

inclusionmelbourne
believing. living. belonging



impact report 2023


CELEBRATING
75 YEARS



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supporting people
with intellectual
disability since

1948



snapshot

Inclusion Melbourne is Victoria's longest serving community-based support organisation supporting people with cognitive disability and those who are socially isolated.

We support people to build genuine relationships, discover and develop recreational and vocational skills, exercise full citizenship, and pursue meaningful opportunities for employment and further education.

We deliver:

1:1 direct support

NDIS Support Coordination

Award-winning social inclusion volunteer programs: Leisure Buddies and the Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme (ACVVS)

Training across various Pre-accredited, Accredited Courses and short courses in literacy, numeracy, work readiness and individualised support (disability and aged care)

We build skills and capacity in the people we support to plan for and take up valued roles with purpose in the community. Our Personal Vocational Journey approach allows us to create a tailored pathway for people with cognitive disability, including people with acquired brain injury (ABI).

We also assist hundreds of people with disability and their supporters to navigate the complexities of the NDIS – from coordinating a range of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) processes, preparing for NDIS planning and review meetings, and connecting people with individual and systemic advocacy.

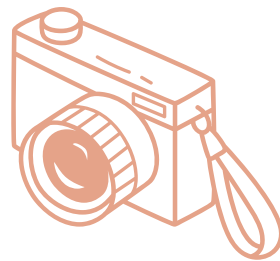
We have extensive experience delivering major collaborative, complex, user-led projects to improve outcomes for people with cognitive disability. The Inclusion Designlab – is our Centre for Policy, Research, Systemic Advocacy, and Quality and brings together people with a disability, community organisations, government, and leading disability researchers to develop, trial, implement new models of practice, in addition to supporting the ongoing development of our/other workforces.

Inclusion Melbourne delivers substantial training and consultancy across a range of sectors, including accessibility reviews, easy language translation, cognitively accessible website design, practice training, and quality reviews.

2023 marks 75 years since Inclusion Melbourne's humble beginnings as a group for children with intellectual disability and their families based in South Yarra.

Join with us as we celebrate 75 years of transformation and inclusion!

**CELEBRATING
75 YEARS**



mission & values

our vision

For people with cognitive disability and who are socially isolated, to live within inclusive communities, where everyone's participation is of value.

our mission

To partner with people to live a good life!



our values

individuality

A single person regarded as a unique personality, distinguished from others by special qualities

We will embrace individuality by:

- Acknowledging uniqueness and accepting differences in a non-judgemental manner
- Using a person-centred approach to meet the unique needs of each person
- Supporting people to make choices that build the lives they want
- Working with people in unique and personalised ways
- Respecting individual and family customs, practices, beliefs, traditions and heritage

integrity

To consistently act on sound moral principles

We will act with integrity by:

- Being respectful
- Doing what we say we'll do and being open about how we do it
- Being honest about what we can and cannot achieve
- Acting in a manner that is deserving of your trust
- Having skilled, competent and professional employees

potential

The inherent ability or capacity for growth

We will see the potential of all persons by:

- Believing that everyone has the potential to keep achieving more
- Ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities for development
- Understanding that overcoming obstacles is a necessary part of the journey to success

relationships

A significant connection existing between people and communities

We will foster relationships by:

- Being honest with each other
- Supporting and encouraging each other
- Connecting people with their community and nurturing new relationships
- Working together to solve problems
- Listening to each other to achieve mutual understanding
- Strongly believing that together people create better lives

**WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN
BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY**



president's report

2023 marks a watershed year for our sector with the handing down of the Royal Commission into Disability Report. Reflecting on the Vision stated at the front of the report 'Australia can be transformed into a more inclusive society that supports the independence of people with disability and their right to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation', I am proud to say has always been the aim of Inclusion Melbourne.

In addition, 2023 marked a new era for Inclusion Melbourne with the appointment of our CEO – Helen Williams. Helen has hit the ground running and has the mandate and support of the Board to improve the overall standing, particularly the financial sustainability of Inclusion Melbourne coming out of the transition to the NDIS.

Our service delivery model is unique and holistic. We support the individual through tailoring their support not only to their needs but to them as a person with a strong focus on independence, empowerment, access, respect, and inclusion.

The Inclusion Melbourne Board, our CEO and our team continue to strive to ensure that IM is a contemporary and responsive organisation. This is despite the significant funding and resourcing challenges we face, and we are not alone in this sector. Again, as the Royal Commission reports says for Australia's future and those living with a disability, we must ensure autonomy and access, and a person's right and choice to make decisions. This is the essence of what Inclusion Melbourne does.

With our history, strong brand, and increasing use of research and data driven evidence, Inclusion Melbourne is looking to shape the future of service provision to people who live with an intellectual disability. We are currently exploring a range of opportunities to grow our brand and service offering through research, looking for new partners and expanding our service offering by embracing new cohorts of people living with a disability to bring them into our community.

Whilst we have an eye to the future, we continue to remain true to our roots and past. Our volunteers are the backbone of our organisation, along with our fantastic team. We will continue to innovate, advocate for, communicate with and deliver quality services to our clients and their families.

Chris Allan

President



“ FOR... THOSE LIVING WITH A DISABILITY, WE MUST ENSURE AUTONOMY AND ACCESS, AND A PERSON'S RIGHT AND CHOICE TO MAKE DECISIONS. THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF WHAT INCLUSION MELBOURNE DOES. ”



Board Members

Chris Allan
Robert Crosthwaite
Paul Gleeson
Ellie Hearn
Mark Hearn
Beverley Jeffreys

CEO's report

As we reflect on the past year, it is with a mix of gratitude, resilience, and a deep sense of responsibility that I share with you our 2023 Impact Report. Since joining in December last year, I have been warmly welcomed by everyone. It has been inspiring to meet so many passionate people, tirelessly working to improve outcomes for people with cognitive disability.

