

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



# That's a wrap on 2023-2024



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## Message from the Chair

Dear Anowah Community Living members, clients, staff, and supporters.

As Chair of the Board for Anowah Community Living, I am pleased to present the 2023-2024 Annual Report. This year has been one of transformation and strategic growth, as we focused on governance, financial sustainability, and responding to sector-wide reforms, all while continuing to support our mission of delivering high-quality, person-centred services.



The disability sector has undergone significant changes, driven by the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission and the introduction of new legislation following the recent NDIS Review. The Board has worked closely to ensure that Anowah remains aligned with these changes and prepared for the future. It has been crucial for us to ensure that our services continue to meet the highest standards of quality, choice, and inclusion, and remain fully compliant with the NDIS Practice Standards.

With the NDIS Review now embedded in new legislation, the Board has been supporting the CEO with Anowah's involvement in public consultations and will provide on-going support for future co-design opportunities. This represents a critical chance for service providers and people with disabilities to influence the future of disability services. We have been focused on ensuring our participation reflects the needs and aspirations of the people we support, keeping them at the centre of our strategic decisions.

One of the key challenges this year has been addressing utilisation issues within our Supported Independent Living (SIL) services. The Board has taken a strategic approach to this issue, balancing client needs with financial sustainability. We have supported the CEO with important discussions through the NDIS Commission's consultations around new group home models, helping to ensure that Anowah stays compliant with evolving regulations while also innovating to provide choice and flexibility for clients. As we look ahead, the Board will continue to focus on developing new models and explore ways to modernise our accommodation offerings to better serve our clients.

Financial sustainability remains a core focus of the Board's work. As the Chair of the Board, I have been actively involved in government consultations as part

of the Independent Pricing Review, contributing insights from our experience to help shape pricing structures that support both service providers and clients. Ensuring that Anowah can continue to provide high-quality services while operating within a sustainable financial model is central to our governance efforts.

**Looking to the future, the upcoming financial year will see the Board undertake a comprehensive review of Anowah's strategic plan. This will allow us to assess our progress, adapt to sector changes, and ensure that our strategic goals align with the needs of our clients and the broader regulatory landscape. We are committed to making this process collaborative, drawing on input from staff, clients, and key stakeholders to ensure that our direction remains forward-looking and responsive.**

As we move into the next year, the Board's priorities will include reviewing the strategic plan, ensuring financial sustainability, and continuing to drive innovation in service delivery. We will also focus on modernising our group homes and exploring funding opportunities to enhance our facilities. These efforts will help ensure that Anowah remains a leader in providing disability services that empower individuals and promote independence.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to all Board members for their dedication throughout the year. I also extend my thanks to our CEO, staff, clients, families, and partners for their continued support. Together, we will continue to build on our strong foundation and work towards a future where Anowah remains a trusted and innovative provider of disability services.

**Steven Lowrie**  
Chair, Anowah Community Living Ltd

## CEO's Report

As I reflect on my first year as CEO of Anowah Community Living, I am both proud and humbled by the legacy of this remarkable organisation. Over the past 58 years, Anowah has built a reputation for providing exceptional care, and I am honoured to play a role in ensuring that legacy continues to thrive.



This has been a year of significant transformation. Like many organisations in our sector, we have faced a rapidly changing landscape, and much of our work this year has focused on adapting to new compliance requirements, restructuring our leadership team, and upgrading our internal systems. These changes, though challenging, were necessary to position Anowah for a sustainable future—one where we can continue to deliver the highest standards of support for our clients.

I am pleased to report that despite these pressures, Anowah has emerged in a positive financial position, thanks in large part to savings made through our successful negotiation with ICARE on our workers' compensation premium. This negotiation was a critical step in ensuring we could reallocate resources to where they are needed most—our clients and staff.

We've also restructured our leadership team, bringing new energy and expertise into our operations, while strengthening the cohesion needed to drive our strategic vision forward. Additionally, our systems upgrades have provided greater efficiency and compliance, allowing us to focus more time and energy on enhancing client outcomes.

One of the most promising areas of growth has been in our Support Coordination business, which now serves 43 clients. This expansion not only reflects the trust families place in Anowah but also our commitment to delivering personalised and meaningful support.

