

Annual Report 2012-13

mpower inc

'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.

mpower inc.

enhancing abilities,
supporting families,
strengthening communities



In 2012/2013 Mpower's workforce of sixty six staff has provided an increasingly diverse range of support services to more than eight hundred families across the region.

Quality Improvement Council

'Yes ... we are a QIC accredited organisation'



Volunteers are a highly valued and essential part of the Mpower workforce. Mpower's Community Transport program is reliant on the generous contribution of our volunteers. Each week drivers make a positive difference to their community by transporting the frail aged members of our community to essential medical appointments.

This service supports our vision statement of 'enabling people to have meaningful connections to their communities.'

ABOVE: CEO Kerry Nelson and Community Transport driver Basil Garner who was presented with a 5 year service award in October, 2012.

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 and the communities surrounding them.

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.

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.

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

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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.

Committee of Management



David Beggs
President
BVSc MVS
Veterinarian
Warrnambool Veterinary Clinic; Faculty of Veterinary Science, The University of Melbourne
Member of the Management Review & Staffing Sub Committee
Joined board in 2005



Neil Ballard
Vice President
B Ec. Dip Ed
Rural Access Project Officer
Warrnambool City Council
Member of the Policies & Procedure Sub Committee
Member of the Management Review & Staffing Sub Committee
Joined the board in 2011



Phillip Annett
Treasurer
BBus Acct & HRM, Dip Mgmt
Business owner
Vehicle & Equipment Finance
Member of the Finance & Audit Sub Committee
Joined the board in 2008



Brad O'Connor
Bachelor of Commerce (Deakin), Member of the Institute of Chartered Accounts of Australia (CAA)
Accountant
Wannon Water
Member of the Finance & Audit Sub Committee
Joined the board 2013



Vern Robson
F.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



David Beard
Diploma of Management, Bachelor of Education
Secondary Teacher
Emmanuel College
Joined the board 2013



Adam Kempton
LL. B , B. Ec.
Lawyer, Company Director, Business Proprietor , Not For Profit Board Memberships
Joined the board in 1997



Sue Henry
Early Childhood Education
Retired Early Childhood Educator
Member of the Policies & Procedure Sub Committee
Member of the Management Review & Staffing Sub Committee
Joined the board in 1977



Gail Horne
Business Manager
Block N Pave
Joined the board in1989

Helen Bayne - Successful Committee of Management applicant for induction in 2013-14

Michael Neoh - Retired

Gordon Curran - Retired

Mpower Annual Report—2012/2013

In 2012/2013 Mpower's workforce of sixty six staff has provided an increasingly diverse range of support services to eight hundred families across the Barwon South West region.

In line with our 2011-2014 Strategic Plan the focus for the year has been on workforce development, quality improvement, program growth, innovation, empowerment, community partnerships and planning for the future.

A highlight for the disability sector this year was the bipartisan support shown by our Federal Government for DisabilityCare (formerly the National Disability Insurance Scheme).

Additional highlights for the year include successful reaccreditation, program growth, new programs, increased service provision to people with high support needs, facility improvements, extended lease of the respite house, leadership development and many positive outcomes identified by individuals and families accessing Mpower programs.

In 2012/2013 Mpower has continued to position itself to be a leader in quality aged and disability services enabling people to have meaningful connections to their community.



The Year Ahead

Work has started on the 2013-16 Mpower Strategic Plan. A key focus of the plan will involve maintaining the agency's focus on a values based culture supporting high standards while preparing for the introduction of DisabilityCare.

Under DisabilityCare people who require care or support will be able to make choices based on organisation performance, cost, agency reputation and comparison with other organisations. To compete in the 'marketplace service paradigm' Mpower will need to adapt and further improve service delivery and design.

In preparation for this changing paradigm the next twelve months will see a continued focus on positive leadership across the organisation, quality improvement, staff training, community inclusion, partnership development and person and family centred practice.

There will also be a stronger focus on improving workplace culture, financial sustainability, increased diversity and flexibility in services, marketing and program evaluation to ensure service user satisfaction.

DisabilityCare will transform the way that people with a disability are supported. There will be both challenges and opportunities for Mpower. Mpower is well placed to face these challenges and seeks to embrace the opportunities that will be provided to agencies and families.

CEO & Presidents Annual Report 2013

The 2012-2013 year heralded in the platform for major change to the community sector, particularly disability services. The impending changes to the sector served as a background to Mpowers operations for the year. All growth and change to service provision was vetted through the lens of the National Disability Insurance Scheme being launched in July 2013. Importantly Mpower understands changes of this level require a strong culture, based on values to support the organisation through uncertain waters as it adjusts to meet the new system requirements. This type of culture will assist in the achievement of our strategic aim to be an employee of choice and support us to be the provider of choice in a competitive market as it arises.

Understanding that Mpower's values based culture is a strong platform for the coming systemic changes has supported our focus on staff development throughout the year.

Garry Trotter a consultant specialising in organisational psychology has been engaged through SED Advisory to work with the management and executive teams, strengthening the commitment to and understanding of a value driven culture. This intensive work with the management teams was supported with two full staff development days engaging staff in discussion and actions about culture and values. *"The foot 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'*

Mpowers culture embraces the long standing philosophy of empowerment and new learning which encourages personal development, innovative thinking and creative outcomes.

These attributes support us to tackle challenges thus enabling families and individuals to have real and meaningful connection to the communities where they live. Mpower works in partnership with the community, corporate entities and government to achieve quality aged, disability and family services that respond to people's needs. Mpower's services are respectful, flexible, family centred and where possible, inclusive if this is desired.



CEO Kerry Nelson President David Beggs

The year saw the consolidation of several new positions and staff in the Mpower structure. Adjustments were made as staff settled into the new structure developed in 2011-12 while also welcoming new staff and program reviews. Several senior and experienced staff have been employed through the year in Early Intervention and administration. We successfully negotiated the employment of very experienced speech and occupational therapists who enhance the early childhood intervention services offered across a full year in line with our strategic aims. We have also appointed a part time accountant to assist with the increasing complex budgeting and financial planning required as the organisation grows and changes.

Following the commencement of a thorough review of the Older Carer Support Program a project officer was employed for six months to assist with the review, implementation of the outcomes and marketing the program to the wider community. The outcomes were particularly pleasing with the reinvigoration of several Carer Support groups and increased numbers of eligible carers receiving services.

Mpower actively maintains and values its ongoing membership of Community South West (CSW) which is a platform for CEO and executive level networking, knowledge sharing and support. The value of the relationships developed through this collaboration cannot be underestimated nor can the shared learning's and enhanced outcomes for the organisations involved.

An example of enhanced outcomes saw the development of a group purchase of HR services. Six CSW organisations are successfully having their HR needs met through a 'package' of services from a local HR specialist. This is a good result which provides an annual agreement for a bulk service at a reduced rate to members.
The outcome is an excellent and cost effective risk

management tool for Mpower and our partners across all human resources and industrial relations related issues.

Of particular note for Mpower was the CSW hosted visit to Warrnambool by Michael Goldsworthy from Australian Strategic Services to offer a full day forum and dinner event covering topics vital to the forth coming DisabilityCare in disability service provision. Michael highlighted six large scale Commonwealth government/productivity reports handed down in the recent past which all pointed to: National strategies, New structures – (NDIS), New systems, New/redeveloped services (client focused/ economically driven) all making up the environment in which service providers will operate in the new world of individualised customer choice.

Imperative facets of the new service paradigm include the need for organisations to know the true cost of each hour of service provision, to market their services in an increasingly competitive environment, to be accredited beyond the minimum requirements of funding bodies and generally to change their operations from 'welfare to market'.