The challenges we have all recently faced across the disability sector have been unprecedented, and yet, they have only strengthened our resolve to create a more inclusive society. They have tested our collective resilience in ways we could not have anticipated. For many of the people we support who were already facing unique challenges, navigating uncharted territories with limited resources was frightening. Our mission has been to remain present and to support people wherever and whenever they need it.

In the past year, organisations have faced numerous challenges navigating the transition of staff back to the workplace. Inclusion Melbourne proactively embraced a hybrid working model placing staff's health and well-being at the centre, maintaining employee engagement, focusing on ensuring seamless collaboration, and addressing logistical complexities.

It is important to acknowledge that post-pandemic impacts are extending far beyond the immediate health concerns of the last few years. Workforces have seen an increase in mental health conditions while pre-existing disparities have been magnified, highlighting an even more urgent need for systemic change. Recommendations in the recently released Final Report of the Disability Royal Commission have focused on a vision for a more inclusive Australia. In embracing this vision, we must now move past these challenges to recognise the opportunity for growth and transformation that lies ahead.



This Impact Report serves as an overview of our organisation's efforts, initiatives, and outcomes in fulfilling our mission of creating a society where every person, regardless of their abilities, can thrive and contribute meaningfully. We aim to provide a transparent and insightful account of our work, demonstrating our positive impact on the lives of people we support and their communities. Our dedicated team of professionals, volunteers, and supporters work tirelessly to ensure that every person we serve is at the centre of decision making and support planning, working together to pursue meaningful opportunities to build capacity and achieve goals.

Throughout this report, you will find compelling stories of personal growth, empowerment, and achievements of these individuals, highlighting various programs, services, and advocacy efforts that have been instrumental in promoting inclusivity and breaking down barriers.

Inclusion Melbourne has used this past year as a catalyst for change.

Our commitment to excellence is reflected in our systemic advocacy and collaborative partnerships with government agencies, community organisations, and businesses. We recognise that the deeply rooted issues faced by the disability sector require sustained effort and collaboration. Together, with our valued partners, we have been able to create innovative solutions, foster social integration, and drive positive change within the sector. A leading example being the first Political Inclusion National Summit to be run, this year.

As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of support for people with disability, we remain steadfast in our dedication to continuous improvement and innovation. This year we reviewed our strategic plan and sought innovative solutions to deepen our impact more broadly, exploring new avenues to enhance our services, leverage new technology, and adapt to the changing needs of the people we serve.



As we deepen the opportunity to build capacity for vocational aspirations for the people we support, Inclusion Melbourne has successfully consolidated previous inclusive employment knowledge, research, and learnings into a 'Personalised Vocational Journey' Roadmap. This consists of a comprehensive placement tool and an innovative framework that empowers individuals with cognitive disabilities to participate in the workforce actively and equitably, where agency is fostered, and supportive environments created that enable individuals to thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Our experienced NDIS support coordination work has been extended to deliver comprehensive assistance and guidance for cohorts with acquired and traumatic brain injuries, along with those who have multiple complex needs, ensuring these individuals have access to the necessary services, circles of support, and resources to achieve their goals and enhance their quality of life.

Inclusion Melbourne continues to deliver courses and services as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The highly experienced team at Inclusion Training delivers thoughtfully contextualised short courses, pre-accredited and accredited education and training that caters to the unique learning needs of people with learning difficulties, ensuring tailored support and opportunities for growth and employment.

Volunteering has always been the heart of our community and it remains alive and well in 2023. We consider ourselves incredibly fortunate to collaborate with an exceptional group of volunteers across our award-winning programs - Leisure Buddies, ACCVS Friendly Visitors, and Volunteer Tutors. They selflessly dedicate their time, energy, and unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of others.



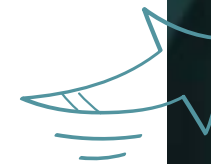
I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters whose unwavering commitment and passion have been instrumental as we have navigated these changes. I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our valued stakeholders, philanthropic supporters, and strategic partners for their trust, collaboration, and ongoing support.

In conclusion, I invite you to delve into this Impact Report and witness the profound impact Inclusion Melbourne has had on the lives of people with cognitive disability and those who are socially isolated. Together, let us continue to champion inclusivity, advocate for equal opportunities, and create a society where everyone can thrive.

In this our 75th year of service, I thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission.

Sincerely

Helen Williams
CEO



“
OUR DEDICATED TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS, VOLUNTEERS, AND SUPPORTERS WORK TIRELESSLY TO ENSURE THAT EVERY PERSON WE SERVE IS AT THE CENTRE OF DECISION MAKING AND SUPPORT PLANNING, WORKING TOGETHER TO PURSUE MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD CAPACITY AND ACHIEVE GOALS.



finance

Finance serves as the lifeblood of any organization, acting as the driving force that sustains and propels its mission forward. Within the context of Inclusion Melbourne, the role of finance is pivotal, shaping the contours of our ability to make a meaningful impact in the Australian disability services sector. My update delves into the financial landscape of our organisation, recognising this department’s integral role and shedding light on the ongoing efforts from us to help navigate challenges.

Financial Landscape

Embedded within the core of Inclusion Melbourne’s operational framework is the intricate dance of revenue recognition, resource allocation, and strategic financial management. This serves as the canvas upon which our organisation paints a vivid picture of dedication to enhancing the lives of individuals within the Australian disability community.