**Looking ahead, I am excited for the future of Anowah Community Living. The groundwork we've laid this year sets the stage for continued innovation, resilience, and most importantly, the ability to enrich the lives of those we support.**

**Thank you to our staff, board members, volunteers, families, and clients for your unwavering support and belief in our mission. Together, we will continue to make Anowah a place where people with disabilities can live fulfilling, empowered lives.**

Warm regards

**Joanne Kernot**  
Chief Executive Officer

# The year that was

## Establishment of Various Sub-Committees

In 2023, we established several sub-committees to drive our governance and operational initiatives forward. These committees focused on areas such as Audit Risk and Finance and Quality and Safeguards ensuring Anowah continues to uphold the highest standards of care and support. This governance structure has and will continue to be crucial in adapting to the evolving landscape of the NDIS, strengthening our strategic direction and enhancing organisational accountability.

## Open Day – July 2023

The Open Day held in July 2023 was a celebration of Anowah’s longstanding commitment to the community. With the participation of families, clients, staff, board members, and the broader Fairfield region, the event showcased our services and the strong relationships we have fostered over decades. The Open Day provided an opportunity for attendees to learn about our programs, explore the facilities, and engage in meaningful conversations about the future of disability support. It also helped highlight our ability to adapt and grow amid challenges.

## Support Coordination Growth

Our support coordination services saw a significant expansion this year, growing to assist 43 clients. This increase reflects not only the demand for high-quality, personalised support in the disability sector but also our success in adapting to NDIS pricing pressures while maintaining exceptional service. Our support coordinators have played an integral role in ensuring clients achieve their goals by connecting them with the right services, enhancing their quality of life and engagement with the community.

## Student Placements On-Site

This year, Anowah continued to support future professionals through our student placement program. We partnered with local Tafe and other educational institutions to offer hands-on experience in disability support, ensuring students gain valuable insights into the complexities and rewards of the sector. This initiative reflects our broader commitment to fostering growth and learning, not only within our workforce but also in the wider disability support community. We are pleased to report that these placements have led to three new fully qualified support workers joining Anowah’s team.

## Hub Expansion

Our Hub has been an important part of Anowah’s community engagement efforts. This year, we expanded our offerings to include more community-based activities, providing diverse opportunities for our clients to engage, learn, and socialise. Whether through arts, sports, or community activities, the Hub has continued to be a place of connection, growth, and participation for all involved.

## Family and Networking Sessions

Throughout the year, we hosted multiple collaborative sessions with families and external services. Events like our Carer Support network, South-West Sydney Support Coordinators network and South-West and Western Sydney Support Coordinator committee meetings. These sessions focused on sharing knowledge, aligning support plans with clients’ goals, and fostering deeper relationships with those involved in our clients care and the broader sector. It was also an opportunity to showcase to 100’s of new visitors what Anowah has to offer.

## Social Media Presence

Our social media engagement has grown substantially, enabling us to reach more people and better share our story. Through regular updates, client achievements, event announcements, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of life at Anowah, we’ve built a vibrant online community that reflects the values and mission of our organisation.

## Farewell to Long-Term Clients

This year, we said goodbye to two long-term clients, Fiona and Sheryle, who moved closer to their families, Fiona to the Port Stephens area and Sheryle to Melbourne. They had been valued members of the Anowah family for many years, and their presence will be missed by both staff and fellow clients but we know they will both be so happy being close to family. Thank you, Sheryle, for leaving us with a piece of your amazing quirky artwork, something we will always remember you by. We wish them the best in their new chapters.



**Vale  
Christina (Tina)  
Russell**

With a heavy heart, we remember Tina Russell, a cherished long-term client who passed away in November 2023. Tina’s presence brought warmth and joy to everyone who knew her, and she will forever be remembered for the special memories we created together at Anowah.



# Property Upgrades

While we did not undertake any major property projects this year, we focused on vital repairs and maintenance. These included significant upgrades to air conditioning units, improvements to kitchen appliances, and bathroom renovations, ensuring that our facilities remain safe, comfortable, and compliant. Additionally, we are excited to share the completion of a new gazebo in our sensory garden, made possible by a 2023 Club Grant. This space has become a peaceful retreat for clients to enjoy nature and tranquility.



**New Gazebo**  
In our Sensory Garden

# Stay Tuned



Anowah Community Living is pleased to share our clients and team member's amazing stories, recent achievements, images from our latest events and social activities on social media platforms. We encourage you to engage with our Facebook and Instagram posts - like and drop your comment and we would love to reply to them! Anowah also has its own LinkedIn page for professional posts, give us a follow to hear more from us!