Mpower Board members and management staff spent a full day working with Michael during his two day visit to Warrnambool. The day resulted in the development of an excellent strategic planning document outlining Mpower's strategies for the coming three years. The strategies are based on the premise of the need to review and overhaul the way we operate and provide services in order to be competitive and sustainable in the future. To support the strategies developed in this session a consultant was engaged to establish Mpower's unit costings across the organisation. This information is vital to the work of assuring competitiveness and viability in the future.

Mpower has a positive history of working well with other agencies in the best interests of the families we service, which demonstrates our strategic value of 'working collaboratively with other providers'.

Our collaborative relationships with Brophy Youth and Family Services, Warrnambool City Council, Lyndoch Living, Bethany, 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.

Mpower's collaborative relationship with Gateways Support Services providing the Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultancy Project (ASDCCP) has been extended for a further two years. This is a reflection of the success of this community building project undertaken in partnership with Gateways Support Services from Geelong. This is a pleasing result with minor changes to the aims of the program which will now focus solely on disability services clients and organisations.

Mpower has again been successful in being accredited through QICSA for a further three years following a three day visit from a panel of four external auditors in March this year. Further stand-alone accreditation was also gained for the Active Oceans program as part of the Healthy Communities Initiative project in which Mpower was a partner with Warrnambool City Council and several other south west agencies.

In line with our strategic aim of providing a suitable facility from which to provide quality services Mpower Committee of Management have invested in sourcing possible options for expansion in close vicinity to our existing offices. These explorations were unsuccessful but have led to further possibilities which may be realised in the coming year.

Mpower aims to be an employer of choice and has welcomed the introduction of the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) which sees the majority of Mpower staff set to receive a 23 - 45% pay increase over the coming 8 years. The ERO commenced roll out in December 2012 and will provide a relatively equal platform for employing staff on which to build our future service model. In the past, staff employed under community sector awards (much of Mpower's workforce) were considerably lower paid than counterparts in the private sector, making careers in our sector less attractive.

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. Throughout the year we have farewelled two of our board members - Gordon Curran and Michael Neoh after 9 years respectively. Each of these members had held executive positions during their years of service and are individually missed.

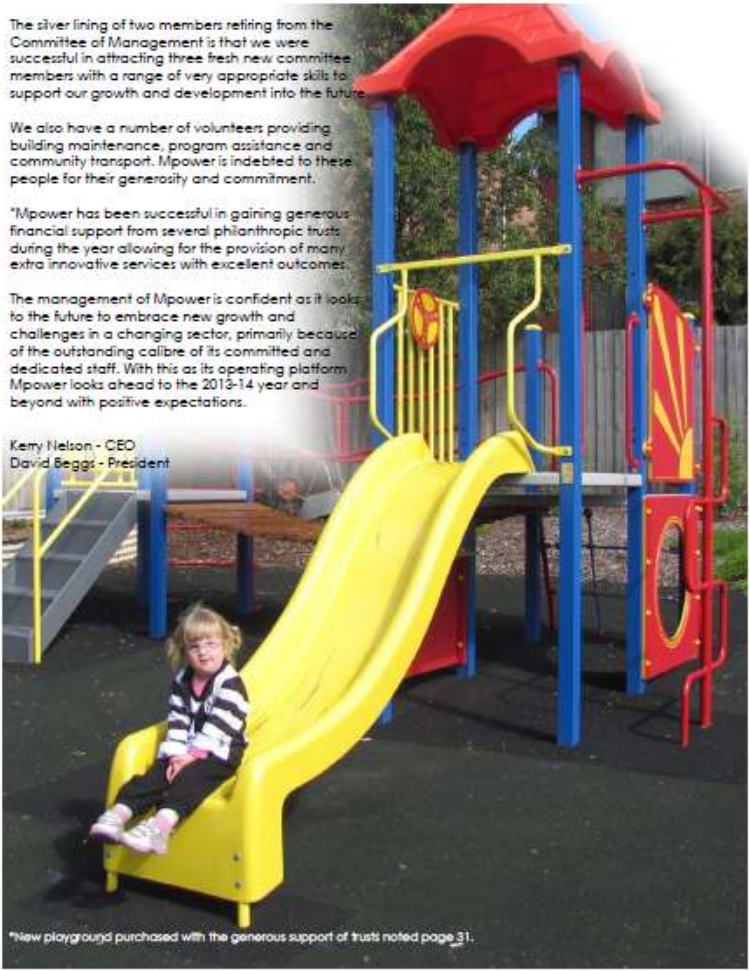
The silver lining of two members retiring from the Committee of Management is that we were successful in attracting three fresh new committee members with a range of very appropriate skills to support our growth and development into the future.

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.

*Mpower has been successful in gaining generous financial support from several philanthropic trusts during the year allowing for the provision of many extra innovative services with excellent outcomes.

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 2013-14 year and beyond with positive expectations.

Kerry Nelson - CEO
David Beggs - President



*New playground purchased with the generous support of trusts noted page 31.

1. Judy's Story

Although she suffers from osteoarthritis and post polio syndrome, Judy Drake has bigger things to worry about.

Her husband Wilf has emphysema, had lung reduction surgery 13 years ago, had a serious bout of pneumonia four years ago and suffers from chronic pain, partly as a result of an old car accident where he broke vertebrae in his neck.

"Wilf used to be my carer, now I'm his carer," Judy said.

Not that she is complaining and with the help of Mpower's Carer Support Program Judy is coping as well as could be expected.

"I always say it is for better or for worse and there is nothing we can do about it, but I don't think I'd be here without the support of Mpower," Judy said.

Judy discovered the Mpower Carer Support Program about six years ago but was initially sceptical.

"I thought I didn't need anything like that but I thought I'd find out about it," she said.

"I went to meet with them and found it was really good to sit down and talk."

Mpower helped with some much-needed improvements around the Drake's home at Naringal, allowing them to continue living on the beef farm, though the land is now leased. Judy was also introduced to the Mpower monthly carer group meetings and respite services.

She has since become a regular at the meetings, gone on trips, to the movies and out for lunch and says the support from fellow carers is "unbelievable".

"I can completely relax while I'm there knowing someone is looking after Wilf," she said.



Individual and Family Centred Practice - A Strength Based Approach

'Mpower is committed to empowering families and individuals to effectively participate in planning that will impact on their lives'. (Mpower Family and Person Centred Planning Policy)

A person centred or family centred approach is used across all programs at Mpower. Staff work with families and individuals to develop a support plan that covers numerous aspects of a person's life including recreation, health and emotional wellbeing. The support plan outlines the steps, timeframes and actions required to achieve the individual's goals.

A family centred approach recognises that each family is unique, that the family is the constant in the person's life and that they are the experts on the person's abilities and needs.

A strength based approach operates on the assumption that people have strengths and resources for their own empowerment. It recognises the barriers to people's empowerment and addresses these barriers using strategies that enable the people we work with to control the process of change.

Exit feedback from parents of EI client.

"Early intervention has been amazing for our family. We saw drastic improvements. We wished it continued in the first year of Primary School."

Innovation & Growth

The following provides a snapshot of just some of the areas of growth and innovation demonstrated by Mpower over the year.

Family Services Growth

Mpower has been successful in obtaining new funding for the Family Services program, enabling the agency to work within a 'Child First and Family Services' alliance with Brophy Youth and Family Services (BYFS), Warrnambool City Council and Bethany to provide Family Services across the south west of Victoria. The new funding has enabled Mpower to employ two additional full time Family Service Practitioners. It has also allowed the agency to broaden its scope. Previously Mpower would work with families where either the child or parent had a disability. Under the new funding Mpower will extend its family support to take general cases where there is no disability identified in the family.

