with the standards. Mpower focused on service management and leadership modules.

A survey of the Carer Support program in February 2012 showed that practitioners are meeting the needs of the carers who were largely satisfied with the service.The survey was conducted by Mpower to get a better understanding of the needs and opinions of carers and to address any issues they may have in relation to the services provided.

A total of 93.5 per cent of respondents said the program was meeting their needs well or very well. All participants said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the support, with many describing it as excellent.

Advocacy

After much debate and support as part of the Every Australian Counts campaign, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will be introduced in 2013.

People with significant and profound disabilities in the Barwon region of Victoria will participate in a trial from July 1, 2013. Over the course of the trial about 5,000 people with significant and profound disabilities, their families and carers in the region will have their needs assessed and will start to receive individual care and support packages under an NDIS model.

This work will include developing a consistent approach to assessing people's needs; and working with service providers to build the capacity of the disability care workforce in the Barwon region.

The Draft Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-16 has been released for comment and Mpower will lodge a submission. The Victorian government says it wants to significantly improve Victoria's support for people with a disability and to ensure the system of support is sustainable and ready for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Mpower will also need to consider that more people may want to buy services either via self-managed ISPs or the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).





Zorron Lucas exploring the new sensory garden at Mpower.

The Changing Landscape

Mpower's prides itself on new learning which encourages personal development, innovative thinking and creative solutions to challenges and change.

This year has seen a number of changes to the environment in which we operate that have led to new ways of delivering services.

The service system is moving towards individual client services delivered in accordance with an Individual Service Plan (ISP) or a 'package' of money allocated to the individual to be spent on their service needs. There has been a noticeable increase in brokerage services this year, involving respite funded by an external agency, usually from an individual's allocated package.

In Early Childhood intervention Services (ECIS) a new system of referral allocation in the Barwon region has resulted in changes in the delivery of services. Children are referred to Mpower with an expectation that a suite of services be provided to meet family needs. Mpower's goal is to provide children *with experiences and opportunities that promote the acquisition of competencies that enable them to participate meaningfully in the home and community environments*.

Mpower has been part of a working party seeking improvements in the process of transition to school in the Barwon region. As a result, a transition matrix is being trialed by Mpower and other agencies. All clients going to school in 2012 will have a one page information sheet outlining key developmental and behaviour information that helps schools gain useful information without reading a range of reports. Parents have responded positively and have commented that the matrix provides a great snapshot of their child and gives an opportunity to have input into their child's plan.

Mpower was accepted as a panel provider for the new Commonwealth *Better Start* program. This program provides early intervention services to children aged under six years who are diagnosed with sight and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome or Fragile X Syndrome. The program aims to provide choice and flexibility to families and carers in accessing more early intervention services to increase their preparation for transition to school.

A music therapy student placement by Fleur Watson gave two early childhood intervention groups and two individual Mpower clients the opportunity to take part in an intensive ten week music program. There were clear goals for this program related to sharing, playing together, building rapport, extending use of words to negotiate and building a sense of caring.

Mpower is positioning itself for the service delivery changes imminent with the introduction of NDIS and/or a rapid growth in individual services.



Mpower CEO, Kerry Nelson makes a presentation to Carmel Madden on her retirement.

Our Workforce

Professionalism and quality in everything we do is fundamental to Mpower's core values.

A changing landscape led to a staff restructure closely aligned to the objectives of Mpower's strategic plan. The restructure will help to ensure Mpower is well placed to respond to ongoing change.

Key features of the restructure include:

- creation of a small executive team, led by the CEO, to allow expediency in decision making appointment of two new executive management positions
- establishment of a new position of Executive Manager of Programs and Quality, second in charge to the CEO, with responsibility for quality, risk management and client service provision. Tonia McMahon was appointed to this position and all service managers report to her.
- Dianne McFadden was appointed Executive Manager Business Operations. This role is responsible for the management of administrative, financial services and business operations of Mpower.

The executive team is supported by a larger management team representing all program areas. Other management roles were retained within the new reporting structure and there was one additional management role developed–Carer & Family Services Manager. Yvette Wilkinson joined the organisation to take up this position.

Other new staff joining Mpower this year included speech pathologist Cassie Brown.

Mpower employed an occupational therapist in a full time role. Emma Young, a new graduate from Deakin University, took on the position and is working across the Early Intervention program, Helping Children with Autism and Better Start programs.

In a new role created as part of the restructure, Peta Smith became Quality Compliance Administrator supporting the Executive Manager of Programs & Quality role. Trish McLean was appointed to the position of Information, Grants and Policy Administrator previously filled by Peta.

Eileen Green, replacing Kathy Fitzmaurice, now supports Erica Smith in the provision of deaf Access Victoria services based in the Geelong region.

There were several changes in staffing and management roles in Early Intervention. Roles were redefined with a distinct effort to share the workload and knowledge across more members of the Early Intervention team. The review included changes in responsibility for several team members.

Throughout the year the following staff pursued career paths to other opportunities or retired for differing reasons: Jane Duffy, Paul Lougheed, Angela Alexander, Ellen Greagen, Deb Harris, Cecily Lindsey and Susan Schietroma.

After 10 years of service, Carmel Madden retired from her role as Coordinator of Community Transport and parent support. Carmel took with her great memories of the development of children and the resilience of parents. '*It has been a great privilege and honour to work with parents*, she said. *They have shown me the strength of the human spirit and I can sense the development in their parenting skills and their coping mechanisms'* Carmel made a positive impact in the decade she spent with Mpower.

Staff to reach significant employment milestones this year included: Julie Pech - 20 years' service. Julie commenced as Early Intervention Playgroup Coordinator in 1992 and with the growth of the program became Early Childhood Intervention Services Manager in 2001. Today this program services approximately 100 children per year.

Julie's previous experience with children with autism has been instrumental in Mpower's development and knowledge of autism services.

Please refer to the Mpower organisational structure for further information.

Staffing as at 30/06/2012

Program Area	Full-time	Part-time	Casual	Total Staff
Executive Team	2	1		3
Administration	4	3	1	8
Deaf Access	1	1		2
Early Intervention	2	13	1	16
Disability Respite	2	2	25	29
Carers	2			2
Parent Support		2		2
Family Services	1			1
Respite Network		1		1
Healthy Initiatives	1			1
Grand Total	**15**	**23**	**27**	**65**

A Learning Organisation

Mpower will pride itself on new learning which encourages personal development, innovative thinking and creative solutions to challenges and change.

Mpower encourages employees to undertake ongoing training and development to increase the efficiency, productivity and professionalism of the organisation and to enhance their career opportunities and job security.

