



OFFICIAL

annual review 2024

contents

Our mission

To make a positive difference in the lives of people living with disability.

Our vision

To provide high quality support to people with disabilities, where every person can say, *'I am living the life that I want'.*

Our values

We treat everyone with respect, value Diversity and the contribution of all.

We encourage individual choice and protect the rights of all people.

We support everyone to be full and active members of their community.

We provide quality support that enables people to live the life they want.

We always strive for excellence, always looking for areas to improve and innovate.

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chair + ceo report

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with immense pride in all that our organisation has achieved. 2024 has been a year of remarkable resilience, and impact, thanks to the unwavering commitment of our team, partners, and community. Together, we have navigated both challenges and opportunities, with each step reaffirming our shared commitment to empower people with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. This report celebrates our collective efforts and highlights the strides we have made in transforming support and services within our sector.



Our People: The Heart of Our Success

A core strength of our organisation lies in our people. Every day, our dedicated staff and volunteers bring compassion, professionalism, and energy to their work, creating a community that champions the well-being, independence, and happiness of those we support. This year, we have invested heavily in professional development to equip our team with the

skills and confidence needed to meet evolving demands. Notably, our Emerging Leaders Program has been a tremendous success. This initiative has provided a pathway for staff to develop their leadership skills, culminating in the appointment of several graduates to key roles within the organisation. This program not only strengthens our workforce but also sets a standard for career growth and personal development, making us a preferred employer within the sector.

In addition, we launched the Employee Voice Committee, which has been invaluable in fostering open communication and inclusivity across all levels of the organisation. This forum allows staff to actively contribute to decision-making processes and has brought forward innovative ideas and solutions that enrich our services. We are proud of the collaborative culture we are building, where each team member feels valued and empowered to make a difference.

Commitment to Quality & Wellbeing

Quality care and wellbeing have been at the forefront of our efforts this year. Our Health and Wellbeing Monitoring and Measuring Framework has allowed us to adopt a proactive approach to supporting both physical and emotional wellbeing. By building and tracking health indicators and implementing targeted interventions, we have significantly improved outcomes for

the people we support. A particular success story this year has been our partnership with Peninsula Health to enhance hospital discharge processes, which has set a new benchmark for continuity of care. The feedback from both clients and healthcare professionals has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are eager to expand this model in the coming year.

Our work in promoting disability awareness has also reached new heights, thanks to our Disability Awareness Seminars, which continue to expand across the Peninsula region. Led by members of our team and individuals with lived experiences, these seminars provide valuable insights

into creating inclusive environments. By collaborating with local schools, businesses, and community organisations, we are fostering a culture of understanding and inclusion that extends beyond our direct services. This work not only benefits the people we support but contributes to a more informed and accepting community.

Innovative Programs & Partnerships

This year, we have continued to drive innovation, introducing new systems and technologies that support business efficiencies. We have been building a bespoke system, we have aptly named LENS, to be our LENS into

Recent example of work produced for our 2024 'focus on what's important to us' awareness campaign.



Bookmark my w

Research from the Center for Higher Education Policy and Practice identifies six ways to improve accessibility in online education through intentional design principles.

In 1990, the Americans With Disabilities Act gave students with disabilities the right to reasonable accommodations in higher education, but many colleges were not structured with disabled students in mind, creating systemic barriers to student success.

Prior research has found students with disabilities prefer online learning. Inside Higher Ed's 2024 Student Voice survey, conducted by Generation Lab, found among students with a physical disability (n=197), 30 percent preferred online asynchronous courses. Those with a learning

the business. We are ready to deploy the new client management system which will replace several legacy systems, ensuring all of our systems integrate and will ensure administrative time spent across all levels of the business is streamlined.

Our partnerships with local businesses and educational institutions have also strengthened our capacity to deliver high-quality services. Notable collaborations this year include our work with the Disability Liaison team at Peninsula Health, which has resulted in better healthcare experiences and support for people. Additionally, our collaboration with Nepean Industry Edge Training and Chisholm Tafe, has allowed us to co-design training programs for future disability support workers, emphasising the values of empathy, inclusivity, and active support. These partnerships not only advance our mission but also create pathways for employment, advocacy, and community engagement.



Empowering Voices & Building Community

The voices of those we support are integral to shaping our services. This year, the True Colours Advocacy Group has been a powerful advocate for accessibility and inclusion, influencing local council policies and engaging with community leaders. This group, comprised of clients with lived experiences, is a testament to the power of advocacy in creating lasting change. Their work on the “We All Belong” Disability Inclusion document has received recognition across the Peninsula, demonstrating the importance of elevating diverse perspectives in community planning.

We also take pride in the individual journeys of those we support, and their stories reflect the success of our approach, with each person being supported to pursue their personal goals and passions. These accomplishments reinforce our commitment to providing opportunities that enrich lives and strengthen community ties.

Financial Strength & Sustainability

This year, we achieved strong financial performance, setting a solid foundation for sustainable growth. Our commitment to fiscal responsibility ensures that we can continue delivering essential services while investing in future initiatives. The success of the Kindilan Op Shop in Mont Albert which generated record-breaking revenue this year, and *focus* On Opportunity Shop in Frankston, where many of the people we support are working and gaining retail experience is a shining example of the community’s generosity and the hard work of our volunteers. These funds directly support our programs, enabling us to expand services and create new opportunities for those we serve.

Remembering Those We Have Lost.

We appreciate that the year has been difficult for many people, particularly those who have lost loved ones. Our thoughts and condolences are with the family and support teams of Julia Alistair-Beattie, who passed away this past year. We also acknowledge each stakeholder who has experienced loss, and we hope you have the necessary supports around you as you move forward.

It was a privilege to represent the organisation and pass on our sincere gratitude to the Negri family, when Tony Negri, the organisations founding Chair, passed away recently, at the age of 90. Tony’s vision and commitment laid the foundation upon which we’ve built our organisation, and his legacy continues to inspire and guide us. We honour his memory and express our gratitude for his remarkable contributions, which will endure for years to come.

Thank you

We welcomed Andrew Simpson to the Board of Directors this year. Andrew brings a wealth of knowledge with 2 decades of Board, company secretary and committee experience in the NFP and for purpose sector.

This years AGM carries a special significance as it marks the conclusion of Paul Hardy-Smith’s tenure as a Director. Paul, brother to Brett Hardy-Smith has concluded his fourth and final term and we extend our gratitude to his commitment, input and support.

We also extend our gratitude and thanks to Paul Thomson, who has been the Chair of the Board since 2019. Paul, who has recently retired from his 37 year career at KPMG, has decided to retire from the Board at the conclusion of the AGM this year. On behalf

of the Board and CEO, we thank you Paul for your support and guidance and wish you well. Fellow Board member Wendy Waddell, CEO of an Aged Care organisation has been nominated to take on the Chair role.

Looking Ahead

As we close out a year marked by resilience, growth, and meaningful impact, we are filled with optimism for the future. In the coming year, we will build upon our successes by developing a new strategic plan that will support us to expand our services, deepen community partnerships, and explore new avenues for innovation. The evolving landscape of the disability sector presents both challenges and opportunities, and we are confident that we are well-prepared to meet them head-on. Together, we will continue to champion the right to an ordinary life for all, providing support that is compassionate, inclusive, and driven by a genuine desire to make a positive difference.

In closing, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the people we support, our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters. Your dedication, generosity, and belief in our mission are the foundation of our achievements. Thank you for a year of extraordinary accomplishments. We are honored to be part of this journey with you and look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the year ahead.



Paul Thomson
Board Chair



Toni Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

the board



Paul Thomson
Chair

Paul joined the Board in 2017 and was appointed Chairman in April 2019. He is passionate about the role that *focus* plays in supporting people with a disability and brings a strong background in professional services and working with government that is very relevant to the organisation.

Paul was a Partner with KPMG for 25 years and retired from the firm in mid 2024. During his career he spent the majority of his time advising both government and private sector clients on large, complex infrastructure and property projects. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and is a member of the Institute of Company Directors. Paul is retiring from the Board at the AGM in November.