The partnership provides a collaborative, systemic approach to achieving best outcomes for 'vulnerable' families in the region.

It supports families to achieve their goals of stability, safety and developmental well-being for their children. A Child First entry point at BFYS provides a community-based referral point into Family Services.

In providing Family Services, Mpower staff continue to work with the best interests of children in mind to ensure children are safe, healthy, and continuing to develop, learn and achieve wellbeing.

Family Services Support Groups - Totally Awesome Parents (TAP) and New At Parenting (NAP)

After winning the 2012 WDEA Social Inclusion and Collaboration Awards the Totally Awesome Parents (TAP) program continues to be well attended and has received ongoing support through the South West Child and Family Services Alliance. The group has been established to support parents with an intellectual disability to provide the best possible care for their children. The TAP participants continue to meet fortnightly and have arranged trips to Wambee Zoo, Warrnambool Springers and Kaotic Kids, as well as learning activities that support the day to day functioning of the family.

Through the South West Integrated Family Services Team (SWIFT Alliance) it was identified that services available to support new parents with learning difficulties were limited. In response Mpower has established the 'New at Parenting' (NAP) support group. The goals of the NAP program are to strengthen social networks for these parents through education with a focus on safety, stability and development of babies/infants. A successful six week trial was held during the year with 12 new parents. With support from the SWIFT Alliance the program will continue with another three or four groups per year. The program has purchased a virtual baby/infant simulator to demonstrate crucial aspects of infant care.

Responding to High Support Needs

Over the year Mpower has increasingly moved towards supporting individuals with higher support needs. This includes supporting individuals with behaviours of concern, complex communication or high physical support needs.

To meet this service need Mpower has focused on effective recruitment, ensuring a qualified, caring and professional workforce of direct care workers.

There has also been a strong focus on staff training and developing a teamwork approach to address high / complex support needs.

"Seeing our daughter with her support workers, you can see that they genuinely care about her and what she needs."

Further Funding for Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultancy Practitioner (ASDCCP)

Two years additional funding has been provided for the Autism Case Consultant Practitioner position. Over the year the ASDCCP Erica Smith has focused on strategic cross sector regional networks and planning groups, secondary consultation, information provision, Autism awareness raising, workforce development and capacity building along with developing a newsletter to support the ASD Communities of Practice groups.

Early Intervention Program Growth

Mpower is a panel provider of the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) and Better Start (BS) programs. These programs are available to children aged up to seven years of age who meet specific criteria. The objective for these programs is to provide increased access to services for children with a range of complex disabilities. The services and supports may include providing consultancy and individual learning and development programs.

The referrals to this program have increased by 10% in the last twelve months. There has also been an increase in requests for service delivery in universal settings and natural environments.

To support this growth and meet therapy needs a Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist have been employed. Therapists and Early Childhood teachers have been visiting schools throughout the region to support children's learning in this context. Staff have also implemented the Victorian Early Year's Framework and undertaken training in 'Motivational Interviewing'.

Exit Interview feedback from EI parents
"Early intervention is very valuable in helping my child's transition to school."

Youth Groups Established

A Youth Group for young people with a disability aged 12-17 years has commenced. The group gives its 25 participants an opportunity to attend community based activities and to develop skills in group decision making and independent living skills such as cooking, budgeting and transport. The group meet every second Friday at the Mpower respite house.

High Flyers Group

The High Flyers group has recommenced and convenes in the respite house on alternate Friday nights in response to an expressed need and gap in service provision. It caters for people in the same age group as youth group attendees who have high functioning Autism. A core group of six attend regularly with interest increasing as the group has become better known.

Dylan Lau, 16, and Sebastian Sarra, 14, are among those who regularly enjoy the youth group. "It's great to play games with other people' Dylan says 'It's better than playing XBox on your own."

Dylan's parents Marcia and Stuart Ray say that their son always comes home happy after participating in the group. "You can tell by the expression on his face that he loves it."

Sebastian's mother Kathy says that "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 own age."

Feedback from Youth Group participants:
My favourite thing about Youth Group is.....
"Seeing my friends and staff."

Mum and Dad like Youth Group because.....
"They get time to themselves."

Adaptive Surf Day

Forty five participants including eight wheelchair users were involved in a community surf event on Sunday 17th March.

The day was a joint project of Warrnambool City Council's Rural Access Program, Eat Well Be Active, Daktari Surf School, Mpower's Active Oceans program and the Warrnambool Surf Club. The event was attended by special guest Christiaan 'Otter' Bailey from the USA, the only paralysed professional big wave surfer in the world. The success of the day will ensure that the event continues.

Possums Nest Toy Library

The Mpower toy library continues to provide an innovative and highly valued resource to many children and families across the south west. Leanne Haberfield and her daughter Grace have been regular users over the last two years. 'Grace takes a lot of musical toys from the library. She gets a lot of enjoyment from using them. You can usually find something that suits the needs of the family and appeals to the child. There is such a variety, books, games, toys, puzzles, DVD's and more and they are all very good quality.'

Below: Winning photo in the WCC Volunteering' Snapped Up' competition reprinted with permission of Coralie Askew.



Collaboration and Partnerships

'Mpower has developed solid and effective partnerships with other community agencies at all levels. These relationships both formal and informal, reinforce Mpower's ability to achieve its strategic goals and enhance service provision to the community' (QICSA Accreditation Report March 2013)

Mpower's mission is to work in collaboration with other service providers and the community. This is done to aid referrals, create opportunities for families and share costs of learning, promotion and training.

There are a number of key partnerships and networks that have been established and supported during the year.



Working with the community so that it becomes more accessible and welcoming for people with a disability is a key focus of all Mpower programs.

Above: Andrew Kindred enjoys activities at Aquazone in Warrnambool.

Community Development and Inclusion

"Mpower is committed to building more inclusive communities. The agency believes that people with a disability should be able to live and participate in the life of the south west community, with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as all other citizens" (Mpower Community Inclusion Policy Statement)

Working with the community so that it becomes more accessible and welcoming for people with a disability is a key focus of all Mpower programs.

This commitment to inclusion is evidenced in Mpower's work with Rural Access to develop a Community Inclusion Network, which has been established for disability service agencies to come together to address barriers to access and inclusion and to promote the importance of good practice in community development.

Mpower's Deaf Access Program also works closely with the Community Development program Rural Access to build community capacity to include people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Community Education

Mpower works with communities, organisations and schools to raise awareness and understanding about disability.

Community education is a key role of the Deaf Access Victoria program and the Autism Spectrum Disorder Case Consultant Practitioner (ASDCCP). The ASDCCP has established regional 'Communities of Practice' every two months, Autism awareness training to over 230 staff from schools and community agencies and distributed an ASD Newsletter quarterly. The ASDCCP was also responsible for working with AMAZE on the presentation of the Victorian Autism Conference in Warrnambool on the 9th and 10th August 2012.

Deaf Access was instrumental in establishing the Geelong Hearing Awareness Week Expo in August, with over 60 participants attending. It is also responsible for developing a Deaf newsletter which is distributed to 135 individuals and organisations. A Deaf 'What's On in Geelong' Facebook page has been established by Mpower's Geelong-based Deaf Access Worker, with 235 likes. In partnership with Australian Hearing, aged care training has been provided to 14 participants from nine agencies.

Support during Financial Hardship

At times families may face financial hardship and have difficulty paying their bills. The last year has seen an increase in the number of families presenting with multiple and complex needs including financial hardship. This is evidenced in the increase in requests for financial support across all programs. To ensure that the agency is responsive to individual needs a range of financial supports have been provided to eligible families including use of Food Bank, provision of Telstra vouchers, provision of petrol vouchers, delivery of flexible support packages and referral to community support services including financial counselling.