Staff are encouraged to learn and grow by being offered training that enhances their skill base and meets the needs of clients. Specific training is also offered to staff to meet the individual needs of clients as they arise.

During 2011-12 many staff took advantage of a diversity of professional development opportunities including formal on-the-job instruction, in-house, external education, training seminars and online training. These included training in behaviour management, PEG feeding and stoma care, stress management, professional boundaries, MOVAIT, 'Bridges out of Poverty', medications and incident reporting, communication, community inclusion, organisational values and culture, Autism and Asperger's syndrome, Floortime, Transition to Change – Best Practice Standards, Apps for Autism, Noah's Ark introduction to the early intervention sector, OH&S, media/marketing, and writing applications.

Conferences attended included the South West Disability Network, the National Disability Services and Disability Services Victoria conferences, Communities in Control conference, and the Asia Pacific Autism Conference. Mpower proudly supported the Deaf Access Co-ordinator Erica Smith to present to the National Deafness forum on inclusion.

Mpower managers attended an I-Tango project workshop presented on behalf of Department of Human Services which provided practical advice on information communication technology. Disability respite coordinators participated in middle management training with the South West Disability Network which was provided by SED Advisory, a Warrnambool based organisation providing business support.

Study Achievements

Joy Vicary was awarded a professional scholarship to complete a Masters in teaching, focusing on children with autism. Emma Young was granted a professional scholarship to support new graduates in early childhood services.

Peta Smith was a finalist in the Westvic Staffing Solutions Excellence Awards recognising her achievements in returning to study after a break of nearly 20 years. Peta completed a Certificate IV in Business Administration and is continuing to study for her Diploma in Quality Auditing.

In November, 2011 Angela Alexander presented to an international conference "Everybody In" at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

Organisational Structure

as at 30/06/12

Consultants:	Gavan Cooper, Robert Lane, Sharon Ralston and Consumer Reference Group *Heather Bock*
Life Members:	Gail Horne, Judy Jongebloed, Cath Lourey, Phyllis McLeish and Glynis Purcell
Board:	Phillip Annett, Neil Ballard, David Beggs, Gordon Curran, Sue Henry, Gail Horne, Adam Kempton, Michael Neoh and Vern Robson *Phyllis McLeish*
Chief Executive Officer:	Kerry Nelson
Executive Team:	Dianne McFadden and Tonia McMahon
Program Managers:	Julie Pech, Erica Smith, Lil Ward and Yvette Wilkinson *Paul Lougheed*
Middle Management:	Donna Lourey and Penny Ryan
Administration:	Olivia Kelly, Patricia McLean, Wayne Rogers, David Skinner, Peta Smith, Jordan Thomas and Shona Waller *Deb Harris and Cecily Lindsey*
Carer Program Program:	Lynda Haddow *Ellen Greagen*
Parent Support Program:	Marg Brough and Jessica Tucker *Carmel Madden*
Family Services Program:	Claire Manson, Pattrina McConnell and Kirsty Sutcliffe *Angela Alexander*
Disability Respite Program:	Deb Harman, Sandy Joyce and Jessica Tucker
deaf Access VICTORIA:	Erica Smith and Eileen Green *Kathy Fitzmaurice*
Early Intervention Program:	Lyndy Boyle, Heather Clue, Jenny Gleeson, Cheryl McKinnon, Leah Patterson, Bev Piper, Daphne Smith, Tracey Tanner and Joy Vicary *Jane Duffy, Cassie Brown, Susan Schietroma and Lauren Fleming*
Disability and Carer Support Staff	Sue Agnew, Tamara Asbury, Luke Campbell, Jaqueline Clarke, Jillian Crighton, Jessica Crow,Betty Dwyer, Herlinda Eykels, Troy Harry, Daniel Hayes, Peter Hill, Elise Jacobs, Amanda Kearney, Rachel Malady, Emma O'Brien, Fran Pearson, Kobe Petera, Jessica Roe, Maria Svent, Jullie Timms, Wayne Tucker and Sheryl Wright *Kelly Dufty, Thomas Napthine, Alex Nesic and Nicole Wright*

Italics represents staff members that have ceased employment with Mpower during the 2011/2012 year



Lily Knowles enjoys the animals at Fun 4 Kids Childrens Festival.

Innovation and Growth

To work within a culture of innovation and empowerment for staff and clients in order to achieve quality growth.

The services offered by Mpower to support local communities continue to evolve and develop in line with community expectations and changes to the sector. Several new initiatives and developments in the past year have strengthened Mpower's position in the region.

During the year Mpower successfully applied to become a Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel. The role of a panel provider is to deliver evidence based early interventions for eligible children focused on contributing to the child's ability to successfully transition to school. Mpower is expected to liaise with other service providers to ensure it is consistent in the direction of services provided.

In 2011 Mpower received funding for a short term project to assist children on a waiting list for Early Intervention services who would be attending school in 2012. Mpower's role was to work with the families of these children and support them with the process of school enrolment and applying for funding where appropriate. Putting in place transition to school plans to create a positive start for families is one of the goals.

For the first time Mpower has been able to offer occupational therapy within its Early Intervention service model. Occupational therapy complements existing services and the therapy team is integrated into service delivery.

The Helping Children with Autism and Better Start programs are expected to grow with the increased availability of a speech therapist and awareness of the role of an occupational therapist. Helping Children with Autism has 50 people registered as eligible for services from Mpower.

The very popular school holiday program received extra recurrent funding from the Department of Human Services that will provide another 1696 hours of respite per year to meet the needs of 20-25 families on the waiting list who want to access the Warrnambool program. Activities offered during the programs include gymnastics, movies, trips to Portland and Port Campbell, Fun4Kids Festival, swimming and beach activities with the most popular being bowling.

As part of Mpower's mission to deliver services in or close to communities where people live, Mpower also provides a school holiday program for Hamilton and Portland clients. The extra school holiday funding included extra service hours for Hamilton and a campaign will be launched to increase Hamilton's knowledge of the program. Currently an after-school program in Hamilton delivered by Stay Residential Services provides about 700 hours of respite to Hamilton and district families. Mpower also provides a school holiday program in Portland delivered by Kyeema and subsidises the Portland YMCA school holiday program.

The provision of Mpower's first respite house in Warrnambool has proven to be a great asset. The house leased at 92 Koroit Street has been invaluable for the Disability Respite program.

Use of the house has expanded during the year and it has become a valued, flexible asset for disability respite. Most of Mpower's respite is now based at the house as it offers a home-like atmosphere for after school respite while providing easy access for staff to the Mpower offices which are across the street.