Michael Negri
Deputy Chair

Michael is a senior executive and CEO in the industrial markets, with 25 years experience managing businesses. He has been a board member of a number of not for profit boards in the intellectual disability sector including Minda in South Australia, Araluen

in Melbourne, as well as a trustee of the Kindilan and Araluen Foundations.

Michael has a Masters of Business Administration from Melbourne Business School, a civil engineering degree from Melbourne University, has completed the Institute of Company directors course and the Harvard Corporate level strategy programs.

Michael is the board's deputy chair and the chair of the finance committee.



Wendy Waddell

Wendy joined the *focus* Community as a Board Member in 2018, and she is passionate about supporting people to have a life that has both purpose and possibility. Wendy has been an interchange parent and has also served on the Board at L'Arche Melbourne.

Wendy is the Managing Director of CraigCare, supporting aged care residents in Victoria and Western Australia.

Wendy has a Bachelor of Arts in Social Welfare, a Masters in Aged Services Management, and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Belinda Scott

Belinda is an experienced health executive with a keen interest in quality, safety and risk systems.

Belinda is a registered nurse with over 25 years in a public health system in Victoria.



Paul Hardy-Smith

Paul first joined the *focus* board in 2012. His brother, Brett, lives in Ash House. Paul is a veterinarian who runs his own veterinary consulting business. He is also a lecturer at the University of Melbourne and Charles Sturt University, the President of the Aquatic Animal Health Chapter of the Australian New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists, and President of the Kew Swimming Club. Paul is passionate about the health and well being of people with disabilities and proud to be a member of the *focus* board.



Nichola Lefroy

Nichola is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and currently serves on another board in the disability sector. She credits her big brother, who is supported at *focus*, as one of her greatest teachers in life.

Nichola is Executive Director of Birrarung Valley Walk Inc., a 'whole of river' project that is identifying and linking a continuous 200+ km multi-day walk through the valley of the Birrarung (Yarra River). She is also Executive Trustee of two Foundations that between them undertake philanthropy in the environment, First Nations, education, the arts, community support and animal welfare.



Andrew Simpson

Andrew is a Chair, Non-Executive Director, Audit and Risk Committee Member, Executive Director, CFO and CEO.

A Certified Practising Accountant (CPA), Andrew has a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

With over two decades of board, company secretary and subcommittee experience, Andrew has strong expertise in the Not for Profit and For Purpose sector with Health, Education, and Membership based organisations including Community Sports.

Andrew has many years of experience leading growth, cost reduction, digital transformation, investment management, acquisitions and change management strategies in For-Purpose, and For-Profit organisations. He builds and leverages relationships with all stakeholders across an organisation to support their mission and continues his professional development through CPA, AICD, and Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) memberships.

executive team



Toni Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

Toni is in her 5th year as CEO, with over 30 years' experience in senior management roles for Non-Profit Disability Organisations. Toni has a B.App.Sci (intellectual disabilities) degree from RMIT. Toni specialises in leading and managing teams through change, building positive cultures that focus on quality supports. Toni has led the Organisation through the most challenging time of its 50 year history and is determined to ensure the Organisation 'prosper and remains a provider of choice across the Mornington Peninsula for the next 50 years.'

Practice (Workforce) conversations and regularly contributes to strategic industrial sector discussions. With over 25 years of experience in the Not-for-Profit sector, Jayne is dedicated to ensuring that the people we support are at the heart of all People and Culture practices, building workforce capability, and driving organisational transformation.



Fran Cashman
*Executive Manager
Quality & Operations*

Fran began her career in the disability sector with *focus* in 2012. She has performed a range of roles across the organisation including Frontline Leadership, HR Recruitment & Allocations, NDIS Support Planning and Continuous Improvement. Fran's passion is celebrating successes achieved through collaborative partnerships. She works to drive the creation, communication and delivery of great service.



Jayne Gillespie
FCPHR
*Executive Manager
People, Culture & Safety*

Jayne is a Fellow of the Australian Human Resources Institute and holds a Masters in Human Resources Management (Employment Relations), along with qualifications in HR Data Analytics, Business, and Community Services. As Chairperson of the NDS Victoria Workforce Forum, she actively participates in NDS Victorian and National Community of



Mark Schwartz
*Executive Manager
Finance*

Mark commenced at *focus* in November

2020. He is a Fellow Member of the CPA and holds a Bachelor of Economics. Mark brings with him many years of commercial accounting expertise gained through wide industry sector experience including Hospitality, Professional Services, Utilities, Consumer Finance, Properties, IT, and Manufacturing. "

"We are driven by our vision to provide high quality support to people with disabilities, so they can say, 'I am living the life I want'."

- Toni Stewart



strategic focus

For 2024-25, we remain driven by our vision to provide high quality support to people with disabilities, so they can say, 'I am living the life I want'.



Person First



Innovation & Collaboration



Reputation, Recognition & Identity



Building Capability



Economic Performance & Sustainability

Strategic Pillar

Strategic Goal

To be known for our person first contemporary supports, empowering people to take control of their lives

To innovate and improve through co-designed solutions - creating change and a point of difference within the disability sector

Have a story that recognises our foundations, celebrates our achievements and welcomes our community inclusive future

To be recognised as a leader in professional practice and known for our supportive approach to wellbeing with exemplar person-first supports

To be economically sustainable and maximise surpluses allowing business opportunities to be explored

Imperatives

- The people we support inform our practice, guide our services and influence their experience of their support
- We promote trust and confidence through our client and family centred engagement
- We drive a strengths based approach to bring out the best in our people

- We use technology to enhance independence in *focus* homes and drive efficiencies across the business
- Develop greater choice in living options for people and work with the market to provide competitive supply
- We move beyond compliance to best practice

- We are known and respected as a trusted organisation with lived experience of disability
- We create strong public awareness and engage with our communities
- Our staff know our story, drive our purpose, and support our aspirations
- We are all part of the conversation

- Our workforce demonstrates critical thinking and problem solving capability which respectfully questions the status quo
- We value and recognise our staff and hold each other to account
- A co-created culture of wellbeing and safety is evident in everything we do

- Financial efficiencies will maximise surpluses and build a strong, vibrant future that can withstand and adapt to change
- Financial best practice through efficient processes, making sound business decisions
- Key personnel take ownership of their results and promote financial accountability

Difference We Make

People are in control of their lives

We are pioneers of excellence

We are known, respected & trusted

Our workforce is our strength

We adapt & thrive



operations + quality

‘Interesting times’

‘May you live in interesting times.’ Often interpreted as an ancient curse, the phrase ironically reflects the challenges and upheavals that come with change.

This year, these ‘interesting times’ have called upon us to adapt to the ever-changing NDIS landscape, requiring resilience, innovation, and a renewed *focus* on delivering exceptional support. Our team has navigated a rapidly evolving landscape in the disability support sector. Significant changes in the NDIS environment required us to pivot quickly, responding to new funding structures, compliance requirements, and policy shifts aimed at enhancing participant outcomes and system efficiency. We have embraced these challenges as opportunities to refine our processes, improve our services, and deepen our commitment to providing individualised, high-quality support. We focused on up-skilling our teams, expanding community partnerships, and ensuring that our participants’ voices remained at the forefront of our planning and operations. In the face of these “interesting times,” we have not only maintained but strengthened our dedication to empowering people with disabilities to lead fulfilling, inclusive lives.

Everything we do circles back to our purpose and our role in the lives of those we support. What lasting impact do we make? What actions, resources, and skills must we cultivate to genuinely affirm that our impact is positive? And, at its core, what

does it truly mean to live an ordinary life?

The second round of our Emerging Leaders Program was launched as part of our Leadership Development initiative. First introduced at the end of last year, this program is designed to enhance the skills and capabilities of emerging frontline leaders and supervisors at *focus*. It offers participants a well-rounded learning experience through professional workshops, one-on-one mentoring from management, and practical training focused on the operational demands of leadership roles. The goal is to build a skilled and capable workforce prepared to step into leadership positions as needed.



