

anowah



Annual  
Report  
2021



# Annual Report 2021

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## Welcome from the chair

On behalf of the Board, I am very pleased to present the Anowah 2020-2021 Annual Report. We have successfully worked through a difficult and very unique year. There has been continuous and complex change at all levels which we have navigated – the Board, Senior Staff, our overall strategy, and throughout the Operations team. Not to mention working through the uncertainty, complexity and constancy of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 financial year result for Anowah was a deficit of just over \$200K. During this year Anowah struggled to align labour costs with invoicing for services delivered. This is something we are now focusing on as an organisation, and are confident that Anowah will return to sustainable operations in the 2022 financial year.

We express our sincere gratitude to Frank Hawkes and Vera Banschikoff, who both resigned as Directors from the Anowah Board after many decades of dedicated service. Their contributions have been enormous over a long period of time, and they will continue to have a lasting legacy over Anowah. Frank has served in all Board roles during his time, resigning at the end of June 2021. Vera was most recently our Chairperson until her resignation in February 2021.

Anowah welcomes Caron Rooks as a Director to Anowah. Caron commenced her Directorship in July 2021, bringing a wealth of experience in the social services and education sectors. Caron has held senior roles with the Smith Family, National Disability Services (the peak body for our sector), and Disability Services Australia – bringing valuable experience, connections and knowledge of our sector and its various challenges.

One of the most significant events of the year was the departure of our respected CEO, Carole Turnbull. Carole has had decades of involvement with Anowah as an active family member (mother) of one of our clients, and she fulfilled this role for 8 years. In that time, Carole executed her financial and accounting skills to full value - navigating Anowah through the massive transition to the NDIS, and applying a meticulous approach to ensuring Anowah's financial future is secure. Carole was also instrumental in driving our Constitution change (Nov 2020), and our

change in company structure - from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

We farewelled Carole – among many stories and tears of sadness, laughter and nostalgia, trepidation, and appreciation – in March 2021. Once again Carole, on behalf of the Board thank you for your dedicated service to Anowah as CEO.

In finding a replacement for Carole, the Board applied a robust recruitment process that resulted in the appointment of Debbie Eisenhauer-Rodney in March 2021. In a short period of time, Debbie has worked tirelessly to get to know the staff and team, our clients, and of course the Board. We are really pleased with her professionalism and leadership, and her enthusiasm and thirst to get a range of initiatives up and running.

Members will also be aware that in 2020-2021 the Board set itself the target of preparing our next Strategic Plan. I take the opportunity to acknowledge the tireless work of Debbie in taking the lead on this, facilitating, and steering the Board and staff through the process. While the Strategic Plan was shared with Members in September/October 2021, most of the heavy lifting to get us there was performed in March to June 2021.

Finally, to my Board colleagues (current and resigned) – thank you and congratulations on your commitment and care for Anowah, your dedication to our meetings and discussions, and your willingness to work collaboratively, always acting in the best interests of Anowah.



## Message from the new CEO

### Debbie Eisenhauer-Rodney

I feel honored to be in the role of CEO of Anowah, such a wonderful organization with a great history. I have been overwhelmed by the support I have received from the Anowah team who have helped me “find my legs”, and I have truly enjoyed meeting the amazing clients that we support.

I was only on board for a short period of time when the COVID Delta variant sent us all in to lock down once again, but the capable and committed Anowah team managed the transition to working remotely seamlessly and we have continued to deliver quality service, keep our Anowah clients safe, and even deliver on many elements of our new strategic plan. I am looking forward to the opportunity to connect in person with family and other members of Anowah as we come out of lockdown, and to opening up Anowah once again to involve family, friends and carers in future activities.



## The year that was

COVID has been a significant disruptor to the whole of the world, to Australia and to disability services. People with a disability are generally much more vulnerable to severe illness than the average population, in fact, data from the UK indicates that people with disability are 2 to 3 times more likely to experience severe illness or death from COVID than the average population.

Anowah has been vigilant in managing risk throughout this COVID roller coaster, now even more concerning with the Delta variant. Despite a poorly managed roll out of vaccine to people with disability by the Commonwealth Government, Anowah managed to be among the first group of disability service providers to organize an onsite vaccination hub. We were able to get clients and staff fully vaccinated early in the Delta outbreak, and this gave our clients some level of protection even though we are in one of the LGAs which had the highest case numbers.