The house provided a perfect venue for a Youth Group pilot project run from August to December, 2011. This was very popular and over this period 684 hours of respite were delivered. The aim of the project was to give adolescents with a disability an opportunity to socialise with peers and have some fun. It also offered an opportunity for skill development in areas such as group decision making, budgeting, cooking and use of public transport. Following a successful tender to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for innovative respite funding, the Youth Group has become an ongoing program. This program runs fortnightly on a Friday evening and has an average of 12 participants.

Respite funding through Individual Support Packages including respite for younger children and other agencies for after school care has been based at the respite house, providing clients the opportunity to be cared for in a home-like environment whilst also accessing community activities such as swimming and the gym.

The Carer Support program at Mpower has approximately 200 carers registered on its program at any one time. Carers can be any age but for funding purposes, the person they care for needs to be 65 years of age or over, or if they are Aboriginal - aged 50 and over. If a person has dementia they can be any age to access the program. The person being cared for must be living in the community, in their own residence and must not be living in permanent residential care. Mpower's Carer support program provides short term case management for carers as well as respite and small amounts of brokerage to purchase resources to assist in the caring role.

As a part of growth and development in the organisation and carer program, Mpower moved towards recruiting and employing support workers with skills and expertise in working with older people in order to provide in-home support and respite to people using the Carer Support program. As well as helping to assure high standards of service, this enhances the skill base of workers and provides more work opportunities for them.

'Innovative' respite has been used to help several people in caring roles during the year. It has been identified that some carers shy away from the term 'respite' and feel they should be in the caring role at all times. This means they don't take advantage of respite, therefore missing out on regular 'time out' for themselves. However, if the carer was asked to go on a trip to external venues, such as the cinema, they were more likely to accept. These innovative forms of respite provide an excellent opportunity for the program practitioners and carers to interact with each other on a social level.

The Carer Support co-ordinators provided many sessions of community education about the caring role and support for carers to groups including – South West Carer Network, Combined Health Support Network, Stroke and Heart Support Group, Parkinson's Support Group, Hearing Expo and the Hamilton Probus Group. The Parents with Intellectual Disabilities project, arising from the Mpower Family Services program, was introduced in early 2011 and a 12-month pilot came to a successful end in January 2012.

The pilot project was introduced after it was noticed that between 65 to 90 per cent of cases referred through ChildFIRST to Mpower's Family Services consisted of a family headed by a parent with an intellectual disability.

The program developed effective support and skill development for parents with a disability or learning difficulty. Its widespread success was reflected in data obtained from parent, worker and community surveys. Twelve families were involved in the pilot program.

A submission has been lodged for refunding this program following a strong push to see the continuation of a similar program which works holistically with parents, workers and the community in delivering a range of services, training and information sharing.

Final recommendations from the pilot program targeting parents who have an intellectual disability identified the need for open pathways, flexible service, worker support and training, and early identification and engagement during pregnancy. This project worked successfully with a range of disability services including Child Protection Services, ChildFIRST, Family services, Parenting Assessment and Skills Development Services and universal services such as kindergartens, Maternal and Child Health services and schools.

Strong networks, shared learning and collaborative practice have been contributing factors to the project's overall success. The Totally Awesome Parents group, which was an outcome of the Parents with Intellectual Disabilities project, was a great success. The program used a large number of different activities and strategies to encourage parents to try new endeavours, take on responsibilities and engage with the community. It involved collaboration of more than 30 not-for-profit organisations. Activities included creative play for children, routines and helpful charts for families and an outing to tenpin bowling.

In March 2012 the Totally Awesome Parents program won the Community Southwest category of the 2012 WDEA Social Inclusion and Collaboration Awards. Family Services continues to provide intensive family support to families where either the children or the parents have a disability and there is an identified risk to the family's wellbeing.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) - Specialist Children's Services and Mpower have moved to a service delivery model where the majority of families receive a service from one agency rather than two or more as happened previously. There are a few exceptions to meet the needs of current clients. From November, 2011, new referrals are placed with the agency responsible for family service co-ordination. Families that reside outside of Warrnambool may receive speech therapy or occupational therapy from the local hospital service in their outreach clinics. This service is dependent on their waiting lists.

A new 20-week Early GOALS program Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) was provided to 19 families in Warrnambool and Portland. The program introduces positive behavior support, is family centered and supports building relationships within families, acknowledges the importance of family's goals and values, and addresses the importance of setting goals and working towards these together as a family.

In a new Memorandum of Understanding developed in conjunction with DEECD, Mpower's role in providing therapy services to school aged children with autism who are eligible for Commonwealth funding is described. The Memorandum of Understanding gives clear information to help Mpower plan effective and appropriate therapy within a school setting.

In conjunction with The Fletcher Jones Foundation and supported by partners South West TAFE, Warrnambool Special Development School, Warrnambool Botanic Gardens and Bunnings Warehouse, a sensory garden was developed at Mpower's office. It is now well established with a selection of fragrant, textured, colourful and tasty plants to invite exploration in sound, smell, taste, touch and sight to enhance the natural environment for enjoyment and learning. The Ray & Joyce Uebergang Foundation and the David & Isobel Jones Family Foundation allocated funds for playground equipment to complete the project.



Rebecca Howard and son Cody.
Photo courtesy of The Hamilton Spectator

Family Centred Practice

" Our learning's tell us that systemically, when people who provide services don't have as their key driver a person-centered approach to their work, less than optimal and sometimes adverse outcomes result for persons with a disability" **Laurie Harkin. Disability Services Commissioner.**

Mpower is committed to empowering families and individuals to effectively participate in planning that will impact on their lives. The mission of Mpower is to ***'work in partnership with families to achieve best outcomes'.***

Mpower adopts a family centred approach to all its programs and works with families to ensure the best outcomes for the care of their family member, while recognising that each family is unique. This involves working with families to make informed decisions on services and supports.

The Strengthening Parent Support program offered support to more than 100 parents/carers who have a child with a disability aged 0-18 years. The program facilitates mutual support of parents through contact with other parents, assistance to support groups and organisation of workshops/forums on key interest topics.

New referrals to the early intervention program have the opportunity to identify and discuss their concerns for their child and family. The delivery of their services is then planned with the family. The involvement of parents in early intervention through attending structured teaching sessions with their child increased their engagement with the service. Traditionally as children reach four years of age programs have been offered where parents do not always attend with their child. The more formal introduction of parent education/ information sessions across all centre-based programs aims to be specific to the learning needs of the children in each group.

Support groups facilitated by Mpower include Hamilton, Dyspraxia, Down Syndrome, Early Intervention, Portland Autism, OSKAA Portland, and Warrnambool Autism.

Best Interests of Children

The support of children and families is a core function of Mpower.

Many of Mpower's foundation services, such as Early Childhood Intervention and Family Services, are designed around the needs of children. Working with families covers a broad spectrum of our services as can be seen in the following examples.