The program has been successful in equipping our people with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to lead teams and handle the evolving challenges of the disability services sector. As a result, two participants have already been appointed as Acting Team Leaders, overseeing three services, while others have stepped in regularly for leave replacements throughout the year.

As part of our strategic goal to enhance the health and wellbeing of those we support, we established a collaboration with the Disability Liaison team at Peninsula Health. This partnership aims to improve health outcomes and ensure high-quality care.

A productive meeting between *focus* and Peninsula Health addressed the challenges faced by those we support when they enter the hospital system. Discussions led to the development of a new hospital discharge process to be implemented at Frankston Hospital. Additionally, several *focus* participants are part of a pilot program designed to document the needs and preferences of individuals who frequently visit the hospital. This assessment will store vital information, including communication, disability, and support requirements, allowing hospital staff to access critical details immediately upon admission.

The meeting ended with an invitation from Peninsula Health for us to attend their next Hospital Grand Round in January. (The Grand Round is a training forum for the hospital department heads, physicians and medical students, to discuss and critically review identified case studies with the aim of providing improvements to practices and processes.) We have been invited to present our case studies of our clients'

experiences in and offer our perspective, in the hopes that our feedback will increase the understanding and skills of medical professionals when treating people with intellectual disabilities.

We have designed and implemented a Health and Wellbeing Monitoring and Measuring Framework, which included the completion of surveys for each person we support, aimed to collate and analyse valuable health, wellbeing and medical factors from the responses. The results of those surveys highlight the need for integrated health interventions that address both physical health and social participation. Possible actions include developing initiatives to promote healthier eating habits and increase opportunities for physical activity and I am excited about the initiatives we are looking to launch next year.

Our Disability Awareness Seminars continue to expand in both scope and audience. The team of presenters includes Daniel Laing (Lived Experience Project Officer), John Edgar (Service Innovation Officer), a family member, and several individuals we support. We have delivered seminars and workshops across the Peninsula and surrounds – to schools, businesses, councils and community groups.



“The challenges of 2024 have strengthened our team, refined our practices, and deepened our commitment to the people we support.”

- Fran Cashman



Additionally, our Disability Advocacy group recently collaborated with Nepean Industry Edge Training RTO to co-design and present a session, titled “What Makes a Good Support Worker?” to students in the Certificate IV in Disability course. The Advisory Committee, which consists of three of our clients and the Lived Experience Officer, attended the final council meeting of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council before the upcoming local elections. They provided valuable insights on accessible design during their presentation of the “We All Belong” Disability Inclusion document for the Shire.

The challenges of 2024 have strengthened our team, refined our practices, and deepened our commitment to the people we support. I am incredibly optimistic as I look towards 2025. I am excited about the opportunities to further enhance our services within the evolving NDIS

framework. With a focus on innovation, collaboration, and unwavering dedication to the universal right to an ordinary life, I am so proud of this organisation and the calibre of people who work here every day to be more and do better. We are ready to navigate whatever changes lie ahead and continue building a supportive, inclusive environment for all. As we close out a year marked by adaptation and growth, I am confident that we are more prepared than ever to embrace the “interesting times” ahead.



Fran Cashman
Executive Manager
Quality & Operations

people culture + safety

Our commitment remains steadfast in building skills and deepening capabilities to professionalise the disability workforce, as outlined in the Draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy (2023).

This commitment aims to enhance quality service delivery, improve participant outcomes, and support the registration of all workers and providers operating within the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Recent data from Jobs and Skills Australia (2024) highlights the workforce need, with workers in aged and disability sectors being in the top 20 sectors with significant workforce shortage for four years now.



Sector Participation

Sector advocacy and relationships are essential as we work through the myriad of changes, opportunities and challenge in our sector. Through collaborative partnerships, we co-create solutions and future-proof both our organisation and our workforce.

Some of the forums we participated in during the last year are:

- **NDS Victorian Workforce Network**
 - Chairing bimonthly meetings with HR professionals and Operations Managers
 - Policy updates, advocacy opportunities, and discussions on innovation and best practices.
- **NDS National Community of Practice**
 - Discussing legislative amendments and their application to the disability sector by engaging with a national community of Executive and Senior Leaders.
- **Building Local Care Workforce Forums**
 - Participated in panels discussing workforce attrition strategies with disability and aged care providers.
- **Industrial Forums**
 - Discussions with the Fair Work Ombudsman in a focused sector discussion on Regulated Worker requirements and implications for registered disability providers.
- **Human Ability**
 - Engaging with unions, Registered Training Organisations, and external stakeholders to discuss industry and workforce needs, and future course design

- **Systems Thinking Investigation of Work-Related Violence**
 - Discussing research by Professor Sharon Newman, QUT.
 - Exploring practical steps from a systems thinking perspective with stakeholders including Worksafe, NDIS Commission, NDIA, and NDS to address the complexities of work related violence risk in the sector.
- **Industry Consultative Committee**
 - Collaborating with bargaining representatives including senior members of the Health and Community Services Union and the Australian Education Union
 - Developing submissions to Federal and State bodies
 - Advocating for the registration of workers in the 'gig' economy, and addressing workforce availability and competition issues.
- **State Disability Workforce Working Party**
 - Facilitated by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
 - Discussing issues specific to the Victorian disability workforce with

State Government, Registered Training Organisations, Peak Bodies, and unions.

Our Workforce

Staffing

- *focus* had an average headcount of 281, with a voluntary staff exit rate of 25, representing 8.9% of the workforce.
- 15.6% of frontline staff changed their employment status this year. We have actively sought to secure quality casual employees into permanent positions to ensure continuity of support and provide secure work for our staff. This strategy aims to attract and retain quality staff in Permanent Part-Time positions in a sector that is predominantly casualised and transient.

Career Development:

- 3.3% of the 15.6% who changed their employment status were Active Support Workers accepted into the Future Leaders program. These staff were seconded to Team Leader positions during periods of leave for career development and progression. Our congratulations to you all in this important step in your career journey.





“Sector advocacy and relationships are essential as we work through the myriad of changes, opportunities and challenge in our sector.”

- Jayne Gillespie

Workforce Application:

- 23.5% of frontline staff were approved for a change of roster in the past year. These changes were largely driven by NDIS funding requirements, changes in the circumstances of the people we support, and the consolidation of rosters into lines with a greater number of hours per fortnight. These changes contribute to continuity of support and ongoing economic sustainability.
- We are also undergoing a progressive roster review process in consultation with staff, to ensure that the supports we deliver are provided by the most qualified and experienced people central to a participants' needs, while effectively managing labour costs and job security within a dynamic and changing funding environment.

Employee Voice Committee

We are delighted to announce the launch of the Employee Voice Committee in 2024! This Committee, comprising representatives from both services and Head Office, is dedicated to discussing initiatives, gathering feedback on change initiatives, and co-designing solutions for identified areas of improvement. I sincerely hope that this forum will grow in the coming years, as the voice of our staff from the ground up is crucial in ensuring we remain aligned in our focus to deliver quality service to the people we support.

Learning and Development

We have dedicated significant effort to Learning and Development over the past few months, working closely with Operations and Finance Departments to ensure we meet our requirements within budget parameters.



I extend my thanks to Kath Moodie, our Continuous Improvement Officer, for her initial design of the Learning and Development Program. Building on this foundation, the People and Culture Team have developed a fully costed model for this current financial year that empowers our staff to onboard, complete compliance training, and focus on person-centered supports and best practice.

This has been a substantial project with many moving parts, systems solutions and process redesign. My sincere gratitude goes to Travis DeGelder, our Organisational Development Manager, and the People and Culture Team for their initiative, commitment to quality learning, and tenacity.

We are excited to embrace a new year filled with challenges and opportunities as we continue to navigate through industrial, sector, and funding changes.

As Winston Churchill wisely said, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”



Jayne Gillespie
*Executive Manager,
People Culture & Safety*

operations

2024 has proven to be a dynamic year for our operations, focusing on recruitment, retention, training, and consolidation amidst a challenging financial landscape.