Advocacy

Advocacy plays a critical role in ensuring that the rights and interests of people with a disability are respected and realised. Mpower continues to support families with individual advocacy as well as systemic advocacy such as, the support provided to the 'Every Australian Counts campaign.

Mpower's CEO Kerry Nelson has been elected to a position on the Victorian National Disability Services (NDS) State committee which represents a wide range of stakeholders and service providers and is a subcommittee of the NDS National Committee. As a peak body the NDS positions itself as an advocate for its members in discussions with government on policy/legislation and funding matters. The Mpower CEO's membership of this committee will assist in keeping Mpower abreast of developments in relation to the move towards DisabilityCare.

Information Provision

Having knowledge and information about what is available in the community is important for families to make choices. Mpower aims to keep everyone using our services informed about what other services are available as well as what we offer.

Throughout the year Mpower has provided information to over 800 families through its monthly newsletter, website and Facebook page.

A number of information forums and guest speakers have also been held across different programs including the Carer Support Programs and Parent Support Program.

Information has also been provided directly to many support groups across the region including the Stroke & Heart Support Group, Parkinsons Support Group, Autism Support Group, Carer Support Groups, Down Syndrome Support Group, Diabetes Support Group and Regional Parent and Carer Support Groups.

A highlight for the year was Mpower's partnership with AMAZE (formerly Autism Victoria) to stream the Victorian Autism Conference live from Melbourne to Warrnambool. The Conference was screened to Warrnambool TAFE on the 9th and 10th August, 2012 providing an opportunity for about 85 regional parents and professionals to receive valuable information on Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Parent and Conference delegate Pam Bennett commented that "It's great because a lot of things are based in the city and you just wouldn't get there. I try to attend as much learning as possible, having the Conference here on our doorstep is great. The more you know the better."

Service Provision across the Region

In 2012/2013 Mpower's 66 staff provided a wide range of services to over 800 families across the Barwon South West region of Victoria.

Services provided include in home respite, centre based respite, community based respite, youth groups, support groups, parent / carer support, deaf access, toy library, community transport, early childhood intervention services, family services, case management.

Increasingly families are requesting more services within the areas they live.

Meeting these needs means more of our staff are providing services regionally including in smaller townships such as Digby, Merino, Coleraine, Branxholme, Condah, Simpson and Lismore. This regional approach is particularly supportive of communities where there may be fewer resources and services to cater for the needs of clients and families.

Meeting the preferred choice of families who may struggle to travel to Warrnambool is in line with our strategic plan and vision.

Service Provision in the Community

Residents of the south west of Victoria are fortunate to have the opportunity to access many attractions, activities and events. Mpower programs are proactive in identifying opportunities to link in with community facilities, activities and natural attractions.

During 2012/2013 participants in the Respite programs have attended many of the attractions offered in the region including Fun 4 Kids, Warrnambool Show, Aquazone, Southern Way bush dance, Port Fairy Folk Festival, Wood Wine and Roses, Cudgee Wildlife Park, Portland Pool, Koroit Irish Festival, Cobden Miniature railway, Warrnambool Springers Gym, the Great Chase and Wunta. Carer Support programs have arranged bus trips for Carers to visit attractions in regional areas including Allansford Cheeseworld, Port Fairy Film Society, lunch at 'The Elms' and morning tea at Wangoom General store.

Active Oceans continues to work closely with local sporting clubs in the delivery of aquatic sport and recreation. The following program partners have provided their time, facilities and support to Active Oceans programs.

- Nestles Rowing Club
- Warrnambool Surf Club
- Inspiring Opportunities
- Port Fairy Yacht Club
- Warrnambool Angling Club

Service Provision across the Region

All staff at Mpower work to ensure people have real and meaningful connections to their community.

The following statistics provide a snapshot of the service provision provided across the region in 2012/2013. This year we have:

- Distributed over 10,000 newsletters to 800 south west families and organisations.
- Supported 18 regional Parent and Carer Support groups.
- Provided 14,446 hours of respite to over 100 families of people with a disability.
- Provided 269 aged carers with carer support services including the provision of 1899 support hours and 731 hours of respite.
- Provided 61 new families with a range of Early Intervention services including assessment, case management, therapy services, play programs and transition to school support.
- Leased Sturgeon View Holiday House for 365 days.
- Provided intensive family support to 39 vulnerable families including 497 home visits through the Family Services Program.
- Provided community members with 163 community transport trips totalling 6,575 kilometres, utilizing 300 hours of volunteer support.
- Provided over 60 families with 425 hours of respite coordination (information, resources, referral and assessment). An additional 161 hours has been spent on service system resourcing (identifying service gaps, partnership development).
- Received and responded to 27 referrals for Autism consultancy.
- Provided community education to over 500 service providers.
- Established three 'Communities of Practice' to support best practice in the delivery of services to people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Loaned toys and resources to over 40 families and organisations benefiting over 200 children.

2. Rachel's Story

Rachel Peters is an occupational therapist (OT) with Mpower's Early Intervention team. Together with one other OT, a speech pathologist, teachers and assistants, the team of 11 provide customised support for children with disabilities and their families. Rachel's career as an occupational therapist spans more than 20 years, including 16 years in Specialist Children's Services with the state government.

Sixteen years ago one of Rachel's children became a client of Mpower. At the time Rachel was working in the area of adult psychiatry, but had done a brief locum in paediatric OT. It was pure fate that her profession was directly aligned with the therapeutic needs of one of her own children. "Occupational therapists help children participate in everyday activities," explains Rachel.



"Whether it be in the home, school or community environment, we focus on helping children gain skills so they can take part in activities that are appropriate for their age and abilities. So our work can range from focusing on toileting issues, sensory processing, imaginative play or fine motor skills. It varies and depends on what a family's priority is."

Rachel's association with Mpower began when her son participated in an Early Intervention playgroup.

"When our child needed assessments, we had a family service coordinator through Mpower who was very supportive. She reassured us about all the assistance that was available and was just so understanding of what we were going through."

"From then on, they (Mpower) provided us with a safe place to go where people supported us and helped us understand why things were 'a bit different' for our family," says Rachel.

It was through her family's connection with Mpower that Rachel discovered a complementary approach to her profession. "A vacancy came up as an Early Intervention Worker with Mpower. Although this didn't involve hands-on occupational therapy, it gave me the chance to be involved in this area and support clients and their families," recalls Rachel. "I was also working part-time as an OT for Specialist Children's Services, so the two roles combined really well." With the encouraging approach of Mpower's staff all those years ago, and support from many others, Rachel has been able to develop her career and personal interests alongside the task of raising a young family including a child with special needs.

"Their staff gave us the courage to access respite and linked the whole family to other programs. They were affirming and acknowledged what we were going through. The Parent Support Worker helped us see that respite was important as it gives you a chance to recharge – you need to be healthy to deal with all the things that come up and it also gives you a chance to spend time with other family members," says Rachel. "My other children were able to access a program for siblings. My husband went on a dad's day out with other dads and was asked to play music at some of the group events." About 10 years ago Rachel left her position as an Early Intervention Worker to focus on occupational therapy with Specialist Children's Services, but has recently returned to Mpower. This time, she is employed as an OT. According to Rachel, Mpower's approach to delivering services, was key to her deciding to come back and work for Mpower again.

"You really get the sense that all workers have equal input to how the services are offered. There's a lot of collaboration and interaction between all staff. We do training together, we meet regularly and give each other a run down on what we're up to, so you can put clients in touch with other programs and services that might benefit them," says Rachel

Rachel attests to this as both a client and staff member.