Mpower was part of a successful tender for a new model of service provision for delivery of Family Services. A generalist model of care has been adopted which uses secondary consultation for specialist advice. The new outreach service is delivered across the region and helps families to achieve best outcomes for children. The developments of a sensory garden and improvements to the Mpower playground have been welcomed by children participating in our programs.

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. The toy library has resources for clients attending many of the programs Mpower offers.

Mpower continues to offer a range of Early Childhood Intervention services, including coordinating services and supports such as funding applications, group formats, individual sessions, parent sessions, assessments, therapy, consulting with other early childhood providers and programs that occur within the natural environment.

Mpower continues to follow state-wide best interest principles as recommended by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



L to R: Angela Alexander, Pattrina McConnell and Kerry Nelson receive the Community Southwest category of the 2012 WDEA Social Inclusion and Collaboration Award.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Working in collaboration with other service providers is an important facet of Mpower's mission.

There are many advantages from this collaborative approach for both the agency and for clients and their families. Collaboration and the formation of partnerships assists in the referral process, creates opportunities for families, leads to shared costs and discounts and assists with promotion and training.

Several key partnerships have been developed over the past year, continuing Mpower's strong history of working well with other agencies.

In partnership with Gateway Family Services, Mpower successfully tendered to provide an Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultation project across the Barwon South West region. The success of this partnership and the program generally has seen an announcement to extend the funding and program for a further two years. Mpower is also a member of the steering committee for the Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) for the Warrnambool, Moyne and Corangamite regions.

Warrnambool City Council is the auspicing body for the HCI. The initiative aims to promote exercise and healthy living for people with disabilities and their carers. Mpower has a lead role in adapting the very successful Active Oceans project for the new HCI target group.

As part of a new consortium, Mpower has successfully tendered to deliver Child FIRST and Integrated Family Services to families and vulnerable children and young people up to the age of 17.

Mpower is working in an alliance with Brophy Family and Youth Services, Warrnambool City Council, Bethany Community Support and the Department of Human Services to deliver the program which is also supported by Gunditjmara and Winda Mara Aboriginal Services. Family Service practitioners deliver effective services to vulnerable children, young people and their families as part of the Child and Family Services Alliance. The partnership provides a collaborative, systemic approach to achieving best outcomes for vulnerable families in the region.

Mpower continued its involvement as an active member of Community Southwest. This coalition of not-for-profit organisations within south west Victoria aims to be a strong influence in developing stronger, fairer and more self-dependent local communities. Mpower actively maintains and values its ongoing membership with Community Southwest which is a platform for CEO and executive level networking and knowledge sharing. The value of the relationships developed through this collaboration cannot be underestimated, nor can the shared learning and enhanced outcomes for our local communities.

Mpower has used its partnerships to improve services and opportunities for staff and clients. For example, the Carer Support Program joined forces with Lyndoch Living to host a workshop to guide carers on `*knowing when the time is right*'. Mary O'Mara from Carer's Victoria facilitated the workshop for carers and family members which explored the right time to consider permanent residential care for the person you care for. It explored the feelings of guilt, grief and loss that carers often experience.

Another program which illustrates the value of partnerships is the Totally Awesome Parents group which involved the collaboration of more than 30 not-for-profit organisations. The program used a large number of different activities and strategies to encourage parents to try new endeavours, take on responsibilities, and engage with the community.

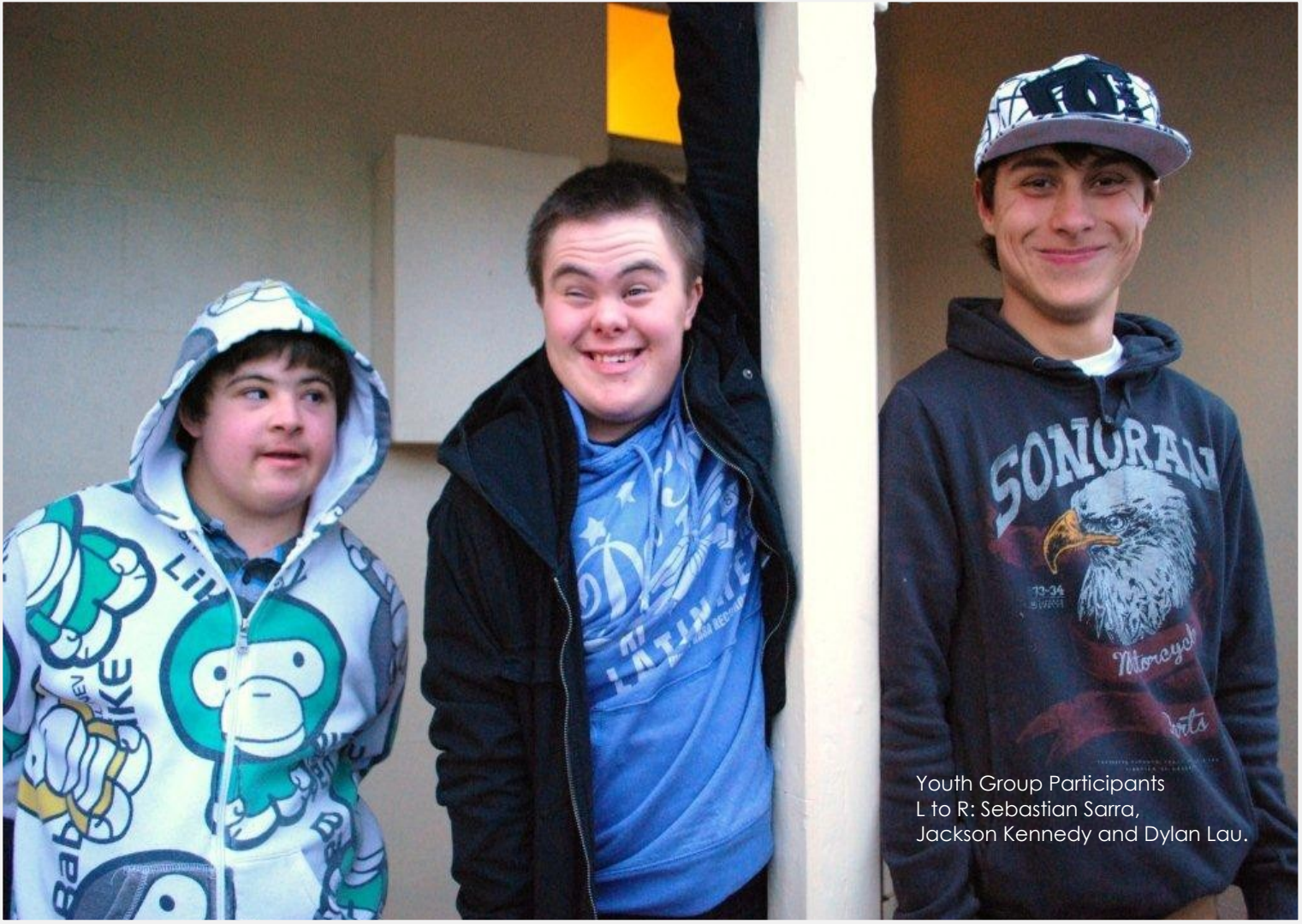
Mpower is a member of the National Disability Service which is a peak body for disability services and disability professionals.