We would like to extend thanks to our staff who worked in difficult circumstances following strict and tiring infection control protocols, and who had uncomfortable COVID tests every 72 hours. We would also like to thank families and carers of Anowah clients who were unable to spend face to face time with their loved ones for many months, in order to keep everyone safe. Your patience and cooperation made our job just that little bit easier.

Hopefully as we move forward to “COVID normal”, with access to vaccinations and improving treatments for COVID patients, we will be able to enjoy a more balanced life with access to the community and all the great things our wonderful country has to offer.



# Interview with Phillip

**Phillip is a client of Anowah who lives with friends in one of our community houses.**

For many years he worked for Hoxton Industries and has recently retired.

Interviewer: Phillip, would you mind telling us how old you are

Phillip: I turn 67 this year.

Interviewer: I hear you recently retired from work?

Phillip: Yes.

Interviewer: What was the best part of working at Hoxton Industries?

Phillip: Making friends, and I enjoyed having cake at my Farwell.

Interviewer: Phillip, do you like football

Phillip: I love football and my favourite team is Parramatta.

Interviewer: If you could go any where in the world where would you go?

Phillip: A park to have a picnic, in the city with my favourite food.

Interviewer: So what is your favourite food?

Phillip: Pasta - Spaghetti Bolognese!



## Strategic Planning

Anowah's Strategic Plan needed updating and enhancement. In order to develop the FY22 Strategic Plan, the Board requested that a comprehensive consultation and review process be undertaken. Consultation included involvement of staff from various levels within the organisation plus the Anowah Board, with the consultation being facilitated by the CEO. The review process included our previous Strategic Plan (2015-2019), scans of current NDIS literature, contemporary research on

models of disability support, as well as an understanding of local and regional challenges and opportunities generally. The Anowah Board felt this was important due to the complex regulatory environment in which Anowah operates, as well as current challenges facing Anowah as an organisation.

The basis of the Strategic Plan was developed ready for Member consultation by the end of FY21.

## Secure and Enhanced Technology

During the last quarter of the 2021 financial year, we further enhanced our use of technology. Data security is important to all organisations, and in particular to organisations such as Anowah where client information is required to be kept confidential, and retained for many years. Cloud based systems where data is saved to secure offsite data centres, and backed up in real time, provides the most effective and secure storage whilst being cost effective. This type of storage also allows data to be accessed from any location – a great benefit during the latest COVID lockdown. Prior to the end of the 2021 financial year we completed the following projects:

- Transitioning our payroll system to a secure cloud based system. This

means the system can be accessed from any location by our payroll officer, and has secure back up and storage of all data and our configuration of the payroll system.

- Transitioning our finance system across to a cloud based finance system. This transition was completed by 30th June 2021, enabling us to start the new financial year with our new cloud based system. This finance system has also provided us with enhanced reporting capability, giving us much better visibility of our performance at the service and site level.

- Many of our important documents were stored on local computers with local back up. We have now transferred all documents, including our quality system with all policies and procedures on to a cloud based Sharepoint folder

platform that can be accessed by all staff, from any location. Access is permission based, so everyone can access and store documents relevant to their role, and there is a single source of truth for all controlled documents. Document security has been enhanced, with secure storage and continuous real time back up of Anowah's stored information.

-We have enhanced our use of our Office 365 software licenses, and all staff are now actively collaborating via Microsoft Teams.

These improvements to technology have enabled us to remain productive and connected during the periods where all non-client facing staff have been required to work from home.

It also meant that our day service could be delivered remotely, with our clients engaging with each other and having activities coordinated and facilitated via Microsoft Teams.



Microsoft Teams.

## Some important numbers

**\$4.65 million**

Supported Independent  
Living Income

**\$556 thousand**

NDIS Community Support  
Income

**\$366 thousand**

CAS / DAY Program Income



**151,700**

Number of support hours



**23**

Number of clients



**70**

Number of Staff



**Kerrie-Anne is a long term client who lives with friends at an Anowah community house.**

**Kerrie Anne was happy to join in on an interview recently and gave some surprising answers.**

Interviewer: How old are you?  
Kerrie Anne: Not telling (with a cheeky smile)

Kerrie-Anne said she loves going to day service to see all her friends and she loves seeing the staff because they are her friends too.

Interviewer: What's your favourite food?

Kerrie Anne: Fish and chips (jumping up and down and pointing her finger) and "don't forget the chips".