Stabilisation Measures

In recognition of the financial challenges that many Disability NFP’s are currently facing, Inclusion Melbourne is proactively implementing measures to stabilise its financial standing. These measures extend across various fronts, encompassing operational optimisation, strategic realignment, and broadening community engagement. By refining our internal processes and actively seeking external support, we aim to fortify the financial foundation upon which our impactful initiatives rest. These measures are crucial for the ensuring the impact we seek is constantly scaled and reaching more people within our community.

Challenges and Adaptive Strategies

Acknowledging the dynamic nature of financial landscapes, we keep our eye on any key challenges that demand adaptive strategies. Financial constraints, transparent communication, and a culture of innovation and adaptability are central tenets guiding our response. By embracing change and fostering an environment conducive to creative problem-solving, we work with our teams to position ourselves in the best place to weather any storms and emerge resilient.

Strategic Considerations for the Future

Looking ahead, Inclusion Melbourne is actively considering strategic measures to revitalize and ensure sustained impact:

Financial Resilience: Continue to explore avenues for financial restructuring, strategic partnerships, and ways to increase and diversify our revenue streams to ensure a resilient financial foundation.

Operational Excellence: Continuously identifying and implementing operational efficiencies to maximize impact with available resources.

Collaborative Partnerships: Seeking collaboration with external partners, government entities, and stakeholders to collectively address any financial challenges and strengthen our mission.

Valetta Fernandes

Head of Finance



case study

Jesse, one of the people we support, kindly volunteered to help us at a recent fundraising barbeque. One of our staff members Julia jumped at the chance to pick Jesse up and drop him off, as they have worked together for over 5 years. Whilst in the car on the way to Armadale Julia asked Jesse if he wanted to try collecting money from customers, as she knew Jesse was a little bit nervous about his money skills. Jesse was very reluctant to do this but through some gentle encouragement/ persuasion, he agreed to give it a try. Valetta and Julia both supported Jesse in collecting cash and using the POS system. He even managed to use the POS system independently while Valetta was away. Jesse was incredibly proud of himself and is now excited to perform the same duties when he volunteers with his local CFA branch when they rustle up some snags at the local Bunnings.



Inclusion Training delivers quality supported opportunities for education and training to people with cognitive disability. Courses provide skills and knowledge with the purpose of a vocational outcome.

Inclusion Training has two locations – Visy Cares Hub in Sunshine and Phoenix Park in Malvern East. Courses delivered include accredited, pre-accredited, non-accredited courses, and Skill Sets in the areas of literacy and numeracy, general education, transition education and work education. There are a variety of short courses relating to skill building, work readiness, digital skills, cooking skills, health and hygiene and everyday skills. Holiday programs are conducted in term breaks that have a learning focus combined with recreation.

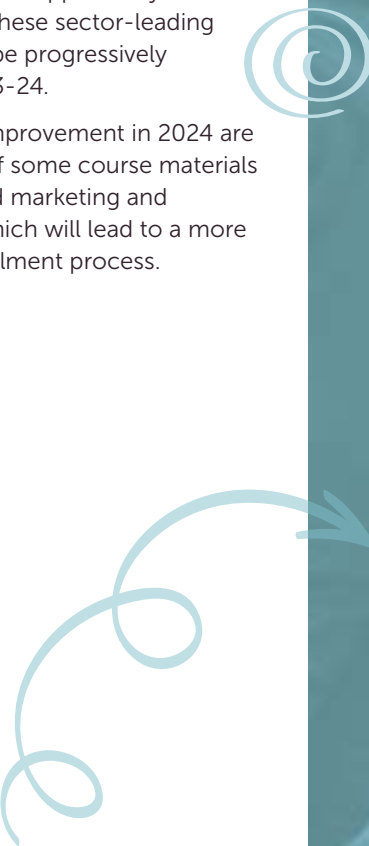
The services provided by Inclusion Training are unique in that they combine formal vocational education and training with direct support, underpinned by Inclusion Melbourne’s practice framework and a focus on long-term capacity building.

Inclusion Training’s growth strategy for the coming years will see the addition of new accredited courses to our official ‘Scope’. In 2024, FSK10119 Certificate I Access to Vocational Pathways will be available from mid-year. Two Skill Sets will also grow our offering to students – Stepping Up with 6 accredited units and Leaping into Work Preparation with 4 units. The aim of both courses is to provide potential students - mainly youth who have left school - with a short course and reinvigorate their enthusiasm for learning.



There will be an increased link with pathways to employment outcomes for all IT students. No matter which course is undertaken there will be an emphasis on providing access to a range of industries and occupations for students. Inclusion Melbourne has also launched its Personal Vocational Journey model, including the Work Opportunity Matching Tool. These sector-leading innovations will be progressively deployed in 2023-24.

Other areas of improvement in 2024 are the digitisation of some course materials and an enhanced marketing and branding plan which will lead to a more streamlined enrolment process.



our courses

2023 has seen the successful delivery of three accredited courses as well as pre-accredited and non-accredited programs at Sunshine campus for a total of 26 students.