Mpower's key networks and associations include:

- South West Carer & Respite Network
- South West Disability Network
- South West Respite Network
- Community Southwest

Continued from previous page

- South West Carer Services Network
- South West Primary Care Partnership
- Brophy Family and Youth Services
- Bethany Community Support
- Gateway Family Services
- Great South Coast Early Years Network
- Family Services Alliance
- Warrnambool City Council
- Department of Human Services
- Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative
- Winda Mara Aboriginal Services
- Warrnambool, Surf Coast and Southern Grampians inclusion support committees
- Barwon and South West Education Network
- South West Volunteer Network
- One and All
- Southern Grampians Community Advisory Committee
- Warrnambool City Community Advisory Committee
- Glenelg Community Advisory Committee
- Geelong Deaf Educators Network
- Active Oceans
- Warrnambool CALD Network
- Healthy Start National Practice Network
- REACT
- DEECD Managers Network
- DEECD Regional ECIS (Early Childhood Intervention Service)



Youth Group Participants
L to R: Sebastian Sarra,
Jackson Kennedy and Dylan Lau.



Monopoly time at Youth Group
L to R: Jacob Rantall, Ehlana Wilkinson
and Nigel Shanahan.



Construction time at kinder for
Aiden Thomson and Bannister Waller.

Community Development and Inclusion

Mpower works in close partnership with the community, corporate entities and governments to achieve quality aged and disability services that are appropriate to respond to people's needs.

Mpower is committed to building more inclusive communities to ensure that people with a disability have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of community life. Mpower seeks to continually develop community partnerships to increase meaningful opportunities and activities for people with disabilities.

These strong links allow Mpower to implement a variety of inclusive programs and become involved in community based activities for clients, ranging from gym training sessions to going to football games and festivals.

There are several key programs that help Mpower to promote community inclusion which include the Healthy Communities Initiative, Active Oceans, deaf access Victoria and Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultancy Practitioner (ASDCCP). In particular, the deaf access program and ASDCCP work predominately with organisations and local governments to advocate and build skills to insure community inclusion for the deaf and hard of hearing and people with autism.

The ASDCCP supported many regional agencies with the provision of training and secondary consulting. Three bi-monthly Autism Communities of Practice have been run supporting up to 150 professionals and families working with children or adults with autism.

Mpower was part of a successful tender consortium bringing the new Healthy Communities Initiative to the region. This delivers community based physical activity and healthy eating programs and aims to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity within communities by maximising the number of people, predominantly not in the paid workforce, who are engaged in proven or innovative physical activity and healthy eating programs.

Active Oceans continues to deliver an opportunity for participants to learn new skills and then join mainstream clubs. Support and education are provided to mainstream clubs to assist them to embrace memberships from people with disabilities. This is a true community development achievement as community clubs build their skill base and understanding to enable people with disabilities to be active members of their clubs.

Each year Active Oceans provides individual swimming lessons, coastal recreation and sporting opportunities for people with disabilities. Active Oceans is currently undergoing an accreditation process through the Healthy Communities Initiative to allow Mpower to become a registered provider of the program.

Also in true community development style, Mpower's deaf access program assists community organisations and services to work more effectively with deaf and hard-of-hearing people by raising awareness about the problems they experience and their needs.

The service also informs consumers of initiatives that allow people with hearing problems to participate in community activities. For example, Mpower shared information about the hearing loop at Warrnambool's new Lighthouse Theatre to assist those with hearing aids and hearing loss. Mpower also advised the Capitol Cinema's refurbishment which includes hearing loops and closed captions on many movies.

Many of Mpower's programs are designed to bring consumers and carers into close contact with the community. The Koroit Street respite house has opened up many opportunities for inclusive activities. For example, the Mpower youth group started during the year and continues to meet fortnightly at the house, helping participants to develop social skills that include shopping and use of public transport.

Disability Services ran nine weekend getaways, each with four participants. These weekends are for both children and adults. Over the past 12 months, seven of these weekends were based at the Koroit Street respite house.

Respite for Older Carers (ROC) has continued in both Hamilton and Warrnambool, focusing on community activities. Over the past 12 months, clients have enjoyed trips to Geelong and Mount Gambier, local festivals and agricultural shows, the Otway Fly along with a combined Christmas breakup. Other recipients of ROC packages have individual respite either in the form of in-home respite or community access.

The Siblings Program continued throughout the year for children 6-9 years and 10-18 years. Some activities have been combined to include all age groups. On average four to six siblings attended the activities which have included Cape Bridgewater seal tour, Leisure Link–Geelong, Seaside Carnival and Geelong Time Zone. This program also provided funding towards the sibling camp held at Rose's Gap in April.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Mpower is committed to providing a range of services that are accessible, sensitive and appropriate for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations.

To achieve this goal, Mpower has established a CALD Action Plan and a CALD Working Group and has adopted several proactive initiatives to advance cultural awareness and inclusion.

Mpower has developed links with multicultural groups and branding, including promotional brochures and advertising, has been adjusted to reflect Mpower's pledge to remain connected to all nationalities and other diverse groups within the community. During the year Mpower staff participated in cultural training with the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation.

Regional Profile

Mpower aims to provide services to communities across south west Victoria and uses outreach and visiting programs to fulfill this goal.

Over the past year, Mpower has maintained a strong presence throughout the region and has expanded programs to meet local needs.

Although Mpower is based in Warrnambool, services are not city centric. Programs continue to operate across the district including Hamilton, Portland, Camperdown, Heywood, Casterton, Penshurst, Timboon, Lismore, Terang and other regional towns.

Respite services and school holiday programs are provided in partnership with locally-based agencies in Portland and Hamilton along with individual care programs for children across the south west. The expansion of Mpower school holiday programs and outreach services have further strengthened our regional connections.

Parent and carer support groups operate in Hamilton, Portland, Casterton, Heywood, Terang and Camperdown.