It has been a period growth and resilience - with individuals juggling multiple jobs to meet personal needs, the recruitment of dedicated Active Support Workers, especially on the Mornington Peninsula, has become increasingly difficult and even more critical.

Recruitment Efforts

In response to the pressing demand for quality support staff, *focus* undertook two recruitment drives in 2024 specifically aimed at finding qualified Active Support Workers. Our own experience has taught us that while qualifications and experience in the field are important, attitude and a commitment to invest in and grow within the organisation are equally vital.

Our recruitment drives attracted 102 applicants, leading to a meticulous screening process that narrowed down candidates to 44 for interviews. In collaboration with the HR department and members of the *focus* Advocacy group, we conducted thorough interviews, resulting in 24 successful hires. Remarkably, 23 out of 24 new employees have been retained, yielding an impressive 96% retention rate!

Onboarding and Training

To ensure our new team members are well-prepared, all successful applicants undergo a comprehensive induction process and any training relevant to allocated services. Each new employee participates in a “shadow shift,” which introduces them to the participants and the specific service needs. Ongoing training and mentorship are provided not only to new hires but to all staff members, ensuring continuous professional development.

Roster Rebuild and Service Delivery

Addressing vacant shifts in service rosters has been a priority. We’ve recognised that shifts have evolved into a complicated structure, often catering to individual needs rather than overall service requirements. To tackle this, we are currently restructuring rosters to:

- Create more equitable lines per service, enhancing work-life balance for staff.
- Significantly reduce vacant shifts, promoting consistent service delivery.
- Ensure compliance with MEA and budget requirements.

Two services have successfully completed the roster rebuild, with two more in progress, a process that will extend into the new year.



“Ongoing training and mentorship are provided not only to new hires but to all staff members, ensuring continuous professional development.”

- Andy Zammit

Looking Ahead: Expansion and Opportunities

As we expand our organisation to accommodate new participants and services, exciting opportunities will arise for current employees to join new teams, develop new skills, and face fresh challenges. This growth will also necessitate more staff, including Team Leaders.

Historically, we have provided Active Support Workers with opportunities to step into Team Leader roles during absences, allowing them to gain valuable experience. In 2024, three Active Support Workers successfully transitioned into these roles, showcasing their capabilities through rigorous preparation and support.

Additionally, we launched the Emerging Team Leaders program, which attracted numerous applicants. Three individuals have been selected for this structured

training and mentoring initiative, and we’re thrilled to announce that we will be recruiting for another round in 2025.

As we look toward the future, 2025 promises to bring new challenges and opportunities for all team members. With a continued focus on recruitment, retention, and professional development, we are excited to continue building a strong, dedicated workforce that can meet the needs of those we support. Together, we are making a significant impact, and the journey ahead looks bright!



Andy Zammit
Operations Manager

stories we share

A Focus On Our Media Group

In 2024, the *focus* media group gathered once a week to develop multimedia skills, share stories and amplify the voice of our community. We are proud to share the following three heartwarming stories the team uncovered.

Laughter, Friendship & Belonging

Stacey's Move To focus

Moving into a new home can be a big change, but for Stacey, joining the *focus* community has been full of new friendships, laughter, and meaningful connections.

Stacey chose *focus* after living in another home in Pakenham. She says, "*focus* has good people, and I get along with them. I'm making new friends, and I enjoy the activities we do together." Stacey moved into her new *focus*-supported home on the Mornington Peninsula on April 10, 2024, and the warm welcome she received made settling in easier. "I get along with the people I live with, and everyone has made me feel welcome," she says. "We have a lot of fun, laughing, joking, and even a little bit of friendly teasing. Laughing is good medicine!"

One of the things Stacey appreciates most about living in her new home is that she can now see her family more often. Moving wasn't without its challenges, though. Stacey spent 13 years in her previous home,

and while she was excited to be closer to her parents, it was still hard to say goodbye. Reflecting on her move, she says, "I was really looking forward to being closer to Mum and Dad. Having their support—and the support from Michelle and Kerry at *focus*—made all the difference."

At *focus*, Stacey enjoys the freedom to make choices about her life, giving her a sense of happiness and independence. "I enjoy everything I do at *focus*," she shares. "I choose what I want to do, and that makes me happy." She's made more friends since moving and continues to receive great support, which makes her feel right at home.

Stacey's story is a reminder of the importance of community, connection, and a sense of belonging—values we're proud to uphold at *focus*.



"I choose what I want to do, and that makes me happy."

- Stacey



Change Through Awareness

Cade's Commitment

Cade is passionate about creating a more inclusive world, and through his role as a presenter at our Disability Awareness Seminars, he's making a lasting impact. For the past year, Cade has been sharing his experiences, educating community members, and helping people gain a deeper understanding of life with a disability.

Since starting the seminars, Cade has presented about twelve sessions, often alongside his co-presenters, John and Daniel. He explains, "The Disability Awareness Seminars are about talking openly about disability and sharing our experiences, like what it's like to be in a wheelchair in the community."

Cade enjoys the variety of audiences he gets to engage with—from high school and primary school students to local golf clubs, community groups, and recreation facilities like YAWA and PARC. He's even spoken at venues like Beretta's Hotel.

Cade finds meaning in teaching others, noting that his presentations can spark real change. "I get the sense of teaching people about disability in the community and how to make spaces more accessible," he says. "For example, I recently spoke to PARC about ways to optimise their facilities for people with disabilities."

Each seminar brings a unique set of questions from the audience, and Cade addresses them all openly. "We talk about lots of different things—my personal experiences, my disability, how it happened, and how I interact within the community," he shares. His stories offer insight into the barriers people with disabilities face and highlight the importance of accessibility for everyone.

Cade's work in the seminars is a testament to the power of lived experience. Through his storytelling and teaching, he's building bridges of understanding and helping create a more inclusive and accessible community.



Making Everyday Count

Meet Anu Kumar

The *focus* Media Group had the honor of sitting down with Anu Kumar, an Active Support Worker at *focus* Individualised Support Services. With eight years under her belt at *focus*, Anu's dedication is a testament to her passion in the disability support sector.

Anu works at Berry House, where she also took on an acting Team Leader role for a brief period. Reflecting on the experience, she shared how it allowed her to find new ways to connect with her team, and provide guidance and support. She also noted the challenges of balancing rostered shifts and administrative duties, highlighting the multifaceted nature of her role.



Prior to her career in disability support, Anu pursued a Masters in Microbiology and worked as a lab technician in pathology. However, her heart led her towards disability care, prompting her to complete her Cert IV in Disability, an experience she thoroughly enjoyed.

Beyond her professional life, Anu is devoted to her family, cherishing moments with her two daughters and son. Sports play a significant role in their lives, with a shared love for football (especially Liverpool), swimming, and even Anu's past involvement in track and field events. In her downtime, Anu finds solace in gardening, dancing, and quality time with her children.

Recognising the importance of self-care, Anu shared her relaxation rituals, which



include listening to music, bike riding, watching movies and indulging in Netflix binges. Weekends are often filled with outings with friends and attending birthday parties, a balance between work and personal life that Anu has mastered.

When asked about her dream destination, Anu's eyes light up as she mentions Egypt. The rich culture, history, and majestic pyramids hold a fascination for her, igniting a desire to explore this ancient land someday.

Looking ahead, Anu's focus remains on improving people's lives, particularly as they age. She emphasises the importance of understanding individuals as they undergo changes, striving to make each day better for those she supports. For Anu, it's about making every moment count and leaving a positive impact wherever she goes.

Anu's story embodies the ethos of dedication, compassion, and resilience that defines the team at *focus* Individualised Support Services. Through her unwavering commitment, she continues to inspire and uplift those around her, proving that a single individual can make a profound difference in the lives of others.