"Our son was part of the first ever 'High Flyers Youth Group' with Mpower. He was also involved in Active Oceans and the Holiday Program. These activities developed a peer support group for him. He now plays in footy and cricket clubs in the local community and loves fishing. He's mad about any sport. Some of his interests were nurtured at an early age through his involvement with Mpower. They gave him a taste of things he loved and he's gone on to learn new skills in these areas."

Outside work, Rachel dedicates time to her passion for visual arts using a variety of textures and mediums to express her connection with the community and the environment. Rachel is on the Committee of the F Project, a local artists' group that encourages and promotes contemporary arts practice.

"I've done a portrait of my son in his sporting gear. I don't understand his obsession with sport, but this portrait was my way of showing I respect his passion," says Rachel.

Respect is a big factor in Rachel's enjoyment of her work at Mpower, too.

"With Mpower I've been able to live my values. Having respect for a client's culture, physical abilities, social situation and beliefs is at the forefront of everything we do."

3. Wayne's Story

Wayne Rogers of Warrnambool has been getting around in a wheelchair for 32 years after suffering a broken neck in a diving accident when he was just 26.

Staying connected has always been a struggle for the 58-year-old IT consultant employed by Mpower, who found it impossible to use public transport.

A brand-new motorised wheelchair has revolutionised Wayne's life, while giving his wife and primary carer, Robyn, some respite.

"This machine also gives me the freedom to catch public transport to work without having to rely on Robyn all the time.

Wayne's motorised wheelchair was obtained from the Employment Assistance Fund, an Australian Government Initiative through Job Access. The Rotary Club of Warrnambool Central has also supported Wayne with additional funds to assist with vehicle modifications.

"Wayne is a talented and knowledgeable IT worker. He's helped us grow from an organisation with 13 workstations to 36 and he's the 'go to' person for all our troubleshooting and networking issues", said CEO, Kerry Nelson.

"Helping Wayne become more independent has been great for him, great for our workplace and really important for his family."

"This motorised wheelchair has made a huge change in my ability to connect with others in the workplace."



Our Workforce

'Staff are committed and caring in the support that they give to their clients and are flexible and responsive to client needs.'
(Quality Improvement Community Services Accreditation (QICSA) Report March 2013)

Mpower's workforce was identified as a key strength in an independent accreditation review by QICSA in March 2013.

Auditors also found that there was a 'strong culture of mutual respect and support amongst staff'.

In 2012/2013 Mpower maintained a qualified and experienced workforce of 66 staff, including 17 full time staff, 23 part time staff and 26 casual staff. Staff are supported through an organisation structure designed to ensure that the organisation's strategic objectives and program requirements are met.

The organisation restructure developed in 2011/2012 has led to positive outcomes in 2012/2013.

A smaller executive team led by the CEO has allowed for expediency in decision making and a stronger focus on strategic direction. The executive team is supported by the management team which is representative of all program areas. The management team has responsibility for implementing the agency's operational plan and addressing accreditation requirements.

As Mpower moves towards a more flexible service model of service delivery the investment in human resources has continued to grow. In 2012/2013 Mpower has engaged Human Resource Consultant Gavan Cooper to further develop the agency's human resource management systems. Gavan has been able to support the agency to consolidate award conditions, prepare for the roll out of the Equal Remuneration Order, move casual staff into part time positions, make improvements to staff induction and performance management and ensure compliance with industrial relations obligations.

With a strong workforce at Mpower we are able to ensure that we continue to provide high quality services to families across the region

Program Area	Full-time	Part-time	Casual	Total Staff
Executive Team	2	1		3
Administration	5	4	1	10
Deaf Access		2		2
Early Intervention	2	10	1	13
Disability Respite	2	2	23	27
Carers	3	1		4
Parent Support		1	1	2
Family Services	2	1		3
Respite Network		1		1
ASDCCP		1		1
Grand Total	**17**	**23**	**26**	**66**

Welcome to Our New Staff

Mpower aims to be an employer of choice. In 2012/2013 we welcomed new staff to the team including Nicole Neild (Administration Officer), Jenny McMahon (Early Intervention Assistant), Mark Barling (Administration Officer), Louise Jellie (Speech Therapist), Rachel Peters (Occupational Therapist), Robyn Carroll (Carer Support Coordinator), Fran Pearson (Respite Coordinator) Kirsty Sutcliffe (Family Services Worker) and Clare Manson (Family Services Worker). New Personal Support Workers include Jennifer Murphy, Fiona Gurney, Tracey McKendry, Amy Thomas, Isaac Rothman, Kelly Reeves, Paul O'Rourke, Melissa Rush, Ashley Nice, Rachel Condon, James Reid, Sharon Luke, Jahzeel Concepcion and Michael Stokes.

Speech Pathologist Louise Jellie joined the Mpower Early Intervention team during the year.

"I have had a strong partnership with Mpower and the Early Intervention team for many years and share the same philosophies about family centred practice, using strengths and supporting inclusion."

Farewell

New opportunities elsewhere have led valued staff to leave during the year. The contributions of Jessica Tucker, Beverley Piper, Jordan Thomas, Sheryl Hyland, Julie Timms, Sue Agnew, Peter Hill, Tamara Asbury, Kelly Reeves and Troy Harry have led to many positive outcomes for families. Each staff person has made a strong contribution to the agency and we wish them all the best in their future.

Workplace Staff Inclusion

In line with Mpower's commitment to an inclusive workplace we utilised the services of Job Access for equipment and office modifications.
This is an initiative of the Australian Government to support the employment of people with a disability. The free service provides funding and help to find workplace solutions for the employment of people with a disability. Funds from this initiative provided a motorised wheelchair, telephone switch console and furniture modifications in the front office for two staff with reduced mobility.

Years of Service

This year we celebrate 10 years of continuous service by Jenny Gleeson. This is in addition to two earlier stints of casual and part time employment prior to her current role at Mpower. Jenny, an Early Childhood Teacher in the Early Intervention Program is a compassionate and empathic teacher who families describe as being respectful in the way she supports them.



YEARS OF SERVICE	%
Under 1 year	26%
1-4 Years	23%
5-9 Years	20%
10-14 Years	20%
Over 15 Years	4%
Over 20 Years	7%

Valuing the Volunteers

Volunteers are a highly valued and essential part of the Mpower workforce. Mpower's Community Transport program is reliant on the generous contribution of our volunteers. Each week drivers make a positive difference to their community by transporting the frail aged members of our community to essential medical appointments. This service supports our vision statement of '*....enabling people to have meaningful connections to their communities.*'

Basil Garner has supported his community over the last five years as an Mpower Community Transport Driver.

"I was looking for something to do and saw from an ad that volunteers were needed. I called up and went from there."

'Basically I get called up to drive people to the doctor, physiotherapist or the dentist if they're not able to drive themselves. I enjoy it very much.'

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

Colin Armstrong
Chris Carroll
David McDonough
Judith Brian
Rosalie Murnane
Avis Patten
Basil Garner
Roy Clarke
Gail Rutter

Contractors

Mpower engages external contractors to ensure compliance and service delivery improvement. Mpower would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following contractors - Paul Gough (Fleet Coordination, Warrnambool Toyota), Gavan Cooper (HR Consultancy), Gary Trotter (Leadership Development, SED Advisory) and Robert Lane (Contract Accountant & Management Advisor SED Advisory).

Preferred contractors identified by Community South West have also been engaged throughout the year providing services such as catering, printing, office supplies and information technology.

Student Placements

In line with Mpower's value of being 'a learning organisation, every year the agency supports student placements and develops partnerships with local learning organisations.