Early Childhood intervention services have increased in Portland where an expanded Early GOALS program has been offered to meet community demand. The program aims to provide parents with strategies, information and support to help them achieve their goals for the early years of their child's life and improve their ability to cope with inappropriate behaviour. Also the provision of services in the natural environment (which is current best practice) enables Mpower to provide services across a large geographic area to provide services in or near the communities families live in. This meets one of Mpower's strong strategic aims.

Involvement in the deaf access program has led to enhanced connections in the Geelong and Colac regions, while the adoption of a new generalist model of service in Family Services has made it easier for Mpower to service the broader south west Victorian region.

Mpower continues to maintain a high profile in regional media with several news articles about programs, carers and clients being featured in the media throughout the year.

Consumer Participation

Consultation with consumers, carers and the community is a high priority for Mpower and serves to strengthen service delivery and outcomes.

Consumer participation takes place in a variety of ways, ranging from informal discussions to formal surveys. The Consumer Reference Group is a key part of the communication process. The group meets quarterly and provides a direct conduit for parents and carers to advise Mpower management on how to improve services. The group includes consumer representatives from all Mpower programs.

A Consumer Participation Working Group comprising Mpower staff from across the organisation aims to develop strategies to improve consumer participation.

The Mpower newsletter and website provide forums for interaction with consumers. Mpower welcomes feedback through its website www.mpower.org.au

Focus groups and surveys add to the options for consumer input.

One survey completed in the Carer Support program in February 2012 showed practitioners are meeting the needs of the carers. The survey was conducted to get a better understanding of the needs and opinions of carers using the service and to address any issues they may have.

A review of the program was completed at the end of 2011, to evaluate the effectiveness of Geelong deaf Access. They key questions about the effectiveness through changing practices, attitudes and awareness showed a high percentage of satisfaction with Geelong deaf Access services.

Compliance, Risk Management and OH&S

Mpower shall provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable for employees, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985 (Vic.).

Mpower places paramount importance on ensuring all risk management, compliance and Occupational, Health & Safety (OH&S) provisions are followed to maintain a safe and risk-free workplace. A structured safety management system is in place to maintain a consistently high standard of safety performance.

Over the past year, Mpower has continued to implement actions and undertake reviews that lead to a safer environment for staff, consumers and families.

An audit of playground equipment resulted in several items being upgraded or replaced. The audit identified items of potential risk and enabled Mpower to apply for funding from local charitable bodies to replace the worn equipment.

An ergonomic assessment of the office was carried out to ensure staff work in safe conditions. Recommendations by the consultant who provided the assessment were introduced over the following months.

Mpower has adopted a new OH&S policy that covers operations on days of total fire ban, extreme weather and in high fire danger areas. As well as complying with DHS requirements, the policy was established in response to the potential risk facing staff on days of extreme weather. It outlines how work operations, travel and activities must be curtailed if any risk is presented by adverse weather conditions, and delegates key responsibilities. The policy dictates that some activities and travel must be cancelled on extreme weather days if there is risk to staff or clients.

Due to the increased workload of the quality administrator, the co-ordination of maintenance was moved to Olivia Kelly who completed initial OH&S training and has been appointed as the OH&S representative.



Participants communicating at the 2011 Deaf And Hard of Hearing Expo in Geelong coordinated by deaf Access VICTORIA / Mpower.

Service Provision

Mpower will 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.

This year we have:

- ✓ Coordinated Geelong deaf and hard of hearing expo attended by 500 people who accessed 45 displays and 20 talks
- ✓ Established 3 Communities of Practice in Portland, Hamilton and Warrnambool
- ✓ Conducted 20 community training sessions for deaf Access Victoria
- ✓ Conducted 17 ASD training sessions for Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultant Practitioner
- ✓ Distributed monthly newsletters to more than 800 recipients
- ✓ Provided 2997 hours of counselling and support through the Carer Support Program
- ✓ Provided 3152 hours of respite through the Carer Support Program
- ✓ 126 new families accessed Parent Support Program
- ✓ Supported 8 volunteer drivers to drive more than 205 hours for the Community Transport Program
- ✓ Supported 43 children/families through the Helping Children with Autism and Better Start programs
- ✓ Supported 100 children through the Early Childhood Intervention program
- ✓ Delivered parent information and support program called "Early GOALS" to 16 families
- ✓ 35 children attended Early Childhood Intervention group programs with structured parent learning sessions within Portland, Hamilton and Warrnambool.
- ✓ Allocated additional flexible package funding to 30 families to support their child's varying needs
- ✓ Delivered 14,433 hours of respite to 169 families of children and adults with a disability
- ✓ Delivered 2251 hours of respite through school holiday programs to 65 families of children with a disability
- ✓ Delivered 4950 hours of respite to carers aged over 60 years
- ✓ Integrated Family Services supported 16 families with 1972 hours of support
- ✓ 5 PWID (Parents With Intellectual Disabilities) families were provided with ongoing support at TAP (Totally Awesome Parents) support group

Mpower Services

Mpower offers a wide range of services for people from birth to senior years requiring assistance with their daily activities.

Disability Respite Programs:
Provides a range of respite programs for families of children, young people and adults with disabilities, including:
- school holiday programs
- weekend getaways
- respite packages
- flexible respite
- Active Oceans

Carer Support:
Provides a range of supports for carers of older people who are frail aged (65+) or people who have dementia. Carers can be any age. The program can provide:
- carer support groups
- carer activities
- respite aids and equipment
- workshops and information forums
- individual parent support

Early Childhood Intervention Services:
A home and community-based early childhood intervention program for infants and children 0 to 6 years with disabilities, including:
- centre-based play programs
- home based programs
- kindergarten support and consultancy
- transition to school programs
- speech therapy
- occupational therapy
- developmental assessments
- flexible packages
- behaviour support, music and sensory programs
  family service coordination and support

deaf Access VICTORIA:
Supporting rural and regional communities. The deaf access program assists community organisations and services to work more effectively with deaf and hard of hearing people by raising awareness about the problems they experience and their needs. 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.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultancy Practitioner:
This program provides information and assistance in development of skills in staff and professionals who work with a person with Autism or their family.

This is achieved through building and supporting networks across different service areas; secondary case consulting to agencies and staff; developing individual training packages on Autism to deliver to organisations and agencies; and developing and supporting Autism Communities of Practice groups in regional areas.

Family Services:
The Integrated Family Services program aims to enhance children and adolescents' safety, stability and development by focusing on building the capacity of parents, carers and families to meet those needs. A suite of services is offered including: family counselling, support and advice with parenting and managing children's behaviour, group work, mediation and case management for families with higher needs.

Parent Support:
Offers support, information and assistance for parents and carers of infants, children and young people 0 to 18 years old with disabilities, including:
- parents support groups
- workshops and information forums
- individual parent support
- parent activities

Sturgeon View Holiday House:
Sturgeon View is a special needs holiday facility. Over this year, the facility has been rented long term to an individual with high support needs who is waiting for his custom built home to be constructed.