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[www.instagram.com/anowahcommunityliving](https://www.instagram.com/anowahcommunityliving)  
[www.linkedin.com/company/anowahcommunityliving](https://www.linkedin.com/company/anowahcommunityliving)  
[www.anowah.org.au](https://www.anowah.org.au)

## Supporters we Thank You

Anowah acknowledges the assistance of all those who support us throughout the year and we give our sincere thanks to the fantastic staff, families and community members for their continued belief in the organisation.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Rotary Club of Wetherill Park, St Johns Park Social Bowls members, and Brian Zammit from BAMS, whose ongoing support has been instrumental to our success. Their generosity helps us continue to provide quality services to our participants and maintain our commitment to the Fairfield community.



The Carols at Horsley Park was held on the 9th Decemeber 2023 and once again Anowah was a major beneficiary of part proceeds from the event. It was an extremely hot afternoon with temperatures over 42 degrees, however, everyone in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the event. Anowah clients due to the heat were unable to attend, however Jo Kernot and Angela Wilkinson and some of our volunteers attended to represent Anowah, helping to man the glow in the dark stall and the Anowah Stall which promoted our service and received a lot of interest and questions from the local community members.

Anowah representatives attended the 31st Birthday Dinner of the Rotary Club of Wetherill Park in February 2024 where a cheque for \$5,000 was presented to Anowah as part proceeds from the Carols at Horsley Park event. We truly appreciate the ongoing support of the Rotary Club of Wetherill Park and the Horsley Park community.

- In December 2023, the St Johns Park Social Bowls members, via their own fund raising efforts, purchased an 8 seater dining table, chairs and coffee tables to be used by our Hub day service. We extend our sincere thanks to the members of **St Johns Park Social Bowls** for their continued and most generous support of Anowah.

- A big thankyou to **McCall Gardens** and the **Western Sydney Wanderers** who donated tickets to the Wanderers vs Newcastle Jets game at Commbank Stadium for Anowah Clients to attend. The men had a fantastic time and continue to visit the Wanderer's home ground to cheer on the players at training sessions, all ability day and more.

- A shout out to **Brian Zammit from BAMS** for organising a Corporate Box for our clients to attend a showing of Cirque Du Soleil – Crystal – at Quodos Bank Arena. The clients had a great night and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Thank you Brian, for your continual support of Anowah.

- A special thank you to **the late Grant Luke and family** for a generous donation to Anowah Community Living which will enable us to provide face to face training to upskill our support staff.

## A word from the Anowah Team



**Leanne Franklin**  
Operations Manager, Home and Living

I have been working in the disability sector since 2010, bringing experience from some of Australia's largest not-for-profit disability service providers. My work is driven by a strong commitment to delivering person-centred active support and empowering individuals to lead lives of their choosing.

### Focus for the Next 12 Months at Anowah Home & Living

Delivering person-centred active support  
Setting and planning individual goals for Anowah clients  
Empowering individuals to make choices about their lives  
Attracting and retaining skilled workers to strengthen our current workforce

I am passionate about fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, ensuring that every individual at Anowah Home & Living has the opportunity to achieve their personal goals and aspirations. I have focused my first few months at Anowah Community living to getting to know our wonderful clients and look forward to continuing to get to know the many families and supporters of Anowah as well.



**Angela Wilkinson**  
Manager, Community HUB & Engagement

Over the past year Anowah has continued to evolve as one of the longest serving providers in the disability sector across South-West Sydney. With a 57-year history of experience in the provision of support, we continually draw upon our expertise to provide a holistic service ensuring choice and control for our clients.

Since joining Anowah in October 2023 we have increased our engagement activities significantly both internally and externally. We have participated, attended, hosted &/ or led over one hundred & ten events, expos, site visits and network meetings. Our aim this past year was to increase Anowah's presence across Western and South-West Sydney ensuring we are well connected and expose Anowah to potential new clientele moving forward.

This year Anowah opened its doors to deliver NDIS Support Coordination. Our Support Coordinators assist clients to achieve greater independence and meaningful connections. The overall aim is to empower people to understand and navigate their own unique journey ensuring we uphold the NDIS principles and Anowah's values.

Over the past year Anowah has invested in staff development ensuring every client receives a quality service within our Day Program (The Hub). We will continue to advance and expand our service offerings, including investment in a unique state-of-the-art sensory garden on our 5-acre property at Horsley Park that will be open to the local community.