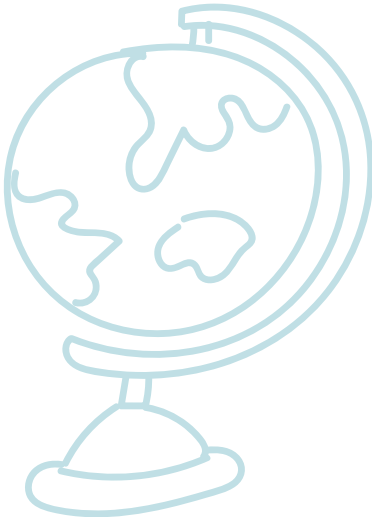
The accredited courses range from Certificate courses in Adult Literacy and Numeracy to Certificate I in Work Education. A total of 15 students are enrolled in these accredited courses.

The Adult Literacy and Numeracy courses support beginner skills in reading, writing and numeracy.

Prepare and present sandwiches and Prepare and serve espresso coffee allowed Work Education students to show off their gourmet sandwich and Barista making skills. This course will finalise the learning journey for 4 students by April 2024 with an expectation of volunteering roles or employment opportunities.

The non-accredited pilot program Work Ready Skills rolled out this year, contributed to personal development, problem solving, decision making and social network building skills through community volunteering programs times and the Nourish Project.

The Pre-accredited program aimed at enhancing literacy and numeracy skills. Students engaged in using digital devices, cooking healthy recipes, understanding mental health, social interactions and importance of a healthy lifestyle.



The non-accredited Skills development and Community access program is very popular with students. It focuses on holistic well-being, connecting with the community, nurturing talents& interests, valuing uniqueness, embracing differences and celebrating life.

Learners are engaged in literacy and numeracy components based on their everyday needs and interests. These and are closely linked with activities undertaken as part of community-based programs to maximise experiences and participation.

This program aims at capacity building skills of learners to negotiate daily life in the community through meaningful activities. Emphasis is laid on concrete experiences to develop independence and confidence by building on functional, problem solving and social network skills through teamwork, roleplay, and participation in community events



LEARNING JOURNEYS

Aarondeep and Salma

Both Aarondeep and Salma missed out joining the accredited Foundation Course in Adult Literacy & Numeracy at the start of 2023. Disappointed that they could not study a course with friends, both students then enrolled for the pre-accredited and Skills development program just so that they could learn new skills. Immensely enjoying these programs, both Aarondeep and Salma are now looking forward to joining the accredited Foundation Course in Adult Literacy & Numeracy in 2024 and enrolling for all 5 days on campus!



Shachin

A music buff but quiet and soft spoken, Shachin is currently studying Certificate I in Work Education. Acquiring new skills in food hygiene practices and preparing and presenting gourmet sandwiches which has helped Shachin gain newfound confidence. He now volunteers at Crossways once a week serving nourishing vegan food to hungry customers!



Helen

Helen graduated in December of 2022 after completing her Certificate I in Work Education with flying colours.

A star student at Inclusion Training - Sunshine campus - Helen always had the confidence and determination to go places. After graduating, Helen started actively seeking employment opportunities where she would be welcomed and accepted as part of a Team.

She got her first break (through APM employment agency) at the Rainbow Club. They are a disability services club based in Laverton.

Helen works as an admin staff at the Rainbow Club for 2 days a week. Her role involves doing computer and paperwork and few other office tasks.

Helen is also earning money which is the best part of her job!

Recently, she was awarded the title of 'Star Employee' which was a fantastic achievement and we're all very proud of her.

Vinh

Very shy and lacking in confidence, Vinh barely spoke a few familiar words in class. From not being able to hold a pencil, Vinh initially faced many challenges learning new skills. Today, in his second year on campus, Vinh is currently doing the Certificate I in Initial Adult Literacy & Numeracy course. With amazing confidence and clarity, Vinh now speaks entire sentences with friends and staff and is quite a genius with numbers and memorizing and rattling off important calendar dates and events.



Inclusion Designlab is Inclusion Melbourne’s centre for research and development, policy, projects and quality. Our team’s combined work and experience in community development projects, research partnerships, quality, practice training, communications, and project design is unique in Victoria’s disability sector. Coupled with our independent funding and direct engagement with the Inclusion Melbourne board, the team also functions as a semi-independent systemic advocacy body – one of only a handful across Australia.

Inclusion Designlab’s focus on quality management, political and electoral inclusion, oral health, LGBTIQA+ inclusion, Circles of Support and Microboards, quality consulting projects, and positive behaviour support has expanded this last year to include inclusion in local sports and recreation clubs, the intersection of oral health and speech pathology, and delivery of Inclusion Melbourne’s new practice framework and training.

In 2023 we farewelled two pivotal members of our team, Jenna Hepburn (Project Coordinator) and Marita Dunphy (Grants and Projects Officer). Jenna and Marita worked in Inclusion Designlab for more than 5 years and were instrumental in driving our Rainbow Inclusion, I Can Vote, and Your Dental Health projects.

In 2023-24, we look forward to expanding our political inclusion work at the national level and launching an exciting range of publications and initiatives in work placement matching, LGBTIQA+ organisational capacity building, and professional development for Australian dentists.



**INCLUSION DESIGNLAB IS
INCLUSION MELBOURNE’S
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT, POLICY,
SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY
AND QUALITY**

Our projects: 2022-23

pass it to me!

People with intellectual disability and inclusion in local sport and recreation

In partnership with Freedom Solutions Australia, and with funding from South East Water, we created a dual-read guide for people with intellectual disability, their supporters, and community sports organisations outlining the best ways to include people with intellectual disability in local sport.

People with intellectual disability are often unintentionally excluded from community sport through a lack of confidence and a lack of awareness and knowledge within sports clubs.