Media Group

Lisa Scilley, Cade Johnson, Sally Bowler, Marcus Schindler, Stacey Edwards, Veronica Tocknell, Kevin Williams, Rex Lawrence, & Michelle Dunne

"Anu's story embodies the ethos of dedication, compassion, and resilience that defines the team at *focus*"

- *focus* Media Team



our experience brought to life

A Focus On Service & Innovation

Sharing our experiences

2024 seminars & sessions

The year 2024 has been exceptionally productive for the Quality & Innovations team, marked by the successful implementation of Disability Awareness Seminars throughout the Bayside and Peninsula regions.

Engagement & Participation

Our seminars have reached a diverse audience, including primary and high schools, local businesses, council groups, and educational staff cohorts. These sessions have fostered a model of shared experience, open discussion, and future planning.

The seminars were led by *focus* participants, family members of those we support, and members of the Innovation & Quality Team.

Achievements

- **Frequency:** We have conducted an average of two seminars per month since the beginning of the year.
- **Employment Pathways:** Participants were compensated as part of a customised employment pathway in community education.
- **Co-Design & Community Education:** This approach has promoted a narrative of influence, empowerment, and community participation for and by the people we support.

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Cade, Marie, Veronica, Annee, and Daniel for their unwavering dedication to this invaluable community-strengthening work. Their efforts have been instrumental in driving our mission forward.



Empowering & Inspiring Life

Daniel's new role

In 2024, the Quality and Innovation Team dedicated significant efforts to developing the role of the Lived Experience Project Officer, held by Daniel Laing.

Daniel's new role underscores the importance of integrating the knowledge and insights of people with disabilities within the industry.

'I am very honoured and privileged to be the "Lived Experienced Officer" here at focus because I believe I have been given this great platform to advocate for our focus residents who cannot advocate for themselves and I feel very strongly about our community being inclusive as a whole', Daniel says.

Impact

- **Advocacy for Lived Experience:** The role highlights the necessity of embracing lived experience to foster a disability sector that is equitable and rights-driven.
- **Community Network Building:** Daniel has been instrumental in building community networks, enhancing the sector's capacity to support and empower individuals with disabilities.

Acknowledgements:

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Daniel Laing for his dedication and hard work, particularly in the area of community network building. His contributions are vital to the ongoing growth and development of our sector.



“I am honoured... to have been given this great platform to advocate for our residents.”

- Daniel Laing



More of the work produced for our 2024 'focus on what's important to us' awareness campaign.

Community Partnership Building

True Colours Advocacy Group

2024 has been an active year for the members of the True Colours Advocacy Group, who meet weekly at the Mornington Community House. The group has become more representative of the focus participant base, amplifying the voices of people with high support needs within their local community and beyond.



Partnerships & Engagement

- Mornington Shire Council: The group has strengthened its partnership by participating in the Disability Advisory Committee and the working group for the Municipal Emergency Management Plan review.
- Educational Influence: The group provided valuable advice to Chisholm and Nepean Industry Edge Training on the curriculum for the new Cert III

in Individualised Support. They also presented to students in the Cert IV Disability course, influencing the training of future support workers and ensuring that the people we support are 'culture-builders' of the industry.

- Local Engagement: Regular meetings were held with local council workers, including Monica Seal and Virginia Richardson, as well as MPs such as Chris Crewther. A notable highlight was a round table discussion with David Bowe, an elected councilor in Horsham Rural City Council with lived experience of disability.



Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to all group members for their hard work. Special thanks to Amy Pollard and Jacqui Kemp from the Mornington Community House for their unwavering support.



John Edgar
Service Innovation
Officer



Daniel Laing
Lived Experience
Project Officer

fostering a life well-lived

Client Safeguards & Wellbeing

I'm thrilled to share some of the incredible work we've been doing to enhance the health and wellbeing of the individuals we support.

In 2024, we've made significant strides. As the Client Safeguards and Wellbeing Officer, I am dedicated to elevating the quality of life for those we serve at *focus*. This involves fostering partnerships, collaborating in a dynamic working environment, and implementing key actions outlined in our organisational policies, strategic documents, and health management plans.

The health and wellbeing of the individuals we support is truly at the heart of everything we do. In 2024, we've made remarkable progress in rolling out preventative health and wellbeing activities. We've conducted a comprehensive review of our Health and Wellbeing Framework,



focusing on key areas such as Health and Medical Indicators, Lifestyle & Physical Activities, and Social & Civic Participation. We're also eager to gather more insights on Nutrition & Lifestyle, Environment, Personal Safety, Rights & Advocacy, and Financial Support.

Our initiatives align with the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission, ensuring we maintain robust coordination and oversight — especially regarding Specific Health Management Plans and high-intensity supports.

We've put in a tremendous amount of effort to strengthen the high-intensity capabilities of our staff. By focusing on our observations of practice, we ensure that everyone is employing best practices in their support. We've also pinpointed crucial areas of improvement, like manual handling, through the lens of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards.

Additionally, our Health and Wellbeing Framework emphasises areas like Dementia care, equipping our staff with the knowledge and skills they need to provide the best support. With the growing number of individuals we assist who are living with Dementia, it's essential that our team is well-prepared in this area.

Every staff member has received training in Active Support, empowering them to understand and deliver the tailored support that the people we serve truly need.

“ We encourage everyone to take an active role in their own lives while prioritising their wellbeing. ”

- Terri Landt





Active Support is broken into 4 key parts:

1. Every Moment Has Potential

We whole-heartedly believe that everyone we support has unique potential just waiting to be unlocked. Our mission is to identify and nurture that potential, empowering them to thrive in their own way.

2. Graded Assistance to Ensure Support

We provide graded assistance that is tailored to each person's needs, ensuring the support they receive is just right—neither too little nor too much. The approach helps build confidence and fosters independence, allowing individuals to grow at their own pace.

3. Maximise Choice and Control

We prioritise maximising choice and control for those we support. By giving individuals options and a voice in their care, we empower them to make decisions that resonate with their preferences and aspirations. Their choices matter, and we're here to facilitate them!

4. Little & Often

We embrace the principle of “little and often” in our approach. By providing consistent, frequent support, we create opportunities for regular engagement and development. This method not only reinforces learning but also builds strong, trusting relationships.

Together, these four key elements drive our commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we support.

One of our standout achievements this year has been our robust focus on medication management. Through the government's Review Me initiative, and with the invaluable support of a licensed Pharmacist, we've conducted thorough reviews of people's medications. We're thrilled to announce that we've completed this comprehensive review process for Red Hill participants, and we're excited to collaborate with families and GPs to implement their recommendations. This

has given us a clearer and more informed view of each person's medication and medical oversight.

We didn't stop there - we have also ensured that everyone received their annual flu vaccinations and closely monitored their COVID-19 testing and immunity levels, providing additional vaccinations every six months as recommended. By prioritising medication safety and preventive care, we've made significant strides in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of those we support.

Building strong partnerships has also been a top priority. We've established a fantastic relationship with the Disability Liaison Officer at Frankston Hospital (Peninsula Health) and Monash Health, working closely with Community Care to ensure seamless support for individuals requiring hospitalisation. This collaboration has drastically improved the overall experience and outcomes for those needing medical attention. Thanks to our teamwork with Peninsula Health, we organised a productive meeting between our senior management and the heads of their disability teams. Our goal was to streamline the process for individuals transitioning from hospital to home, ensuring their supports, needs, and any necessary equipment or interventions are thoroughly addressed.

We've been on an exciting journey exploring innovative interventions that can truly empower the individuals we support. One standout solution is the V Drive power assist motors, which can be easily attached to manual wheelchairs. This incredible technology allows individuals to take the lead while staff provide assistance, significantly reducing manual handling and enhancing independence.

Another game-changer is the Automatic Rehab Moto exercise bike. This adaptive bike can accommodate clients with minimal movement, even allowing them to use it while seated in a wheelchair. With both passive and active modes, it encourages movement in the legs and arms, making a tremendous difference in their health and wellbeing.

At *focus*, we aspire to be trailblazers in implementing such transformative interventions. Our goal is to enhance day-to-day life and help individuals actively engage with their world. We believe that every innovation we introduce paves the way for greater independence and a brighter future.

