



**PRESIDENT'S &
CEO'S
REPORT**

2018/19




MELBA. LIVING LIFE!

Ben Renshaw and Glenn Foard

In our previous reports we have noted the significant change that is occurring in the disability services industry driven by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Our reflections on the 2018–19 financial year are that, if anything, the rate of change is increasing! In the past year not only is the NDIS continuing to underpin changes to our organisation, other significant events have occurred that are also shaping Melba's future. We are pleased to report that the Board and senior management have prepared diligently for these events and believe we are well-positioned to build on our proud history, grow our capacity and continue to drive quality outcomes for the people who choose to purchase our services.

Significantly, on 28 August 2018, the then Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, the Honourable Martin Foley MP, announced that Melba was one of five providers chosen to assume responsibility for supported accommodation (Supported Independent Living) and respite (Short-term Accommodation Assistance) services being transferred from the Department of Health and Human Services.



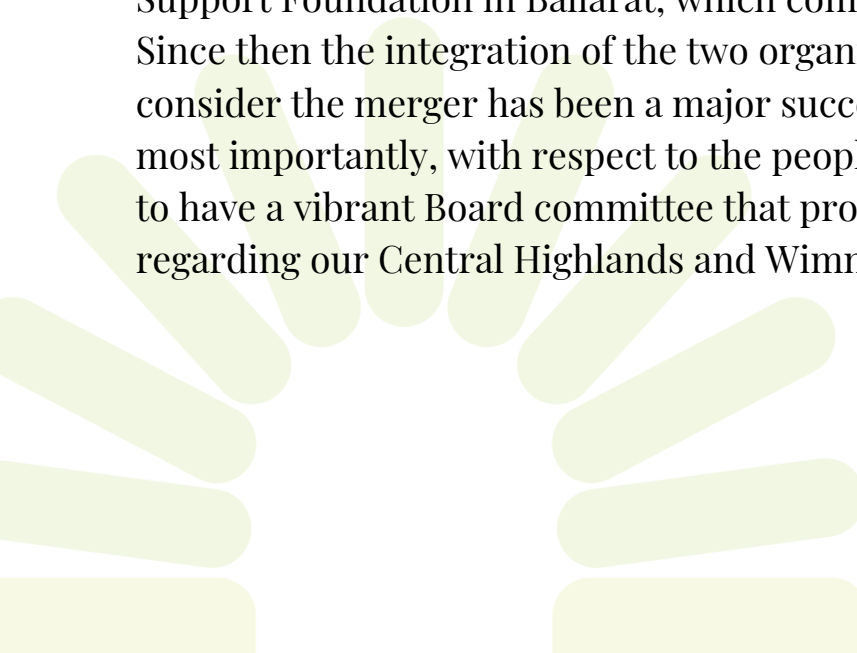
Minister Foley stated Melba and the other providers “were chosen following a rigorous process, undertaken in partnership with people with disability and their families, the workforce and the disability sector” and that “all providers demonstrated innovative approaches to service delivery, have proven track records in delivering high quality support and have existing links with the community.”

We agree with Minister Foley who also noted that “this (was) an important step in the transition to the NDIS and will provide better support and services for people with disability across Victoria.”

As part of the transfer the Board established a subsidiary entity, Melba Support Services Australia Ltd, to assist manage the transferring services. The wholly-controlled company is governed by a Board comprised of a subset of existing Melba Directors. As you would expect, it shares Melba’s long-standing vision and purpose and is also a not-for-profit, public benevolent institution.

Throughout 2018-19 we prepared for the successful handover of services that occurred at 65 different locations in August and September 2019. We are privileged to now have the opportunity of supporting some 600 new individuals and welcoming approximately 700 departmental staff to our organisation. Our new service sites are in various locations ranging from Nhill in Western Victoria to Orbost in East Gippsland.

The transfer was preceded by the exciting merger with Karden Disability Support Foundation in Ballarat, which commenced officially on 1 July 2018. Since then the integration of the two organisations has progressed well. We consider the merger has been a major success – financially, culturally and, most importantly, with respect to the people we support. We are fortunate to have a vibrant Board committee that provides advice on a range of matters regarding our Central Highlands and Wimmera operations.



We were also asked to auspice other new services including a small, innovative day-service on the Mornington Peninsula that was previously managed by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and a children's respite service in Cranbourne previously managed by Oz Child. In both these instances we were very pleased to do so.

Under the NDIS, Support Coordination, a new type of service, plays a vital role assisting individuals and their families to navigate the scheme and access funded supports. We are now assisting more than 300 individuals through our hard-working Support Coordination team.

Each of these new service developments was aided by an organisational restructure implemented in January 2019, expanding our senior management team. It is gratifying that we have attracted new managers of significant talent to our organisation.

Readers of past reports will know Melba is committed to increasing the housing choices available to people with disability. New housing developments in both Melbourne and rural Victoria all progressed during the year. Combined, the developments will provide more than 50 homes to individuals with disability allowing people to choose where and with whom they live. Seeing the difference it made to individuals who moved into new homes in Cheltenham and Ballarat during the last year was very affirming of our efforts in this area. Along with one of our partners (Housing First) it was also pleasing to be asked by Yarra Ranges Council to assist with a feasibility study they are undertaking relating to establishing social housing in Lilydale, including for people with disability. We can legitimately claim to be a leader in Specialist Disability Accommodation, as it is known under the NDIS.