Incorporating case-studies gathered from sporting organisations Australia-wide, this guide breaks down these barriers, providing easy steps, resources and stories of success for sports clubs to become truly accessible and inclusive.



political inclusion national summit 2023

Coordinated by Inclusion Melbourne and University of Melbourne, with funding from Melbourne Disability Institute and sponsorship from Deakin University, Aruma, and Microboards Australia, we successfully delivered a ground-breaking two-day, accessible online National Summit which brought together experts and self-advocates to address the key drivers of political inclusion and exclusion of people with an intellectual and cognitive disability.

Featuring 33 speakers and project partners from advocacy organisations and self-advocacy groups, human rights organisations, government bodies, international experts and researchers, the National Summit provided an opportunity for more than 80 people with intellectual and cognitive disability to contribute to the creation of a national strategy to overcome disempowerment and marginalisation to create a more inclusive political culture and ensure all voices are heard.

The Summit established the conceptual groundwork for a national evidence-based project focused on building the civic and political self-advocacy capacity of people with intellectual disability through awareness raising, easy-language information systems and political education.



speech pathology guide for oral health and intellectual disability

We have continued to work with our partners to build on the work and outcomes of our interdisciplinary oral health project. We worked with Speech Pathology Australia, Dr Jo Watson (Deakin University), and self-advocates with disability to develop and refine the Disability and Oral Health Collaboration’s (DOHC) Oral Health and Disability Pathway for people with intellectual disability to include the unique input of Speech Pathologists.

This included developing a working group with oral health professionals, speech pathologists and people with intellectual disability and complex communication needs for co-design and prototyping of the Guide. We collated recent research and existing materials relating to speech pathology and oral health, incorporating feedback from Speech Pathology Australia and a representative of the Australian Dental Association (Victorian Branch) in the development.

With support from the Borrodell Bequest, we produced the Oral Health, Disability, and Speech Pathology Guide for speech pathologists and dental practitioners.

This collective body of work has enabled us to advocate for and update the NDIS Commission Practice Alert for Oral Health, while our advocacy led to the inclusion of a new competency in supported decision making and positive behaviour support in the Australian Dental Council’s (ADC) competencies for new dental practitioners.



quality and practice

Inclusion Designlab coordinates Inclusion Melbourne’s quality management system, continuous improvement meetings, Board Quality and Risk Services sub-committee, NDIS Practice Standards audits, and Feedback and Complaints processes.

In 2022-23, Inclusion Designlab prepared the organisation for its NDIS Registration 18-month review audit. Several areas of the organisation undergoing review to ensure our digital systems, consumer experience, and outcome measurement processes were robust enough to ensure the people we support can achieve their goals, build their capacity, and experience Inclusion Melbourne as safe and reliable.

The past year also saw Inclusion Designlab consolidate Inclusion Melbourne’s Practice Framework, with five face-to-face or online sessions delivered to all staff and new practice management and measurement strategies deployed across the organisation. 2023-24 will see the Practice Framework adapted for external organisations for delivery through consultancy.



partners, advisers, and funders

Academic, peak body and collegiate organisation partners and funders in 2022-23 included a combination of long-term partners and a range of new organisations:



We also thank our international collaborators:



Inclusion Designlab’s staff were members of the following panels and advisories:

- Deakin University: Graduate Courses Advisory Committee
- Disability Oral Health Collaboration (and DOHC National Intellectual Disability Health Roadmap Subgroup)
- City of Brimbank Disability Network Group
- NDIA Independent Advisory Council: Intellectual Disability Reference Group
- State-wide Disability Network for Culturally Diverse Communities: Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV)
- Curtin University: Advisory Committee for Graduate Positive Behaviour Support Courses
- (As chair) National Community of Practice for Circles of Support and Microboards

support coordination

Over the last 12 months, the Inclusion Melbourne Support Coordination Team has continued to assist participants to manage their NDIS plans and funding, but more importantly, has assisted participants and their families to imagine a better life for themselves, and utilise their funding creatively to work towards their ideal future. Our Support Coordinators have a unique ability to “think outside the box” when connecting participants to supports, and have an established network of like-minded Providers who we can link participants with.

Our Team consists of committed, enthusiastic Support Coordinators with a vast array of expertise and backgrounds. We have Support Coordinators who are highly skilled in NDIS Home and Living applications and sourcing supported

accommodation, and others who have specific interest in working with participants with certain conditions such as (but not limited to) Autism, ABI, and Cerebral Palsy.

Some highlights of this year have included our Team undertaking training in Individualised Living Options (ILO), a new NDIS Funding model that allows participants more choice and control over where they live, and who they live with. Another highlight has been collaborating with our internal Direct Supports department and Inclusion Training campuses to set up participants with opportunities in their local communities such as joining local sports clubs, valued learning opportunities, along with volunteer and paid work.

Moving into the new year, our Support Coordination team will be focusing on widening our participant base, and supporting people who may not be eligible for NDIS funding, but require our special skill set to make positive change in their lives and address social isolation and adaption to an acquired disability. Inclusion Melbourne hopes to use our expertise and person-centered practice to assist people who receive support through other government funding streams, or who are privately funded.

Below are a few stories about how our Support Coordination Team has supported participants to work towards their long-term goals:



Insights from our Support Coordinators

“ I was able to support a participant to work towards his NDIS goals of being able to play a valued role in his community, meet more people, be happy and to live a good life.

This participant moved from participating in a day program 5 days a week by envisioning a better life for themselves with a wish to volunteering somewhere in the community. Through effective utilisation of support coordination hours, care team meetings were facilitated, the right providers engaged, and with support this participant reduced the number of days they spent at their day program and now spends two days a week in the mainstream community, in a volunteering role working with horses.