Each year Mpower offers placements to students undertaking a range of courses. Placements which can range from one week to three months depending on their course of study, provide students with an opportunity to work directly with families and to better understand the working environment of a community service organisation. The eleven students on placement this year have demonstrated enthusiasm for learning and have contributed positively to the Mpower team.

We have a collaborative partnership with paediatricians in the south west.
This year fifteen medical students studying at Deakin university have done a component of their community placement in the Early Intervention program in consultation with paediatricians.



Above: A medical student visiting Mpower's Early Intervention program.

Organisational Structure
as of 30/06/13

Consultants:	Gavan Cooper, Robert Lane, Shane Storer Consumer Reference Group
Life Members:	Gail Horne Judy Jongebloed, Cath Lourey, Phyllis McLeish and Glenys Purcell.
Board:	Phillip Annett, Neil Ballard, David Beggs, Sue Henry, Gail Horne, Adam Kempton, Vern Robson, Brad O'Connor, and David Beard *Gordon Curran, Michael Neoh*
Chief Executive Officer:	Kerry Nelson
Executive Team:	Dianne McFadden and Tonia McMahon
	Helen Conheady
Program Managers:	Julie Pech, Erica Smith, Yvette Wilkinson and Lil Ward
Middle Management:	Donna Newell and Penny Ryan
Administration:	Mark Barling, Patricia McLean, Nicole Nield, Wayne Rogers, David Skinner, Peta Smith, Shona Waller and Olivia Kelly *Jordan Thomas*
Carer Support Program:	Robyn Carroll, Lisa Macdonald and Lynda Haddow *Ellen Greagen*
Parent Support Program:	Marg Brough and Jessica Tucker
Family Services Program:	Claire Manson, Pattrina McConnell and Kirsty Sutcliffe
Disability Respite Program:	Deb Harman, Sandy Joyce and Fran Pearson *Jessica Tucker*
deaf Access VICTORIA:	Erica Smith and Eileen Green
Early Intervention Program:	Lyndy Boyle, Heather Clue, Jenny Gleeson, Louise Jellie, Cheryl McKinnon, Jenny McMahon, Leah Patterson, Rachel Peters, Tracey Tanner, Joy Vicary and Emma Young *Beverly Piper.*
Disability and Carer Support Staff	Luke Campbell, Jaqueline Clarke, Jillian Crighton, Jahzeel Concepcion, Rachel Condon, Betty Dwyer, Herlinda Eykels, Fiona Gurney, Daniel Hayes, Amanda Kearney, Sharon Luke, Rachel Malady, Tracy McKendry, Ashley Nice, Emma O'Brien, Paul O'Rourke, Koby Petera, James Reid, Isaac Rothman, Melissa Rush, Maria Svent and Wayne Tucker. *Sue Agnew, Tamara Asbury, Jessica Crow, Kelly Dufty, Troy Harry, Peter Hill, Elise Jacobs, Julie Kuric, Fran Pearson, Jessica Roe, Daphne Smith, Michael Stokes, Jullie Timms, Amy Thomas and Sheryl Wright.*

Italics represents staff/board members that have resigned from their positions with Mpower during the 2012/2013 year.



The sounds made by a small keyboard are musical gold to young Grace Haberfield.

Grace has been using keyboards and other items from the Mpower toy library over the past two years and continues to take a lot of pleasure from them.

Grace has a chromosomal abnormality and glaucoma which has left her without sight. When she did have some vision the lights of the keyboard were an attraction, now it is the melodic noises which keep her entertained. "Grace takes a lot of musical toys from the library", mum Leanne said. "She gets a lot of enjoyment from using them but there are a variety of toys that she can enjoy." It is the variety that appeals to Grace, and other members of the family. "You can usually find something that suits the needs of the family and appeals to the child," Leanne said. "There is such a variety...books, games, toys, puzzles, DVDs and more and they are all very good quality." "We've got some here now and Grace is enjoying them and her little three year old brother likes to play with them as well."

5. Dave & Tania's Story



"Trying to juggle work, friends and family without respite would be impossible. Our daughter needs someone with her all the time."

Kahlia's passion for cooking has also been nurtured by Mpower, and her support workers have used the opportunity to encourage new behaviours.

Part of Mpower's approach to helping Kahlia has been through structure and routine.

"Mpower have given her more stability. She has the same team of support workers and three nights each week they pick her up from school and engage her in different ways. Thursday night is dancing. Other nights it might be cooking, art, sightseeing or just hanging out quietly and observing others," says her mother, Tania.

"Seeing Kahlia with her support workers, you can see that they genuinely care about her and what she needs."

Quality Service Delivery

"Mpower has a strong reputation for providing services to its community and is committed to the continuous quality improvement of those services" (QICSA Accreditation Report March 2012)

Accreditation

In March 2013 Mpower was reaccredited by the Quality Improvement and Community Services Accreditation (QICSA).

Over a three day period in March, four auditors assessed all aspects of our operations including governance, management, human resources, physical resources, financial management, risk management, compliance, safety, partnerships, services and programs.

As part of the Healthy Communities Initiative, project worker Lisa Macdonald led Mpowers Active Oceans program towards successful registration with the Healthy Living Network. It is envisaged that this registration will enable the Active Oceans model to be replicated in other areas.

A Strong Focus on Quality

QICSA identified that there is 'a growing profile of quality improvement and innovative practices embedded across the organisation.'

This statement is supported by Robyn Carroll who joined Mpower's Carer Support program during the year after having worked for many years in aged care in Ballarat and Castlemaine. "I've had a lot of contact with carers and have got to understand what a huge role it is and the issues and problems that carers face. We try to improve things and support all our carers, always looking for ways to improve aspects of the program."

The commitment to quality is reflected in Mpower's vision, mission, service delivery and through a comprehensive quality work plan. Mpower's 'Quality Work plan 2012-2013' incorporates quality improvement actions identified by Mpower staff, working groups, accreditation bodies and the Mpower Consumer Reference Group. Considerable progress has been made towards achieving the required outcomes. Actions from the Quality Work Plan include consolidating award conditions, updating compliance software, developing new brochures, reviewing the fee structure, developing new forms and templates, introducing a weekly staff bulletin, developing a recruitment checklist, developing a Carer Support register, developing a training database, establishing new working groups and developing a digital items register.

Mpower is supported in its implementation of the quality plan through the establishment of various working groups including:

- Consumer Reference Group
- Occupational Health & Safety Committee
- Cultural & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Working Group
- Staff Well-being Working Group
- Profile Enhancing Working Group

As Mpower continues to grow it is important to ensure that the systems in place at the agency are maintained and improved.

Evaluation and Feedback

'Mpower is active in seeking feedback on its services and programs from clients both formally and informally and acting on that feedback where appropriate'. (QICSA Accreditation Report March 2012).

The Mpower Consumer Reference Group continues to provide input into service delivery and design. Feedback from clients is used to improve services on a day to day basis.

Pam Bennett has been a parent representative on the Mpower Consumer Reference Group for the last three years. "It has given a good picture of what is going on at different stages. We get to talk about anything. If some problem pops up and a parent or carer isn't comfortable raising it themselves, they can ask us. Staff have taken things on board that have been raised and have acted so that there are positive outcomes."

Compliance and Risk Management

Managing risk has become an integral part of reforms in recent years in the community services sector, the public sector and the business sector. A structured approach to risk management is a key feature of a quality organisation.

QICSA identified in its report that the Mpower Committee of Management and staff have a 'high level' of risk awareness.

Mpower's commitment to quality has also been evident in the establishment of an Executive Manager of Quality and Programs role. In this role Tonia McMahon is responsible for compliance, risk management and OH&S across the organisation supported through the continued updating of the MYCARMs (compliance and risk management software) system.