We are actively planning exciting activities and special events that promote movement and encourage everyone to take an active role in their own lives while prioritising their wellbeing. Our unwavering commitment to their health and happiness drives us to explore innovative ways to enhance their overall quality of life.

In closing, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, clients, families, and stakeholders. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in our journey this year. Together, we're making a positive impact and prioritising the health, wellbeing, and quality of life for the amazing individuals we serve. Let's keep this momentum going.



Terri Landt
Client Safeguards & Wellbeing Officer

creating futures together

Growth & Engagement

This year has been both rewarding and impactful. My focus has been on expanding our community connections, building meaningful relationships, and creating pathways for people with disabilities to live fulfilling lives with the supports they need and deserve.

Local School Post-School Options Expos

This year, Ezza, Marie, Veronica and I, attended five local school expos dedicated to post-school options. These events were a valuable opportunity to speak directly with families considering support options for their family members as they become adults. We were able to give them a true sense of what it's like to be supported by *focus*—what it means in terms of empowerment, independence, and personalised care. Ezza, Marie and Veronica shared stories from their own lives helping families understand the impact of *focus*'s support and the possibilities it creates. Building these connections with families early on allows us to guide them through their options and provide reassurance as they make significant decisions for their family members.

Welcoming New Residents

A highlight of this year has been welcoming two new residents, Stacey and Richard, into the *focus* community. Watching them transition into their new homes and seeing the difference in their confidence and independence has been incredibly fulfilling. Our approach prioritises individualised

support, and it has been wonderful to see Stacey and Richard experience more choice and control in their day-to-day lives. The transition process aims to support not only the new person moving in but the current residents. The residents are involved in decision making around who moves in to their home. They have a number of meet and greets to make sure that the person is the right fit for their home.



Media Program & Creative Projects

Our media program has been an exciting platform for those we support to express themselves through a creative outlet. This year, our media group put together an Acknowledgement of Country video as a tribute to the Bunurong land and the Coolun people. Currently, they are working on a promotional video for our *focus* on Opportunity Shop. What makes these projects unique is that our media

group members plan, film, and direct the productions themselves. This experience not only builds their skills but also enables them to play an active role in promoting *focus*, giving them ownership and pride in their work.

Local Disability Expo in Langwarrin

Attending the Local Disability Expo in Langwarrin was a valuable opportunity for us at *focus* Individualised Support Services. By participating in these sessions, we aim to increase brand awareness within the community, build strong networks with Support Coordinators, and connect with potential clients seeking high-quality support services for their loved ones.

Promoting *focus* in the community brings many benefits. It helps families and Support Coordinators learn about our services and how we make a positive difference in people's lives. It also allows us to reach more people who might need our support, ensuring that they have access to reliable, person-centered care. Additionally, it strengthens our reputation and shows our commitment to empowering people with disabilities in a supportive and inclusive way.

At the expo, people we support shared their journeys, highlighting the positive changes they've experienced with *focus*, such as increased independence, learning new skills, and gaining more control over their lives. These personal stories resonated deeply with families looking for supportive and trusted options, showing them the impact of our services.

Through these interactions, we strengthened our connections with other professionals in the disability sector and showcased the values that drive us. Events like this are instrumental in expanding our reach and reinforcing our commitment to providing individualised, empowering support for people with disabilities.

Building Relationships with SDA Providers

Throughout the year, I've dedicated time to building relationships with reputable SDA providers to explore housing options that go beyond traditional models. By partnering with providers who share our vision, we are identifying housing solutions that not only meet accessibility standards but also promote a lifestyle of choice and empower people to live ordinary, fulfilling lives. These connections ensure that we're not only providing housing but helping people find a place where they feel at home—where they have choices about who they live with, where they live, and what level of independence they enjoy.



Reflecting on the past year, I am proud of what we have achieved in creating stronger community ties, welcoming new residents, and fostering an environment of empowerment and choice. Each event, connection, and collaboration strengthens our mission and brings us closer to creating a future where people with disabilities can lead enriched, ordinary lives on their own terms.



Michelle Dunne
Growth & Engagement
Officer

Our Stories:

red hill garden revitalisation

This year, Red Hill Garden underwent a remarkable transformation with the introduction of our horticulture program. Over the past twelve months, our dedicated group has tirelessly worked to rejuvenate the space, clearing out overgrown plants and weeds to restore the garden to its former glory.

Each week, participants have engaged in hands-on activities, gradually building their gardening skills. From pruning and planting to weeding and watering, everyone has contributed to the care and maintenance of the garden. Recently, we took a significant step forward by introducing a lawn mower, marking an exciting milestone in our journey.



Participants have been taking turns learning to operate the mower, not only mastering the mechanics of the tool but also developing their stamina as they tackle different sections of the lawn. This experience has fostered teamwork and a sense of accomplishment, as everyone celebrates the lush, manicured landscape that reflects their hard work.

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue our horticulture journey, looking into how the group can build on their capabilities and expand their works at Red Hill.



Jess Bruinsma
Activity Facilitator

“ We are excited to continue our horticulture journey, looking into how the group can build on their capabilities.”

- Jess Bruinsma



Our Stories:

having a say conference 2024

The group were all up early and extremely excited to start the long journey to Geelong for the annual 'Having A Say Conference'.

We made it just in time to pick up our lanyards and head to the main auditorium for the opening ceremony with the CEO of Valid Fionn Skiotis welcoming us to the conference.

The Having a Say Conference aims to empower people with disability, through the opportunity to 'have a say' about issues that affect their lives. It is also a place where people can come together to celebrate abilities, achievements and have the opportunity to be heard by politicians, government and service providers to be part of developing strategies to address issues and recommendations made at the conference.

From there participants were supported to their chosen come and try activities with the Harley Rides around Geelong Waterfront being one of the absolute favourites!

Then the real excitement began, we were able to check in to our cabins at Tasmans Caravan Park. Everyone unpacked their belongings swiftly so we were able to head back out to The Sphinx Hotel for dinner and the Red Faces event.

focus participants certainly had a blast at The Sphinx, with three of our participants entering an act into the Red Faces show. Marcus and friend wowed the audience dancing along to the song 'This Is Me' from The greatest showman, coming in the top three acts of the night and securing themselves a shot in the finals! Philip and Kevin also made their return as 'The Boys



from the bush' singing a crowd favourite, Country Road by John Denver which had the whole crowd singing along.

The group returned to the cabins extremely tired but very happy from their busy day.

The next morning was an early morning back at the waterfront, where participants were able to go in and out of the different workshops on offer that were of interest to them, as well as meet some of Geelong's finest First Responders with the Ambulance and Vic Police, putting on a display. Everyone enjoyed looking at the inside of the emergency vehicles and even trying on some of the uniform pieces such as hats and bulletproof vests.

In the afternoon the group again were able to split into activities of interests with most of the ladies opting to have their hair and makeup done in preparation for the main event, the dinner dance hosted at The Pier in Geelong. Pip and Marcus chose to do a walk along the Pier taking in the sites of the beautiful afternoon and getting some great pictures!

Everyone was extremely excited getting ready for the dinner dance with the Ladies putting on their favourite frocks and the gentlemen selecting some fine attire of

their own. Once at the dance a few people headed straight to the dance floor to get a good spot to watch the AMAZING 'Un-Limited' band perform all the classics from the 70's 80's 90's and 2000's along with all of today's catchiest tunes.



The night was spent eating delicious food with good friends dancing the night away!

On the third day we had Marcus, Christopher, Bruce and Philip all keen to cook a BBQ breakfast of bacon and eggs for all to enjoy to offer enough energy for packing and the long journey back to the Peninsula!

A great time was had by all!



Jo Delaney
Activity Facilitator

Kindilan Op Shop:

a year of gratitude

I am delighted to report that the 2023-2024 financial year has been another remarkable success for the Kindilan Op Shop. We achieved a record \$310,000 in takings, an impressive increase from last year's \$219,000 – that's an increase of over 40%!