Personal Support:
Mpower has a team of qualified and caring personal support workers who can provide support to individuals in their home or in the community.

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.

Facilities:
Meeting rooms are available for hire to community groups.

Information and Referral:
Mpower staff can provide information and referral to a broad range of health and community support services (including respite services).

Community Transport:
Community transport provides flexible transport arrangements for those with disabilities to allow them to attend health or community support services.

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 Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Victorian State Government
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Department of Health
Department of 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
Coastcare
Nestles Rowing Club
Port Fairy Yacht Club
South West Scouts Association
South West TAFE
Warrnambool Angling Club
Warrnambool Netball Association
Warrnambool Surf Lifesaving Club
Warrnambool YMCA

Key business and community partners

Bridge Personnel
Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre
Darrian Office Choice
East Raglan Clinic - Dr Jonathon Duffy
Enhanced Resources
Gunners Office Equipment
McLaren, Buzolich & O'Keeffe (MBO)
Multicomm
SED Advisory
South West Credit
Star Printing
Warrnambool Telephone Co.
Warrnambool Toyota

Trusts, foundations and estates

ANZ Trustees
Western District Employment Access
Helen MacPherson Smith Trust
Estate of LM Price
Isobel & David Jones Family Foundation

Help us if you can

There are a number of ways that you can assist Mpower to continue its work in the community.

Donations

A donation of any kind for the valuable work done at Mpower is gratefully accepted. Mpower assures that any money and gifts will provide assistance to individuals and families in south-west Victoria who have difficulties in their lives.

Making a Will

Making a Will is about ensuring that the people and causes you hold dear are treated the way you would wish after your death. Besides family and friends, many people find it appropriate to remember in their Will those institutions and activities which have been important to them. Mpower would like you to consider leaving a bequest to our special organisation. Bequests by supporters and friends are integral to ensuring that what you have valued will be supported into the future.

What is a Bequest?

A bequest is a specific gift left in a Will that allots part of your estate to a particular beneficiary, a person or an organisation.

This gift can be cash, shares, or bonds, property or a percentage of an estate.

It is important for your families and loved ones that you have a Will to make your wishes known and prevent any confusion or heartache

A Bequest can be:

- A specified sum of money
- A percentage of the estate
- The residue of the estate after other specific bequests are paid
- A percentage of the residue
- The total of the estate after debts and testamentary expenses
- Property, stocks and shares, works of art or antiques



Why Give To Mpower

Although Mpower is government funded, this funding is strictly tied to our 'core service' provision, as described in our services section of our website - www.mpower.org.au

Mpower provides many extra services to meet the needs of our service users, which require funding not received from government sources.

The beauty of any gifts of funding to Mpower is that it is used to provide services to people here in the South West.

For further information or to make a donation please write to:
Executive Manager Business Operations
Mpower Inc
PO Box 269,
Warrnambool, 3280

FINANCIALS

Accountant's Report

The Year in Review

Mpower has recorded another strong financial result in 2011/12 while continuing to provide high quality services to clients. The result is due to significant growth in funding combined with disciplined expenditure management. The surplus of $195,231 will be invested back into the organisation to enable Mpower to continue to maintain the organisation's assets for future service provision.

While the detailed financial statements are contained in this annual report, I take this opportunity to provide further explanation of some significant and important items contained therein:

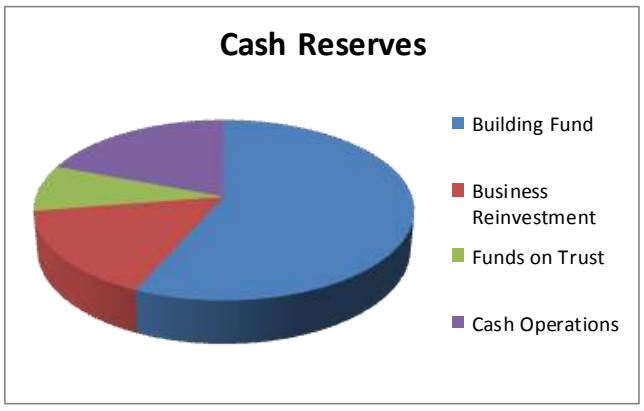
Income

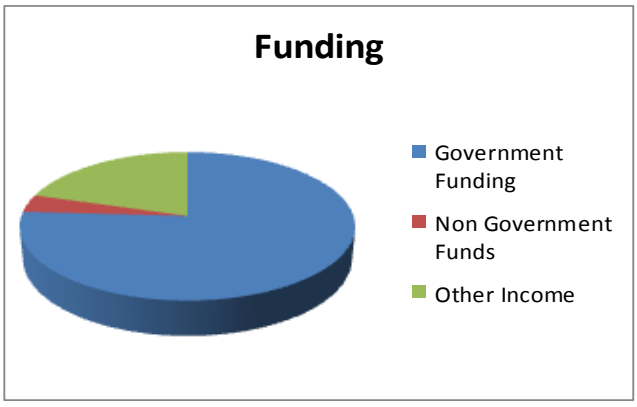
Total income exceeded $2.8M which is the largest recorded result for Mpower and up $400,000 on the previous year. For clarification sundry income contains almost $300,000 in program income carried forward to the 2011/12 year, offset by increased staff and program costs. Sundry Income also contains interest received on money invested and set aside for future building development.

Expenditure

Expenditure is tightly monitored against budget at both the organisational level and for each program. Some notable variances for the financial year included:

- Additional advertising expenditure incurred for staff employment as provided in program funding received
- During the year we undertook a triennial Quality Audit thus requiring additional external support and reflected in Audit costs
- Additional consulting costs incurred in developing computer systems for individual packaging and for external support for tender submissions
- Increased depreciation and motor vehicle costs associated with the bus purchased last year funded with the generous support of the Uebergang Trust.





Balance Sheet Position

Mpower has maintained its strong financial position with Net Assets of more than $2.4M and over $1.5M in cash reserves at the end of the year. Approximately 80% of these funds are invested into term deposits with the South West Credit Union and set aside for employee entitlements and future building development. The committee 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 asset values were reviewed at year end, in particular the Land and Buildings, and it has been deemed that the value is consistent with conservative external valuations received.

Financial Management

Mpower has disciplined financial management arrangements in place. The management team, in conjunction with the Finance and Audit Committee, reviews detailed financial results and policies on a quarterly basis. Summary financial reports are submitted to full committee of management meetings on a monthly basis. All program leaders have been involved in setting budgets and monitoring their costs, and once again they have been very effective in managing their budgets throughout the year.