Given the changes we are going through the Board considered it is essential we have a clear strategic path to follow. Following strategy workshops, a new five-year plan was finalised and endorsed by the Board in May 2019 and subsequently presented to staff at a series of forums. The plan, titled *Our Melba, Our Future!* has three primary goals:

1. Drive Outcomes and Quality

People purchasing services from Melba receive excellent service that enables them to achieve their desired personal outcomes.

2. Continue our Growth

Melba will grow to meet the needs of individuals and families. Growth will be managed and considered in locations and services where we can make a positive difference. Excellence in service delivery will be fundamental to growth. Growth will not be at the expense of existing services.

3. Empower our Workforce

Melba has a vibrant, thriving culture and an engaged, skilled workforce that is inclusive and accountable.

Our Melba, Our Future!
can be read in full on our website.

Along with the strategic plan we completed a project to refresh our logo and branding led by our new communications team. The revised logo maintains our long-standing Melba 'M'—representing the three groups that make up our organisation: the people we support, their families and our staff—but in a lively new design.



Another of the highlights of the year was the Able Bake House 'High Tea' in June 2019 attended by Catherine Andrews (the wife of Victoria's Premier), the Yarra Ranges Mayor and more than 100 guests. It was an excellent showcasing of the outstanding work done by the people we support and their Melba support team.

In February 2019 it was announced that a Royal Commission into violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability would be held. Melba issued a media release in strong support of a Royal Commission stating that the abuse and neglect of people with disability is shameful and totally unacceptable. The commission's work will span some three years and we hope it will result in important recommendations on policy and practice to address past systemic failures.

At our 47th AGM, held on 26 November 2018, we recognised several individuals through our annual awards. In the context of a Royal Commission that is highlighting tragic abuse, it is important to remember there are good things

happening and that Melba staff perform their jobs admirably.

Andrew Jeffrey is one such staff member who received the individual Stevenson's Award for his work which is above and beyond what is expected and his commitment to improving Sarah's life. Similarly, Olivia Angus and the Independent Supported Living team who are dedicated to Ben's supports and responding flexibly to his changing needs, were recognised when they were awarded the team Stevenson's Award. Indeed, we sincerely thank all staff who work at Melba for their skill, commitment and dedication.

Among the outstanding nominations of people we support, Liam Aberly from Ballarat won the Rebecca Britt award for his kindness and selflessness which come naturally to Liam. Liam consistently shows his concern for others, advocating on their behalf when necessary and actively seeking to help in any way he can. The confidence we have in the quality of services Melba provides was reinforced in September 2018 when we successfully completed our first quality audit with SAI Global. Additionally, throughout the year we actively participated in work by the NDS to promote their Zero Tolerance (of abuse and neglect) Framework. And in July 2018, the U.S.-based Council on Quality and Leadership's CEO, Mary Kay Rizzolo, wrote to us to designate Melba as a 'Global Ambassador of Quality'.

New directors Matthew Brett, Richard Frampton, Ilona Laurie-Rhodes and Jonathan Pickering were also elected at the 47th AGM replacing directors Dr John Annison, Brian Baker, Peter Vince and Rachel Waters each of whom either retired at or prior to the AGM. Graham Leaver has also since retired as a director after more than a decade on the Board. We acknowledge the excellent service provided by all Melba directors and their ongoing commitment to good governance along with our hard-working group of self-advocates, ARROW, who report to the Board annually. While not part of our formal governance arrangements, we were very pleased His Honour, Justice David O'Callaghan, accepted our invitation to take on the role of Melba's Ambassador. Throughout the year we maintained good relationships with a range of organisations that benefit Melba and the people we support. Of note are our partnerships and

work with Box Hill Institute, La Trobe University, Yarra Ranges Council, the Council on Quality and Leadership, SAI Global, Mt Evelyn and Districts Community Bank, the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner, National Disability Services, the Victorian Chemists Golf Club, Prescience Design, the Department of Health and Human Services, the NDIA, Jubilee Housing, Housing First, Community Lifestyle Accommodation, Guardian Living, Lilydale Uniting Church, Community Housing Limited, Anchor Incorporated, Inspiro, SACS Consulting, Pathways to Care, local schools, Volunteering Victoria and the Quest Trust.

We also want to pay a special tribute to the generosity of the Leaver family whose financial support permitted the construction of a new bus shelter at our Melba Avenue Lilydale site that we opened at a heart-warming function held in December. The bus shelter honours David Leaver who we supported for many years.

We also acknowledge the support we receive from our local Members of Parliament notably James Merlino MLA who provided much appreciated assistance during the year, along with Yarra Ranges Councillors, all of whom are great friends of Melba.

Finally, to the people and families who have made the decision to purchase services from Melba – thank you. You entrust us to provide the support that meets your unique needs and assists you to live the life you want. Melba. Living life!



**BEN
RENSHAW**

President and
Chair of the Board



**GLENN
FOARD**

Chief Executive
Officer