They have met many new people and both them and their family have reported being much happier, and growing in confidence.

”

“ I supported a woman who experienced a significant change of situation and was admitted to hospital and it was deemed unsafe for her to return to her Supported Independent Living accommodation. Her parents had passed away and her immediate family lived interstate and she decided she would like to move interstate to be closer to her family.

I provided choice and control sourcing accommodation to meet her preferences interstate, e.g. location, close to public transport, study, community activities and assisted her to develop a short list. She attended video calls with her top three with my assistance and then chose her preferred provider to move to. I submitted recommendations from her therapists and supported her to put forward her wishes and to amend her NDIS goals to give her more independence and further build her skills.

I supported her to liaise with the hospital liaison officer and requested a plan review meeting and she received a healthy NDIS plan that supported her transition interstate, including Medium Term Accommodation so she could discharge from hospital.

”

community support

Community Support at Inclusion Melbourne recruits, trains, and mentor’s volunteers for three key volunteering programs. These being Leisure Buddies, Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) and Tutors at our Phoenix Park & Sunshine sites.

We are very fortunate to work with a wonderful cohort of volunteers who give their time, energy, and commitment to improve the lives of others. This is a very generous gift they give to our community, and we thank them very much. It is truly appreciated.

Our award-winning **Leisure Buddies** service links a volunteer with an adult NDIS participant with a cognitive disability. Leisure Buddies are matched according to several factors, such as where they live and shared interests. Volunteers support participants to achieve goals relating to:

- Social participation and inclusion
- Community access & engagement
- Experiencing new activities
- Development of new skills

This service creates unique opportunities for participants to make new friends, have fun and complements more traditional relationships such as family and paid support.

Inclusion Melbourne is an Auspice for the **Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme** and are funded by the Department of Health. This scheme assists older Australians living at home with an in-home care package who may be feeling alone or isolated due to mobility, fragility, or communication issues. We support volunteers to provide one to one friendship and companionship through fortnightly visits.

Our **Tutors** assist our training sites at Phoenix Park in Malvern East and the Visy Centre in Sunshine. They invest their time and energy to assist the students with their work on an individual basis and form a wonderful relationship with them.

Within the Community Support team, we pride ourselves on our skill to facilitate relationships between participants and volunteers to create friendships that are life changing and meaningful.

We recognise the service of our milestone volunteers for 2023 and they are:

Marcia Fyson Tutor	15 years
Melissa Masutti Leisure Buddy	10 years
Yao Wang Leisure Buddy	10 years
Peter Adams Leisure Buddy	05 years
Carolyn den Hartog Tutor	05 years
Peter McLeod ACVVS	05 years

We thank them very much for their commitment and service to our community. **Their volunteering has changed lives.**



leisure buddies

In April 2022 Community Support matched Emmy with Trevor and since then they have formed a true friendship where they are able to share and enjoy activities together. Emmy has often commented that she enjoys spending time with Trevor and making his life better and with her volunteering she has gained much more then she has given.

Emmy and Trevor’s outings have included trips to the theatre, coffee’s and lunches. Emmy frequently remarks she has developed a true friendship with Trevor because he is such a lovely person and the time she spends with him is enjoyable and fun. I often chat to Trevor about his volunteer Emmy and it is truly wonderful to see his face light up with happiness whenever her name is mentioned.

tutors

Earlier this year we recruited a Volunteer Tutor for Phoenix Park to attend classes on a Friday. Steven’s motivation for volunteering stemmed from a wish to gain practical experience within a community setting after completing his university degree. Since Steven has started his tutoring he has been helping a student called Elizabeth and through his help she has been able to concentrate better in class and has made significant progress with her learning.

Steven has commented that seeing this change in Elizabeth has been the highlight of his volunteering and a very rewarding experience for him.

aged care volunteer visitors scheme

Mary and Katy were matched nearly a year ago. Mary who is in her 80’s, was feeling lonely. Her husband passed away several years ago and increasing health problems have caused her to be more isolated. Volunteer Katy is able to visit Mary regularly wanting to give back to her community and find fulfillment on a personal level.

Mary and Katy share a passion for gardens and both enjoy coffee, cake and a good chat. A beautiful friendship has blossomed. Katy provides a great example of our volunteers going the extra mile. She noticed that Mary’s arms were covered in scratches, caused by her beloved dog’s long nails. Katy arranged an extra visit to take Mary and her dog to the vet so that they can continue to enjoy cuddles!

MILESTONE VOLUNTEERS

marcia fyson / 15 years

Marcia congratulations on this wonderful milestone you have been such a wonderful support to our students and played an instrumental role in caring, helping and advocating for our students.

I feel it would be amiss of us not to acknowledge the most wonderful friendship you had with Danielle and the positive impact you had on her life. It was truly the most amazing bond.

The sincerity of your interactions with students and your genuine enjoyment of their company provide witness of how inclusive relationships can enrich the lives of everyone concerned.

Thank you for your wonderful contribution to our community by your volunteering in the past 15 years and for making sure our students are well cared for and have the assistance they need to make the most of their time at Phoenix Park.



yao wang / 10 years

Yao you were one of the first volunteers recruited when we commenced the Leisure Buddy program and you have been loyal to Inclusion Melbourne through many changes over the years.

Prior to your match with your current buddy Li you have supported three other participants and you are able to connect with people who have limited speech or are nonverbal.

Yao you are an absolute pleasure to have as a volunteer with Inclusion Melbourne. You are kind, dedicated and caring.

Thank you for your wonderful contribution to our community by your volunteering and for making a difference.