This software sends a notification email when a compliance task is due. Users can complete a task and attach supporting evidence with just a click of the mouse. Non-compliance or non-performance is automatically escalated to the line manager. MYCARMS makes compliance everyone's responsibility. The software also provides a unique opportunity to manage the complete lifecycle of a risk from identification, assessment, treatment and review. It enables Mpower to track operational risks across the organisation.

The investment in this position and the establishment of relevant working groups has ensured that Mpower meets all of its legal and contractual obligations.

OH&S

The OH&S Committee meets quarterly to ensure a coordinated approach to addressing OH&S and to ensure that staff come to work every day, and stay healthy, safe and fit while in the workplace.

In 2012/2013 there has been an increased focus on staff consultation on OH&S matters which affect employees, including identifying hazards, assessing risks, and making decisions about measures to control risks. Increased consultation has been achieved through direct, face to face consultation with employees during workplace inspections, distribution of OH&S minutes and reports, inclusion of risk as a standard agenda item at staff and management meetings and seeking staff feedback.

Initiatives undertaken by the Committee throughout the year include regular incident report reviews, biannual workplace hazard inspections, development of an OH&S Workplan, conducting two workplace fire drills and OH&S training for staff including fire safety, first aid and manual handling.

Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Working Group

The CALD Working group has met quarterly through the year with the aim of implementing the Mpower Cultural Diversity Action Plan 2011–13. The Working Group and action plan have been developed to support best practice and establish a framework that will improve our understanding of and engagement with culturally diverse communities. It will also help us design and deliver appropriate services for people from diverse cultures within the community.

Outcomes from the plan include introducing indigenous education programs to the Active Oceans program, cultural awareness training, including CALD fields on all Mpower registration forms, developing a CALD statement on employment advertising, developing terms of reference for the CALD working group and reviewing and communicating the Mpower CALD policy.

Empowerment

Mpower's name is based on the concept of empowerment. The term 'empowerment' covers a vast landscape of meanings, interpretations, definitions and disciplines.

At Mpower empowerment is a core value which is promoted through person and family directed services recognizing individuals strengths.

Mpower is committed to empowering families and individuals to effectively participate in planning that will impact on their lives. Through information provision, family centred and strength based practice, Mpower is able to provide the opportunities, resources and support that people need to become empowered.

A Learning Organisation

'The new operating environment will bring significant challenges and potentially great opportunities for organisations that understand and adapt to the change'.
(Mpower CEO, Kerry Nelson)

'There is a strong commitment to being a learning organisation with staff encouraged to undertake a suite of mandatory and other professional development'. (QICSA Accreditation report March 2012)

Mpower prides itself on new learning which encourages personal development and innovative thinking to challenges and change. All employees are encouraged to access ongoing training and development to increase the efficiency, productivity and professionalism of the organisation. As a learning organisation Mpower has invested 2% of its 2012/2013 salary budget to the ongoing learning and education of staff.

In 2012/2013 there has been a strong focus on developing positive leadership across the organisation. The skills and quality of leaders within Mpower, at all levels across the organisation, are critical to our success in providing quality services that are positive, supportive, flexible and responsive to individual needs.

Gary Trotter from SED Advisory has worked closely with staff over two full day sessions covering the importance of Mpower's values based culture. Complementing this training was a suite of training developed by the CEO and Disability Services Manager and delivered in-house to the Disability Support Workers to instil the importance of always working within Mpower's values.

Further training provided throughout the year included a wide range of topics including:-

Facets of human resources management, Personal development of service specific best practice, OH&S, compliance, business and administration skills

Staff also attended a number of conferences throughout the year including:

- Alzheimer's Australia Conference
- Carers Vic Conference
- Communities in Control
- Conference for Women
- NDS CEO conference
- Victorian Autism Conference
- South West Disability Network Conference

Staff are further supported in their learning through supervision, coaching and mentoring which provides an opportunity for them to discuss and reflect on their learning, roles, responsibilities and challenges.

A weekly staff bulletin has also been established during the year. This bulletin contains professional and personal information to aid learning while also highlighting the latest upgrades to Mpower quality systems.

Feedback from casual disability support staff following values training sessions:

"I really liked that we (staff) could talk openly about how we feel about our jobs."

"The concepts discussed help broaden staff understanding of one's contribution and responsibility within the organisation and outside of the organisation."

"It was very positive and really made me feel more valued as an employee by being encouraged to add input and feedback."

"Great meeting. Very encouraging and supportive to get some reinforcement from the bosses."

"Good for staff to feel valued and listened to."

Mpower Services

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

COMMUNITY INCLUSION & SUPPORT

Mpower provides a range of programs and supports in the community for families of children, young people and adults with disabilities. The programs enable participants to take part in both Mpower activities based in the community and other community activities of choice including:- school holiday programs, weekend getaways and Active Oceans.

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.

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*
- *Managing children's behaviour,*
- *Group work, mediation*
- *Case management for families with higher needs*

Sturgeon View Holiday House:
A special needs holiday facility in Dunkeld available for rent to people with Special needs and their Families/carers

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

Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS):
ECIS aims to improve the lives of young children with a disability or developmental delay and their families through the provision of specialist support. A range of services include specialised therapy interventions, family support, co-ordination and support to early childhood education and care settings to promote access and meaningful participation of children with a disability

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.

THERAPY SERVICES

Mpower provides therapy services to children 0-7 years with specific developmental delays or disabilities
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Developmental assessments

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

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Mpower provides a range of supports for carers
- of any age or older people who are frail aged (65+),
- People of any age who have dementia.
- Carers over the age of 65 caring for a person with a disability
- Who are parents of a child 0-18 with a disability

Other supports include
- Carer/parent support groups
- Carer activities
- Respite aids and equipment
- Workshops and information forums
- Individual parent support

SUPPORT PACKAGES

Mpower provides a range of support packages consisting of different levels of funding to purchase services to meet the individual needs of the client/ family.

The packages are available for eligible:
- children 0-6 years with an assessed developmental delay
- People of any age with an assessed disability.

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
Mpower acknowledges the support of the Victorian 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
Portland YMCA

Key business and community partners
Darrian Office Choice
East Raglan Clinic - Dr Jonathon Duffy
Enhanced Resources
Gunners Office Equipment
McLaren, Buzolich & O'Keeffe (MBO)
SED Advisory
South West Credit
Star Printing
Tasty Plate
Warrnambool Telephone Co.
Warrnambool Toyota

Trusts, foundations and estates
'Baby Bob' project
Parenting doll
The William Angliss Charitable Fund

Playground project
Replacement of Playground equipment at 71 Koroit Street
Isobel & David Jones Family Foundation
Uniting Church Fellowship
The Ray & Joyce Uebergang Foundation

'Mums Matter' project
Innovative respite option for mothers of children with high need disabilities
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

Our Finance

The year in review

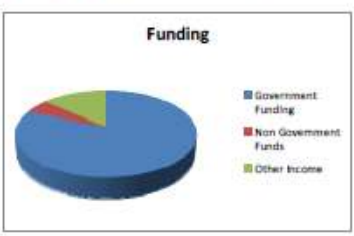
Mpower presents to members a sound financial position, having recorded another strong financial result in 2012/13. Importantly this has been achieved while continuing to provide high quality services to clients. Financial sustainability is important as the sector transitions to new funding and business models required under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, to take effect in in our region in 2016.

The 2012/13 result is due to significant growth in funding combined with disciplined management of costs. The surplus of $337,520 will be invested into several initiatives over coming years and 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 $3.2M which surpasses last years' record by $400,000. For clarification, non-department funding contains an allocation for Gateways Support Services and sundry income contains almost $170,000 in program income carried forward to the 2012/13 year. Sundry income also contains interest received on money invested and set aside for future building development.