Interviewer: Where is your favourite place to go

Kerrie Anne: To the cinema to watch a movie.

Interviewer: Do you like the football

Kerrie Anne: I only go for Parramatta in the football because they are the best!

Interviewer: Do you like the football

Kerrie Anne: I only go for Parramatta in the football because they are the best!



## Interview with Kerrie-Anne



## Supporters we thank you

In January and June Anowah was able to purchase two new vehicles with the generous support of Chris Bowen (Federal member for McMahon) through the Stronger Communities Grants Scheme and Tanya Davies (NSW member for Mulgoa) through the Community Building Partnership Grants Scheme. These two vehicles replaced two of our aged and unreliable vehicles providing much safer, comfortable transport for our clients.

On Tuesday 29th September 2020 Tanya attended Anowah for a cheque presentation of funds from the Community Building Partnership Grant for the new vehicle. President, Vera, Public Officer, Helen, and staff Nancy and Bev were in attendance to accept the cheque. Tanya was happy with the vehicle and stated it was good to see what the funds were used for.

Thank you so much to the members of the St Johns Park Social Club, who, once again, through their own fund raising efforts, raised funds which enabled them to purchase some furniture items for Anowah. Anowah clients were very excited to receive their lovely new furniture items just in time for Christmas. Thank you St Johns Park Social Club for your ongoing support of the Anowah organization.

Our 2020 Club Grants Funding successful submission for Recreation and Leisure Program was supported by Cabra Vale Diggers. Thank you so much Cabra Vale Diggers for your continued support.

**Rotary**   
Club of Wetherill Park

## Looking forward

Anowah is a wonderful, family focused organisation with a great history. We are excited to be involved in a dynamic sector that is changing and recognizing the fundamental rights of people with disability. This provides great opportunity to support our clients to achieve authentic social inclusion that may not have been possible in the past. For Anowah to continue to support people with disability into the future, we need to continue to strengthen our foundations. Like all organisations, this requires ongoing change – and the Board has recognised that this comes in a range of key areas for our next Strategic Plan period.

### A refreshed purpose

Many organisations are choosing to articulate their purpose, in addition to their mission and vision, and this is becoming an expectation of clients and potential employees within our sector. They want to ensure they align themselves with an organization that has a purpose that resonates with them.

Organizations in the disability sector tend to have Mission and Vision statements that are quite similar and reflect current policy settings – Anowah’s Mission and Vision

statement falls in to this category. Articulating a new “Purpose Statement” has provided Anowah with the opportunity to think about how it would differentiate itself from other providers. After a great deal of discussion across all levels of the organization, we have developed the following purpose statement:

**We support authentic social inclusion of people with disability so they are active and engaged citizens of Sydney’s Third City**

This purpose statement will inform how we deliver our services as we move forward. “Authentic social inclusion” and the concept of citizenship are key challenges that will stretch us to constantly innovate, listen to our clients, and build stronger community connections. To achieve this, we will need to upskill our staff, move beyond traditional models of service, and play a stronger role in advocating for our clients when ever they do not have equal access to community resources, employment or education as others in the community.

This is a significant challenge for Anowah, but one that we are all excited to be working toward.

## **Evolving our engagement with clients, Members and key stakeholders.**

We believe it is important to amplify the voice of our clients, and further develop our engagement with families, members and other key stakeholders.

For clients, we are working on implementing a Client Voice Framework which includes the establishment of a Client Committee with an experienced external facilitator, Our first Client Committee meetings with external facilitation will be held prior to the end of the 2021 calendar year.

Beyond this, we are developing a wider Stakeholder Engagement Framework which addresses the who, how, when and what topics we will consult on.

### **Improving, innovating and widening our service offering (aligned to future needs of people with disability)**

Now that the NDIS has been fully rolled out for nearly 3 years in NSW, people with disability are developing maturity as consumers, and they are looking for services that suit their individual needs and preferences.

Disability service providers need to be innovative in the design of their service offerings, and the onus is on the providers to do this to stay relevant. Providers also need a solid understanding of and alignment with the future directions of NDIS policy and contemporary views on person centered service design.

### **Remaining relevant to our current client cohort, and being attractive to a new cohort of clients.**

Anowah has a great foundation of family focused high quality care, and the next step in our evolution is to move toward a model of client empowerment.