Finally I record my thanks to the administration team at Mpower led by Dianne and Donna. They have, as always, been diligent, accurate and reliable in recording and reporting all management and financial data. Also a thank you to Kerry and the Committee who are at all times professional and co-operative in the way they work with me to oversee the finances of the organisation.

Robert Lane
B.Bus (Acc), MBA, CPA
Mpower Accountant

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE

MEMBERS OF MPOWER INC.

Scope

We have audited the financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Mpower Inc. for the year ended 30th June 2012. The Committee is responsible for the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies used and described in Note 1 to the financial statements which form part of the financial report are appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act. (Vic.) 1981 and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We have conducted an independent audit of this financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of Mpower Inc. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the members.

The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act. (Vic.) 1981. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Association's financial position,

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report of Mpower Inc. presents true and fair view of the financial position of Mpower Inc. as at 30th June 2012 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note to the financial statements.

McLaren Buzolich O'Keeffe
Certified Practising Accountants

10 September 2012

Michael
Partner

Financial Statements

MPOWER INC.
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2012

	NOTE	YEAR $	2011 $
INCOME			
Government Funding			
DHS		1,298,777.76	1,223,512
DFACS		139,329.07	92,192
DEECD		691,057.98	719,091
		2,129,164.81	2,034,795
Other Grants			
Non Department Funding		6,000.00	44,810
Other Revenue			
Sundry Other Income		669,350.44	322,963
TOTAL INCOME		2,804,515.25	2,402,568
EXPENSES			
Accountancy		14,759.99	9,530
Advertising & Promotion		23,466.73	9,171
Audit & Legal Fees		11,041.79	3,850
Bank Charges		1,493.64	1,369
Catering		5,379.14	5,228
Cleaning		11,875.36	9,325
Consultants Fees		60,751.00	42,560
Depreciation		106,967.67	97,197
Insurance		6,501.60	7,581
Maintenance and Repairs		69,656.27	68,120
Motor Vehicle Operating Costs		70,786.84	51,189
Postage		7,882.88	7,635
Printing & Stationery		21,127.16	20,300
Program Costs		453,673.09	348,770
Staff Costs	2	1,697,838.42	1,552,261
Security		1,282.00	687
Subscriptions		8,554.01	13,246
Telephone		13,357.65	14,932
Utilities		22,888.16	18,225
TOTAL EXPENSES		2,609,283.40	2,281,176
OPERATING PROFIT		195,231.85	121,392

MPOWER INC.
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2012

	NOTE	YEAR $	2011 $
Profit from ordinary activities		195,231.85	121,392
Retained Profits at the beginning of the financial year		2,229,131.28	2,107,739
		2,424,363.13	2,229,131
RETAINED PROFITS AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR		2,424,363.13	2,229,131

MPOWER INC.
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH JUNE 2012

	NOTE	YEAR $	2011 $
CURRENT ASSETS			
Operating cash and equivalents	5	301,371.28	373,522
Trade and other receivables		31,859.69	30,837
Other Debtors			
Australian Taxation Office		706.25	-
Cash held for investments	3	1,129,839.59	1,061,835
Cash held in provision	4	129,746.50	121,885
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,593,523.31	1,588,079
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Land at Market Value		254,000.00	254,000
Buildings at Market Value		801,879.58	801,879
Less Accumulated Depreciation		(214,266.00)	(194,163)

Plant & Equipment - at Cost	625,848.19	564,043
Less Provision for Depreciation	(313,706.20)	(293,062)
	312,141.99	270,981
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	1,153,755.57	1,132,697
TOTAL ASSETS	2,747,278.88	2,720,776
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
EFT Suspense Account	-	107
Trade Creditors	-	15,908
Income in advance	166,032.00	272,393
Provision for Holiday Pay	52,104.56	67,472
Provision for Sick Pay	33,362.84	57,510
Provision for Long Service Leave	22,255.32	29,579
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	273,754.72	442,969

MPOWER INC.
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH JUNE 2012

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provision Long Service Leave	49,161.03	48,676
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	49,161.03	48,676
TOTAL LIABILITIES	322,915.75	491,645
NET ASSETS	2,424,363.13	2,229,131
MEMBERS FUNDS		
Retained Profits	2,424,363.13	2,229,131
TOTAL EQUITY	2,424,363.13	2,229,131

MPOWER INC.
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2012

Note 1 - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

These financial statements are a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic.) 1981. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic.) 1981 and the following Australian Accounting Standards.

AAS 5: Materiality

AAS 8: Events Occurring After Reporting Date

No other applicable Accounting Standards, Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

(a) Income Tax

Mpower is exempt from tax in accordance with the ITAA Section 50-5.

(b) Fixed Assets

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation. The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

(c) Employee Provisions

Provision for staff entitlements incorporates accrued annual leave at the balance date, long service leave for all full time employees and sick leave based on historical leave taken. On costs are included in the carried provision.

(d) Superannuation

The Association contributes employer superannuation on behalf of permanent employees receiving greater than $450 per month. The Association is not legally obligated to contribute greater than the 9% superannuation guarantee levy.

MPOWER INC.
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2012

	YEAR	2011
	$	$
NOTE 2 - Staff Costs		
Employee Provisions	(46,353.24)	9,296
Wages	1,529,801.13	1,350,819
Staff Training	52,280.71	49,496
Superannuation	131,872.67	117,467
Uniforms	671.32	332
Workcover	25,643.60	20,932
Leave Loading	3,922.23	3,919
	1,697,838.42	1,552,261
NOTE 3 - Cash held for investments		
SWCU I12.1 - Building reserves	882,911.35	829,415
SWCU I12.2 -Invest. reserves	246,928.24	232,420
	1,129,839.59	1,061,835
NOTE 4 - Cash held in provision		
SWCU 12 - Employee provisions	129,746.50	121,885
NOTE 5 - Operating cash and equivalents		
Cash in hand	300.00	200
Cash at bank - SWCU S1	299,203.34	367,839
Cash at bank - SWCU S1.1	26.47	224
Cash at bank - Westpac 28-2127	116.21	3,548
Cash at bank - Debit Visa	1,725.26	1,711
	301,371.28	373,522

Mpower Offers:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultancy
- Carer Respite Coordination
- Carer Support Program
- Community Transport
- deaf Access VICTORIA
- Disability Respite Programs
- Early Childhood Intervention Services
- Healthy Community Initiative - Eat Well Be Active
- Integrated Family Services
- Parent Support Program
- Sturgeon View Holiday House



Mpower Inc
71 Koroit Street
Warrnambool 3280

Phone: 03 5561 8111
Fax: 03 5561 8100
Email: admin@mpower.org.au
Web: www.mpower.org.au