We really appreciate your loyalty, commitment and support to this program throughout your 10-years of service



melissa masutti / 10 years

Melissa, we congratulate you on this special milestone of 10 years of volunteering at Inclusion Melbourne.

We believe that you embody all the skills and qualities needed as a volunteer. You are kind, caring, reliable, patient and we acknowledge the very valuable contribution you have made to our community.

Since March 2018, you have developed a beautiful friendship with Antonia where you have supported her in becoming more independent in the community. This has changed her life for the better.

We thank you for so very much for your 10 years of volunteering where you have always demonstrated your belief that people with a disability should have equal access to inclusion and social participation.

direct support

Inclusion Melbourne’s Direct Support professionals are committed to fostering a service delivery that goes beyond mere assistance; it is a dedicated effort to empower individuals in their journey toward attaining a valued identity within their local community. We believe in the transformative power of establishing meaningful roles, allowing each person we support to contribute in ways that are personally fulfilling and socially significant. Through tailored support, our team endeavours to not only develop but also extend the skills, competencies, and networks of those we serve, ensuring they become active, engaged members of their community.

In essence, our service delivery is a collaborative process that seeks to unlock potential, promote inclusion, and build a foundation for lasting connections and personal growth.

Our Direct Support professionals provide 1:1 community access where they work closely with the people we support to promote the dignity, independence, choices, rights and responsibilities of each person; supporting their achievement of goals and personal development. They also support Trainers and Assessors across both campuses of our Inclusion Training RTO to deliver programs to participants in the classroom.

Our Community Inclusion and Vocational Officers are responsible for locating, implementing and developing community inclusion opportunities for people with cognitive and intellectual disability. They create and successfully implement opportunities for people with disabilities to be included in typical day-to-day activities which reflect the ordinary rhythms and patterns of life as experienced by other members of the community without disability. Either through social access, volunteering opportunities or employment.

Our Direct Support team is unique as we do not have a ‘day service’ program for the participants we work with. We provide tailored support for the people we support in the following ways:

- We work with you to create opportunities and explore possibilities
- Our services are designed and tailored to fit you
- We focus on partnering to build and achieve a good life within local communities
- All of our activities occur in the home and community – the place where friendships and experiences are made

Our Practice and Vocation Lead works closely with the people we support to establish valued roles as part of their vocational aspirations, through the development of a personalised vocation journey roadmap. Whether that’s being a volunteer, an entrepreneur, or working at a chosen workplace , we support them to develop and extend their skills and competencies, as well as their informal networks within the community. It is important to provide everyone we work with the opportunity to dream and be enabled to explore what a vocational pathway could be for them.



jesse & the CFA

We have supported Jessie to become part of a well-respected volunteering community with the CFA. He attends weekly meetings, is involved in their fundraising days and now regularly supports the team with washing their trucks every Sunday. He is very much part of the team. This volunteer role has allowed him help others in the community, which provides a natural sense of accomplishment. His role as a volunteer has also given him a sense of pride and identity.



afi's dream factory

The Direct Support team supported a budding performing artist who was one of the people we support to perform at the Melbourne Fringe Festival. His performance was called 'Dream Factory', an immersive performance installation that transports you into the real and imagined worlds of Neurodiverse and mixed ability artists. Inspired by Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland, his performance explored themes of isolation, connection, and the longing for escapism. We worked closely with the Rollercoaster Theatre group who are an independent, not-for-profit theatre company of trained actors formed to counter the extreme lack of employment opportunities for people with mixed abilities within the arts. Through their performances they broadly challenge held misconceptions of disability, using their work as a platform for actors to create theatre and film that defies expectations and challenges stereotypes.

Through working with them we have seen the people we support feel significantly increased levels of self-worth, purposefulness and personal autonomy. Their work celebrates diverse perspectives and bring marginalised voices to the fore. Inclusion Melbourne and the people we support really enjoy and value working with them.





people, performance & culture

People are our asset - PPC's focus has been on building a productive, passionate, and accountable workforce in response to post pandemic markets, and resolving previous social isolation for staff by introducing a hybrid-working model. We continue to welcome employees as they return to the office post pandemic and aim to achieve a sustainable balance of accommodating individual flexibility arrangements while addressing the need for team collaboration.

As an employer of choice, we ensure that our people are at the forefront of our decision making and are responsible for driving our purpose and impact goals for the future.

Our newly introduced weekly all-staff meetings are an opportunity to bring our IM community together to share updates and good news stories across the organisation.

staff health and well-being initiatives

In addition to the wellbeing initiatives documented in our employee value and benefits section below, we continue to hold employee health and wellbeing as a key matter of importance for the organisation. To assist in protecting our workforce throughout cold/flu season and COVID outbreaks, we encourage employees to receive the most recent vaccines while Inclusion Melbourne covers the cost. This aims to reduce absenteeism and protect our staff and loved one's health in addition to reducing service disruption for our participants.

We continue to follow Government legislation regarding vaccination evidence and document retention laws to protect the data of our employees.



special projects and workforce development

The highly anticipated onboarding software for HR was launched this financial year which proved to be a game-changer for automating the department's processes. This software is used by our new recruits and payroll/finance, as well as HR, so it was vital that this tool was seamlessly integrated with multiple process, people and software prior to launching. It has been well received by not just the HR department, but the new recruits joining our organisation at that exciting time of signing their contract!

In alignment with our new strategic direction we have undergone a consolidation of roles and departments to enable a streamlining of services and deeper collaboration across service delivery points. We have worked closely with all staff as part of this change management process, from the beginning, during staff consultation; to rolling out new positions and welcoming new employees to the organisation.