A significant part of this success lies in our wonderful team of volunteers, who make the Op Shop the vibrant and welcoming place it is. This year, we welcomed five new volunteers, some of whom joined us from the local Probus Club. Volunteers of all ages bring a deep sense of purpose to our work, knowing they're helping raise funds for the focus participants. They step in whenever someone is on leave or unwell, creating an environment of true teamwork and support.

In our shop, we've made it a priority to bring everyone together and keep the energy high. We run a few friendly competitions, like our Tattslotto game where each volunteer gets a number and has a chance to win \$10 each week. For those who enjoy sports, we have our footy tipping and Melbourne Cup sweepstakes. And, of course, we celebrate whenever we can with birthday morning teas. These traditions foster friendships and make the shop a joyful place to be.

I want to give special recognition to my twin sister, Nancy, who has volunteered with Kindilan Op Shop for an incredible 38 years – an achievement that truly reflects the spirit of commitment our shop is known for.

Our shop continues to thrive not only because of the great prices but also due to the friendly atmosphere and the strong connections we have with our local community. Customers always comment on how well the shop is organised and how welcoming our volunteers are. "It's really a community within a community".

We're fortunate to receive wonderful donations from our generous community, and our regular local customers have been steadfast in their support. One of my favorite parts of the job is running flash sales – I'll call out half-price sales during the last 30 minutes on Saturdays, and we'll often do around \$900 in sales on those days.

Ultimately, our shop isn't just about raising funds; it's about the friendships and a sense of belonging. To all our volunteers and supporters, you have my deepest gratitude. Your loyalty and hard work are the heartbeat of Kindilan Op Shop, and together, we make this a truly special place. Whether at the front counter greeting customers with a smile or working hard behind the scenes, each of you plays a vital role.

Thank you all – I sincerely appreciate every one of you and your commitment to making our shop what it is today. Here's to another fantastic year ahead!



Bev Stacpoole
Kindilan Op Shop Manager

"A significant part of our success lies in our wonderful team of volunteers, who make the Op Shop the vibrant and welcoming place it is."

- Bev Stacpoole



CFO Report:

financials

The following represents a summary of the financial position of Kindilan Society ABN 21 004 947 782 (T/A *focus* Individualised Support Services) as at 30th June 2024. A copy of the complete audited accounts may be obtained if required by contacting the Chief Executive Officer at The Coolstores, 4/475 Moorooduc Hwy, Moorooduc (Ph: 03 59 815100).

2024 Profit & Loss Report

Income	
Ndis & Government Grants	\$26,460,766
Client Fees	\$2,132,979
Fundraising & Donations	\$791,532
Investment Income	\$1,469,324
Consultancy Income	\$12,000
Other Income	\$148,907
Total Income	\$31,015,508
Expenses	
Salaries And Staff Related Costs	\$24,466,428
Depreciation & Amortisation	\$1,033,961
Repairs & Maintenance	\$583,068
Motor Vehicle Expense	\$229,307
Occupancy Expense	\$61,540
Professional Fees	\$266,318
Other Expenses	\$2,360,987
Total Expenses	\$29,001,609
Surplus From Operating Activities	\$2,013,899
Net Gain / (Loss) In Fair Value Of Financial Assets Classified At Fair Value Through Profit Or Loss	\$1,131,890
Surplus For The Year	\$3,145,789

2024 Balance Sheet

Current Assets	
Cash Assets	\$4,317,252
Receivables	\$949,005
Other Assets	\$1,049,520
Total Current Assets	\$6,315,777
Non-Current Assets	
Other Financial Assets	\$29,689,838
Lease Assets	\$496,549
Property, Plant And Equipment	\$26,154,564
Other Assets	\$608,446
Total Non-Current Assets	\$56,949,397
Total Assets	\$63,265,174
Current Liabilities	
Payables	\$1,254,904
Lease Liabilities	\$192,391
Provisions	\$3,078,976
Total Current Liabilities	4,526,271
Non Current Liabilities	
Lease Liabilities	\$313,329
Provisions	\$789,685
Total Non-Current Liabilities	\$1,103,014
Total Liabilities	\$5,629,285
Net Assets	\$57,635,889
Equity	
Reserves	\$10,681,249
Accumulated Surplus	\$46,954,640
Total Equity	\$57,635,889

“ We’ve
come a
long way
since I
started.”

- Ray Sullivan



Ray Sullivan: 20 years of dedication

A Focus On Staff

It feels like just yesterday I walked through *focus*'s front door, looking for something new - but it was back in 2003! I was doing security work and some delivery driving, but it wasn't really fulfilling, so my brother-in-law suggested I'd be a good fit working with adults with disabilities at *focus*.

So, off I went, asking for a job, and *focus* gave me a chance. I started as a casual, just dipping my toe in. But within a year, I found myself hitting the books, studying for that Cert VI in Disability. I was hooked.



From Hartigan to Century to Bungower, my trusty EH Holden and I had the opportunity to experience quite a few different places before I started a permanent role at Hartigan that lasted 10 years.

After a stint on long service leave, I was ready for a change and moved across to Bungower. I already knew some of the people from my early days, so I settled in well.

Some of my favourite memories include the time the crew from Hartigan went to see

The Eagles live. What a night! Seeing those smiles, feeling the music - it's moments like those that make it all worth it.

There have been so many great moments, trips to Apollo Bay, nights out in the city - we're all about making memories and focusing on the experience. That's what makes *focus* special. The dedication to making every moment count.

We've come a long way since I started.

We work hard to make sure it's all about choice and independence. Whether it's pursuing personal goals or just living the lifestyle they choose, we're here to support every step of the way.

As a staff member, you learn to pay attention to the details. Making sure the house feels like a home, staying on top of paperwork - it's all part of the job. But it's worth it, knowing you're making a difference in someone's life. It's that kind of care and consideration that sets *focus* apart - plus the people like Phil, who always reminds me to "Drive Safely" when I'm heading out after a shift. It's a small thing, but it means a lot. It really shows what type of person he is and how he was raised by his family.

So yeah, that's how it all started for me. Twenty years of memories, laughter, and a whole lot of heart. That's the spirit of *focus*, always looking for ways to make a difference.

compliments + feedback

A Focus On Team Spirit & Kindness

"I would like to thank Fiona Strahl, Ashleigh Zovic and Rachel Butler who all stepped into Acting Team Leader positions at Cedar, Cedar Flat, Olsen and Banksia. They all did a fabulous job, were responsive, easy to communicate with and assisted with any and all maintenance requests that came their way!!"

– *Kristen Bellsmith*

"Elissa supported PB to bam activity last Thursday, and family came to watch. Feedback from PB's family that Elissa was really good with PB which they really appreciated." – *Jennie Mulhall*

"I had the pleasure of witnessing Barbara provide outstanding active support to two participants from Oppy House. She was front and centre, actively engaged in supporting them enjoy a front-of-stage experience at a local 80's night event. The participants were laughing, smiling, and dancing throughout the performance, with Barbara right there beside them, fully immersed in their enjoyment. It was absolutely fabulous to see a support worker so dedicated to facilitating meaningful and enriching experiences for others. Barbara's commitment truly exemplifies the impact of active support in helping people lead rewarding lives."

– *ex employee*

"Tim has an amazing support team around him which is evident when family are involved and can see the support & great communication." – *Denise Shingles*

"I want to say thank you and show appreciation to the following for all their hard work. Kerry Rei, Shirley Jones, Ashlee Bayliss, Sarah Christensen, Cathy Howe and Kim McGrath. Their willingness to jump into any challenges and get the job done and always willing to help."

– *Rachelle Brown*

"I am a Support Coordinator and visit a resident at Oppy House Frankston. I would like to say that the resident has blossomed and truly loves her home and *focus* activities. The staff and House Coordinator Jenni Mulhall do an AMAZING Job and thought you should know."