Expenditure

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

- There is some shift from consulting costs to accountancy this year with the appointment of a new resource, and also a reduction in consultancy costs from last year which had included considerable work on building design consultancy.
- Program costs are down, due mainly to the difference in program costs brought forward from previous years income.
- Depreciation is considerably higher this year, due to a full write-off of a new playground funded with the generous support of the Uebergang Foundation and the Jones Family Trust.
- Telephone costs increased due to the Telstra exchange outage and a general increase in mobile phones due to staff increases. A claim was successfully made to Telstra and program funding covers additional staff mobile phone costs.
- Staff expenses, while significantly up by almost $400,000 on the previous year, contain adjustments to leave provision and include additional casual employment costs for new programs. Detail is provided in note 2 to the accounts.

Balance Sheet Position

Mpower has maintained its strong financial position with Net Assets of more than $2.7M and over $2.1M in cash reserves at the end of the year. Approximately 56% of these funds are invested into term deposits with South West Credit 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 are regularly reviewed, in particular the Land and Buildings, and are deemed to be consistent with conservative external valuations received.

It should be noted that this year we have moved to change the processing of debtors and creditors in line with strict accrual accounting, thus you will note balances in the Balance Sheet for Trade Creditors and the Australia Taxation Office.

Financial Management

Towards the end of the financial year, Helen Conheady was appointed to the role of accountant in a part-time capacity. Helen's skills and knowledge are welcome and significantly strengthens the capacity of our team. 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 are involved in setting budgets and monitoring their costs, and 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 and more latterly Helen. They demonstrate great wisdom, diligence and reliability in recording and reporting all management and financial data. May I also thank 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. I look forward to working with the Mpower team as we address the challenges from the significant changes being introduced to the sector over the next 2-3 years.

Robert Lane
B.Bus (Acc), MBA, CPA
Mpower External Accounting Adviser



MPOWER INC.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your Committee members submit the Financial Report of mpower Inc. for the financial year ended 30th June, 2013.

Committee Members

The names of Committee members throughout the year and at the date of this Report are:

- David Beggs - President
- Neil Ballard - Vice President
- Phillip Annett - Treasurer
- David Beard
- Sue Henry
- Gail Horne
- Adam Kempton
- Brad O'Connor
- Vern Robson

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the Association during the financial year were to provide support and counselling services for Aged and Disability Impacted persons.

Significant Changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operational Result

The surplus for the year amounted to $337,520.39 (2012 $195,232).

X

David Beggs
President

Dated this 13 day of September, 2013.

MPOWER INC.

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2013

	NOTE	YEAR $	2012 $
INCOME			
Government Funding			
DHS		1,807,723.91	1,298,778
DFACS		140,234.46	139,329
DEECD		670,978.55	691,058
		2,618,936.92	2,129,165
Other Grants			
Non Department Funding		25,730.00	6,000
Other Revenue			
Sundry Other Income		574,027.02	669,350
TOTAL INCOME		3,218,693.94	2,804,515
EXPENSES			
Accountancy		19,465.09	14,760
Advertising & Promotion		10,927.16	23,466
Audit & Legal Fees		9,705.69	11,042
Bank Charges		1,667.93	1,494
Catering		6,091.78	5,379
Cleaning		13,075.80	11,875
Consultants Fees		29,310.41	60,751
Depreciation		128,358.00	106,968
Insurance		7,307.59	6,502
Maintenance and Repairs		62,890.62	69,656
Motor Vehicle Operating Costs		65,728.96	70,787
Postage		7,769.02	7,883
Printing & Stationery		17,653.44	21,127
Program Costs		350,919.86	453,673
Staff Costs	2	2,100,702.71	1,697,838
Security		671.50	1,262
Subscriptions		8,237.44	8,554
Telephone		20,209.48	13,358
Utilities		20,481.07	22,888
TOTAL EXPENSES		2,881,173.55	2,609,283
Profit from ordinary activities		337,520.39	195,232
Retained Profits at the beginning of the financial year		2,424,363.13	2,229,131
RETAINED PROFITS AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR		2,761,883.52	2,424,363

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

MPOWER INC.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2013

	NOTE	YEAR $	2012 $
CURRENT ASSETS			
Operating cash and equivalents	5	753,241.54	301,371
Trade and other receivables		50,827.54	31,860
Other Debtors			
Australian Taxation Office		-	706
Cash held for investments	3	1,192,189.43	1,129,840
Cash held in provision	4	136,961.97	129,746
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,133,220.48	1,593,523
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Land at Market Value		254,000.00	254,000
Buildings at Market Value		804,938.58	801,880
Less Accumulated Depreciation		(234,451.00)	(214,266)
Plant & Equipment - at Cost		596,305.65	625,848
Less Prov'n for Depreciation		(349,454.77)	(313,706)
		246,850.88	312,142
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		1,071,338.46	1,153,756
TOTAL ASSETS		3,204,558.94	2,747,279
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade Creditors		63,353.65	-
Other Creditors			
Australian Taxation Office		64,911.61	-
Income in advance		107,297.00	166,032
Provision for Holiday Pay		70,982.08	52,105
Provision for Sick Pay		55,089.00	33,363
Prov'n for Long Service Leave		25,701.90	22,255

MPOWER INC.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2013

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

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

Property

Freehold buildings are shown at market value as assessed by the committee of management.

Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis.

The carry amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by the committee to ensure it is not in excess of recoverable amount from these assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to their present values in determining the recoverable amounts.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets, is depreciated on a straight line basis over their useful lives to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Class of fixed asset	Depreciation rates
Buildings	2.5%
Plant & equipment	10-33%
Furniture & fittings	10-33%

(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.

(e) Payables

mpower now account for year end accruals by following standard business practices. In prior years outstanding monies were deducted from cash at hand.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

MPOWER INC.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2013

	YEAR	2012
	$	$
NOTE 2 - Staff Costs		
Employee Provisions	50,229.41	(46,354)
Wages	1,795,015.10	1,515,884
Staff Training	60,037.40	52,281
Superannuation	155,566.14	131,872
Uniforms	104.45	672
Workcover	27,771.37	25,643
Leave Loading	11,978.84	17,840
	2,100,702.71	1,697,838

NOTE 3 - Cash held for investments		
SWCU I12.1 - Building reserves	932,011.88	882,912
SWCU I12.2 -Invest. reserves	260,177.55	246,928
	1,192,189.43	1,129,840

NOTE 4 Cash held in provision		
SWCU 12 - Employee provisions	136,961.97	129,746

NOTE 5 - Operating cash and equivalents		
Cash in hand	300.00	300
Cash at bank - SWCU S1	750,684.49	299,203
Cash at bank - SWCU S1.1	157.15	27
Cash at bank - Westpac 28-2127	1,413.16	116
Cash at bank - Debit Visa	686.74	1,725
	753,241.54	301,371

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

MPOWER INC.

ANNUAL STATEMENTS GIVE TRUE AND FAIR VIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION OF INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

We, David Beggs and Neil Ballard, being members of the Committee of mpower Inc. certify that:

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position of mpower Inc. during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2013.

X

David Beggs
President

X

Neil Ballard
Vice President

Dated this 13 **day of September, 2013.**

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 2013. 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 a true and fair view of the financial position of mpower Inc. as at 30th June 2013 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

McLaren Buzolich O'Keeffe
Certified Practising Accountants

23 August 2013

Michael O'Keeffe B.Bus CPA
Partner

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 care.



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