We are committed to developing our workforce, from an initial tailored onboarding process to ongoing practice training and regular coaching and mentor sessions. Our RTO Inclusion Training also offers our staff the opportunity to study whilst they work with us, to improve their qualifications whilst gaining valuable on the job experience.

employee value and benefits

Financial

Our employees are eligible to salary package which maximises their nett pay by accessing tax benefits. Increasing our employee's take home pay is a financial benefit that we offer all our employees via an outsourced agent, AccessPay.

We continue to offer the Flare benefits program to all employees. This is an online tool that provides discount vouchers for leisure and retail outlets and facilities. This year, Flare launched its newly developed app which increased accessibility for shopping vouchers, as well as offering wellbeing tutorials, a wellbeing calendar of events, collections of expert, quality content covering topics like resilience, financial wellbeing, stress and more, which underpins our wellbeing program.

Through Flare and AccessPay, our permanent employees have a choice of novated leasing options to pay for vehicle expenses pre-tax.

Wellbeing

Employees are supported in an environment where we encourage open communications. Regular meetings with Managers as well as informal catch ups have been instrumental in creating strong foundations between reporting lines.

The continuation of the Mental Health First Aid Officer role has seen support offered digitally through regular updates on the Wellbeing SharePoint site, as well as support on an individual basis. We aim to see the expansion of this role next year with an additional resource trained to offer this unique support to the organisation's workforce.

Our EAP provider's, the Delta Centre, continue to offer counselling services to our employees. We outsource this to external professionals as another option of support for our most valued assets; our people.



service awards

The following employees were presented with certificates & vouchers at the IM Retreat Day.

10 years / Suzanne Lau Gooley

05 years / Julia Rundle
Belle Le
Stacey Boyd
Wendy John
Khagendra Gurung
Michelle Hall
Theresa Breen



volunteers

Someyeh Anari	Abeer Hassanein	Lefteris Patlamazoglou	Trina Findlay
Daniel Andreotti Andreotti	Michael Hawkins	Joel Pearce	Katherine Bastow
Katherine Bastow	Steph Hislop	Suzannah Pearce	Bree Dahlmann
Rania Bishay Bishay	Jalisa Hodgson	Claire Pedersen	Jenny Duong
Amber Bowman	Emma Holder	Minh Pham	Someyeh Anari
Sophie Boyd	Primrose Holland	Hung Pham	Walter Hanna
Christian Brett	Deborah Holmes	Aarani Rajmohan	Minh Pham
Katherine Cail	Linda Hughes	Pete Riley	Jalisa Hodgson
Amber Cardwell	Barbara Hutchinson	Carol Robinson	Peter Fisher
Kylie Castan	Zeeshan Hyder	Hannah Rumble	Victoria Fleiszig-Marton
Yoanna Chan	Elena Ivanishko	Amy Sandler Roberts	Katherine Cail
Rhonda Chang	Hayley Jobson	Max Schoffelen	Ruby De Luca
Sarah Coakley	Abdelrahman Katamesh	Christine Scott	Fur Lama
Sarah Curtis	Katamesh	Rinu Sebastian	Vu Phuong Uyen (Ellie)
Bree Dahlmann	Soumella Konstantinidis	Janet Self	Aarani Rajmohan
Nur Ezzati Daud	Stephanie Koochew	Joel Smith	Steven Groves
Rachel Davis	Cherisha Koshy	Justin Smyrk	Angela Panettieri
Richard Day	Anastasia Kossivas	Jien(Jin) Son	Abeer Hassanein
Ruby De Luca	Kenley Kuoch	Edwina Torok	Leanne Land
Rebekah Delahoy	Paul Kurta	Natalie Townsend	Rania Bishay
Carolyne Den Hartog	Oliver Lacy	Kevin Tran	Paul Kurta
Renuka Dharmaratne	Shirley Lai	Marek Turski-Szendzielarz	Michael Hawkins
Jenny Duong	Natalie Lake	Vu Phuong Uyen	Daniela Veytia Cortes
Graham Edwards	Fur Lama	Daniela Veytia Cortes	Tess Fisher
Niki Esler	Leanne Land	Yao Wang	Steph Hislop
Rosita Fernandes	Andrew Lawton	Emily Watling	Hung Pham
Trina Findlay	Alison Lever	Frances Wheeler	Robert Wilson
Peter Fisher	Briony Lewis	Yen Woo	Keeleigh Grant
Tess Fisher	John Lloyd	Jordan Wright	Jordan Wright
Victoria Fleiszig-Marton	David Luffman	Nelson Yeung	Cherisha Koshy
Narelle Furner	Tess Lynch	Ivan Zulman	Hayley Jobson
Marcia Fyson	Brian Lynch	Dragana Georgioska	Abdelrahman Katamesh
Mona Gendy	Mallory Martel	Alison Lever	Daniel Andreotti
Dragana Georgioska	Melissa Masutti	Jess Harrison	
Michelle Glanville	Emma McCaul	Edwina Torok	
Shane Golden	Peter McLeod	Rachel Davis	
Joanne Gooren	Aoife McNair	Natalie Townsend	
Keeleigh Grant	Elizabeth (Libby) Meagher	Claire Pedersen	
Steven Groves	Shana Miller	Kenley Kuoch	
Steven Hains	Mike Moffat	Aoife McNair	
Walter Hanna	Jack Moloney	Jien(Jin)Son	
David Harper	Dot Nathan	Amber Cardwell	
Jess Harrison	Jane O'Loughlin	Mona Gendy	
	Angela Panattieri		



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believing. living. belonging

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