– *Support Coordinator*

"Jim ! Thank you for all your support when one of the Clients from Hartigan went to hospital . You managed and responded to the situation with calmness and made the process for me (on oncall) smooth. Thank you ! Hartigan is lucky to have you :)"

– *Kerry Rei*

"A customer came into *focus* on Opportunity today , engaging with participants and staff about People with Disabilities and how wonderful it is to see and talk to our participants. As he left he said goodbye and he will be back to donate items as it is a lovely shop with a warm and welcoming environment."

– *Wendy Langdon*

"I would like to take a minute to send a shout out to Paula from Oppy house

(and socks if we still have them!) From the moment I met Paula, she has stood to me out as very smart, capable and caring. Paula has made a huge effort to understand the Oppy ladies and house routine in a very short time. Her attention to detail and observation skills are outstanding, she is a huge asset to Oppy house. Paula makes a remarkable difference to every shift I work with her and I can't thank her enough. "

– *Barbara Anestopoulos*

"I would like acknowledge and compliment Jack Schofield from Helvetia. Without him being aware, I saw Jack's respectful manner towards a client, and he showed excellent active support skills. Further to this, a fellow staff member

commented that Jack will often remind other staff about active support, which they said was great. A great Team Member and gentleman." – *Jo Reid*

"I have watched Elissa McCabe support Andrew at the op shop today and her willingness to support him in an activity out in the community was amazing.

She supported him walking explaining to him how to walk as well as engaging with him in a positive upbeat manner."

– *Wendy Langdon*

"I would like to pass on compliments to two staff members: Mennie and Justin. Both staff are really good and go above and beyond!" – *Ramon Knoll*



service milestones

Celebrating Our Incredible Staff

As we reflect on our journey, we want to take a moment to celebrate our amazing team at *focus*. Whether you are just starting your journey with us or have been a part of our family for twenty years, your hard work and dedication are truly inspiring.

Thank you for your commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities to choose the lives they want to live. Your compassion and effort create meaningful opportunities that enrich our community and transform lives.

We are grateful for each of you and the passion you bring every day. Together, we are making a difference, and we look forward to celebrating many more milestones in the future!



5 YRS

Aldrin Thomas
Noreen Kemboi
Robertson Moyo
Michelle Dunne
Mel Sangu
Yvonne Cohen
Chris Swistak
Jumie Ologere
Donna Spouse
Wendy Langdon
Piotr Olszewski
Janine McLaggan
Steve Strain
Kristen Bellsmith
Barbara Marumahoko
Florence Kiilu
Pamela Mutandamini
Teresia Kiguru

1 YR

Cassandra Moodie	Katie Howell
Mennie Vatta	Krishna Aryal
Pam Knudsen	Bradley Sermon
Basir Shirzad	Ben Kiprotich
John Vachalukkal	Carol Kiprop
Shaylee Chapman	Rajin Rijal
Josh Jeremiah	Emma Corcoran
Aimee Rietschel	Gansuda Rueangram
Manu Ipe	Manzour Manzour
Machelle Anthony	Mitchell Tamanika
Karl Wiebrecht	Paula Ribeiro Da Silva
Brian Limo	Sarah Christensen
Christine Richter	Themiya Pethiyagoda
Faith Chepkemoi	Van Pham
Usman Javed	Aman Goel
Dennis Kurgat	Ashley McGlynn
Sarah Lukudu	George Okeke
Aimee Barker	Nahid Hasan
Kirri Lougoon	Angelo Paraskevas
Anneka Gobel	Benson Mwangi
Nicola Kenyon	Rory Putko
Agnes Gachigwa	Esther Koli
Nav Kaur	Audry Kipkebut
Nicole Gatulak Jal	Felix Rutto
Sona Babu	Jasvinder Sidhu
Alfonce Kimtai	Kanwar Singh
Svitlana Kuzmovych	Ruth Ruoti
Cheryl Heins	Zipporah Kariuki
Laura Glennon	Daniel Laing
	Carolyn Young

20+ YRS

Ray Sullivan
Samantha Jenkins
Andrew Zammit
Rebecca Edwards
Betty Shearer

15 YRS

Dean Plane
Joanne Delaney
Chris Rigg
Jo Reid

10 YRS

Teri Knaggs
Kelly Martin
Maureen Scully
Jonathan Nyahumbi
Regina Muchai
Anna Kagima
Michael Kuzmovych
Ricardo Ithier
Joseph Mungura
Peter Sheppard

heartfelt thanks

A focus on our supporters

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped us this year. Your time, generosity, and kindness make a real difference in the lives of people with disabilities. With your support, we continue to grow and bring joy and inclusion to our community. Thank you for being with us!

A-Grade Appliance Service
Airmaster Corporation
Alecia Rathbone – Housing Hub
All Things Equal Café
Allannah Wooloughan
Andrew Bird – Foundstone
Annee and Roger Angell
Arbotrim
Arny's Office Furniture
ASSA ABLOY Entrance Systems Australia
Australian Red Cross
Belvedere Community Centre
Belvedere Indoor Bowls Club
Ben O'Brien
Blairgowie Yacht Squadron - Sailability
Blairgowie
Boomerang Bags C/O Sorrento Community Centre
Brent Woolgar – DSC
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Leisure

Country Fire Authority
Courtenay Gardens Primary School
Crib Point Primary School
Crook Bubbles No Troubles
David Hodgson
Delta Therapy Dogs
Digital Fusion
DJ Boofhead – Justin Reynolds
DKnet Group
DO-CREW
Drew Beswick
Dromana Community House
Dromana Football & Netball Club
Dromana Potters Group, Dromana Community Hall
DSC – Disability Services Consulting
East Frankston Over 55's Club
Escala Partners
Evans and Partners
Frankston Baseball Association
Frankston City Council
Frankston Library
Frankston North Community Centre
Frankston Softball Association
Freemasons Victoria
GrenDesign
Guy Ayres – Relae Property Group
H.E. Thomas Transport
Hastings Yacht Club
HDAA
Hide-Tech Electrical

Hit The Switch
HMB Lawyers
Jim's Mowing Mt Martha Central
Joy of the Earth Community Garden
Kenshin Karate
Kindilan Foundation
Langwarrin Community Centre
LaTrobe University Research Centre
Loki Ball – Performl
Mach 1 Panel & Paint
Maddocks Lawyers
Master Jacks Café
Michael Bink – Ability Roundtable
Monica Seal - MPS Disability Community Inclusion Officer
Mornington Community House
Mornington Library
Mornington Peninsula Shire
Mornington Racecourse -MRC
Mornington Yacht Club - Sailability
Mornington
MP Plumbing & Gas
Murray White – Crash Bang Wallop
NAMS Airconditioning Services
National Australia Bank
NDS – National Disability Services
Nepean Industry Edge Training
Norden Body Works
OFFICEBOY
Oncall Personnel
Opteon solutions
Orima Research
Orwill St Community House
PARC Aquatic Centre Frankston
Pathways to Care
Patterson Lakes Community Centre
Peninsula Health
Peninsula Plumbing & Hydronic Heating

Peninsula School of Dance
Pitcher Partners
Polperro Winery
Prompt Networks
Red Hill General Store
Red Hill Lions Club
Red Hill Pharmacy
RMIT – Architectural and Interior Design School
Rosebud Secondary College
S & M J Plasterers
Sabrina Shop Fitting
Seaford Lodge
Sean Dempsey - Foundstone
Seawinds Community Hub
Seed to Seed Program
South East Peninsula Health Unit
St Georges Church Red Hill
Steph Clarke – 28 Thursdays
Stretch & Movement Program, Peninsula Dance Project
T Beez Bakery
The Pines Mens Shed
The Salvation Army Mornington
Tonic Gym Dromana
TPG
TT Insurance
UPPERCUT Tree Services
VALID
Varied Abilities Music Program (VAMP)
Virginia Richardson MPS Community Resilience Officer
Williams Builders
Women with Disabilities Victoria
Workforce Plus & Management Governance Australia
YAWA Rosebud

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**more
information:**

**focus Individualised
Support Services,
4/475 Moorooduc Hwy,
Moorooduc, VIC 3933**

T: 03 5981 5100

E: admin@focuslife.com.au

W: focuslife.com.au

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