To attract new clients, and remain relevant to our existing client group, we need to ensure our Anowah purpose is both compelling and meaningful. Authentic social inclusion is important to all people, with or without disability, and is something Anowah will seek for all its clients as we move forward.

## Our Values

**To inform how we will work and deliver on our purpose, we have reset our organizational values with Anowah's EPPPIC core values:**

**Ethical:** We are Ethical in all that we do

**Passionate:** We are Passionate about our role in supporting people with disability, their carers and families

**People focused:** We are People focused, respecting the dignity and rights of others

**Person centered:** We are Person centered, ensuring the people we support are in control of their lives

**Innovative:** We Innovate to make things possible

**Collaborative:** We Collaborate to get the best possible outcomes for the people we support

We have also refreshed the Anowah brand with vibrant colours and a modern design, created a new website, and established a social media presence so that we can connect with the broader community. This was needed to reposition ourselves to attract new opportunities, clients and support



## Interview with Sheryle-Lee

**Sheryle-Lee is a lady with a great sense of humour who lives in an Anowah community house with her house mate.**

Sheryle-Lee took part in an interview recently and gave some surprising raw answers.

Interviewer: How old are you?

Sheryle-Lee: I'm 12, because we all know you should never ask a woman their real age (with laughter)

Interviewer: Do you like where you live?

Sheryle-Lee: I enjoy living in my home and I like to take care of my flat mate.

Interviewer: Do you have a best friend?

Sheryle-Lee: I don't have a best friend, but he comes close (with an outburst of laughter and a shoulder shrug)

Sheryle Lee: Oh well, I have lived here with John for four years and I'm happy!



## **Managing our finances sustainably**

For the past few years, our primary focus has been on transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and managing the increase in administrative and compliance obligations that have resulted from this transition. We now need to focus on sustainable growth to secure the future of Anowah.

In the last three out of four years we have returned a surplus, but a reduction of even two clients would compromise Anowah's ability to operate sustainably hence the need for some level of growth to mitigate against this.

For Anowah to remain viable into the future, strong financial control and efficient service delivery will be required to maintain a suitable level of reserves, whilst allowing investment in quality service delivery, Anowah assets and Anowah staff.

## **Improving our overall performance – finding and improving efficiencies in how we are currently working**

The NDIS is a world leading person centered reform, but it does bring with it the challenge of fixed pricing and very low margins – this is a sector

wide challenge. This means that to have sufficient funds to maintain our assets, invest in our staff and improve our services, we have to operate as efficiently as possible.

This means improving our processes, making the best use of technology, and ensuring staff are well trained and understand how to follow processes and use technology in the best possible ways.

Services need to be delivered in accordance with funded plans, and Anowah needs to operate within the key assumptions that underpin the NDIS Pricing Model.

These assumptions include efficient use of staff, supervision levels and minimizing organizational overhead. To operate with this level of efficiency, Anowah will need good systems to allow for timely and accurate reporting of activity and results.

Whilst we have put a number of foundational systems in place, there is still the need for further investments in our systems, technology and people.

## **Making best use of our assets and property portfolio**

Anowah is fortunate to have some great property assets, and these assets need to be maintained in a way that is appealing to clients, families and staff, and to preserve their value and be competitive in the market

Our Horsley Park buildings are currently under utilized, with one

of the buildings and many of the surrounding areas not used at all. In addition, these buildings have not been maintained over the past few years.

We will be undertaking work at our Horsley Park site to create a new and interesting client space that can be used for a variety of group based activities and upgrade the administration area.

We are actively seeking funding and support for these required upgrades, and to date have received a grant for the development of a sensory garden at our Horsley Park site, which will further enhance the client experience for both residents and day services visitors.

### **Strengthening our workforce and culture**

We believe it is important that we have a culture of openness, communication and transparency.

At Anowah, our staff are our most important asset because they deliver the direct support to our clients. The right staff with the right skills and the opportunity to learn and expand on their skills will have direct benefit to our clients. Workplace Culture is everything, and we are working on maintaining a positive and vibrant culture aligned with our new EPPPIC core values.

To ensure we recruit and retain the best staff we can since they are the cornerstone of our delivery, we are working on enhancing the way we attract and retain the best people in a competitive environment – meaning that in our difficult sector we need to set ourselves apart from our competitors.

This translates to how we attract and recruit our staff, an induction and onboarding program that sets our people up to succeed, and our professional development program to support, mentor, challenge and improve our workforce over time.

## CONTACT US now

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