This year we established our WHS committee. This will facilitate cooperation in developing and carrying out measures to improve safety for all workers at Anowah. As we continue to evolve and adapt to an ever-changing sector, I look forward to continuing Anowah's mission to advance social inclusion through innovation, empowering clients to be active and engaged within their communities.

## Celebrating Long-Term Service

In October 2023, we celebrated an incredible milestone—Bev’s 40 years of service at Anowah. Bev’s dedication has been an inspiration to us all, and her impact on both clients and staff cannot be overstated. We marked the occasion with an intimate afternoon tea, attended by Bev’s family, friends, and colleagues, as well as many of our clients and families who all came to share in the moment and pay tribute to her lifelong commitment.



## Other team members who have celebrated length of service Milestones this year:

**+5  
years**

**Margarita Jaramillo  
Connie DeMeo**

**+40  
years**

**Beverley Ward**



## Thank You to Our Volunteers and Board of Directors

At Anowah Community Living, we are incredibly fortunate to be supported by a dedicated team of volunteers and an outstanding board of directors who selflessly give their time, expertise, and energy to our organisation. Their contributions are invaluable and play a pivotal role in ensuring that we continue to provide high-quality, personalised services to the people who rely on us.

To our volunteers, thank you for your generosity and compassion. Whether it’s assisting in daily activities, helping us maintain the grounds, offering a kind word, or lending a hand at our events, your impact is immeasurable. You bring warmth, care, and a sense of community that enriches the lives of our clients and staff alike.

To our board of directors, your leadership and commitment have been crucial in navigating the complexities of the NDIS and ensuring that Anowah continues to thrive. Your strategic guidance and unwavering dedication have helped us strengthen our services, adapt to new challenges, and plan for a brighter future.

We are deeply grateful for all you do. Together, you help us create a welcoming, supportive environment where individuals with disabilities can live fulfilling lives. Thank you for making Anowah the special place it is today.

## Thank You to Our Frontline Staff and Leadership Team

We extend our deepest gratitude to our incredible frontline staff and leadership team at Anowah Community Living. Your unwavering commitment and hard work are the heartbeat of our organisation, and your contributions make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we support.

To our frontline staff, thank you for your compassion, dedication, and resilience. Every day, you go above and beyond to provide personalised care and support to our clients. Whether it’s through direct care, creating a safe and welcoming environment, or ensuring that each individual’s needs are met with dignity and respect, your efforts are truly inspiring. You embody the values of Anowah, and we are so proud of the work you do.

To our leadership team, thank you for your guidance, vision, and tireless support. Your leadership has been instrumental in driving our mission forward, fostering a positive workplace culture, and ensuring that Anowah continues to grow and adapt in an ever-changing sector. Your ability to lead with empathy and strategic thinking has made all the difference in navigating challenges and seizing new opportunities.

Together, you form the foundation of Anowah’s success. We are deeply grateful for all you do, and we look forward to continuing to work together to make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

# Client Stories



## Philip

Philip has been a resident of the Anowah service since 1989. In May 2024, Philip celebrated his 70th birthday with his Anowah friends. He hosted a party at Smithfield RSL and also enjoyed a second celebration at the Hub. Phillip has been enjoying his retirement by choosing weekly activities he would like to pursue, attending the Hub for activities that he enjoys and spending time with his friends Debbie and Kerrie Anne.

## John

John was supported by staff to explore woodworking this year, He was supported to learn about safe use of equipment, PPE and how to use both power tools and hand tools. John was supported to renovate a chest of drawers and a coffee table which he really loved. He sanded them, cleaned them and then repainted. As you can see he was having great fun honing his skills!



# Some Important Numbers

**\$5,380,761**  
2023 Revenue

**\$ 4,598,031**  
2023 Expenses

**\$ 782,730**  
2023 Surplus

**68**  
Number of Staff

**54**  
Number of Clients



# Looking Forward

**As we look ahead, Anowah Community Living Ltd is committed to expanding and enhancing our services to better support our clients and community. Our future plans include several key initiatives:**

## Changes in the NDIS Sector

1. In October 2024, significant changes to the NDIS have been rolled out, aimed at improving client experience and ensuring funding is used effectively. These changes include a new definition of NDIS supports and updated guidelines for service providers, which will impact how we deliver and report services. A transition period is in place to help participants and providers adapt to these new regulations, but we remain committed to supporting our clients through these changes with minimal disruption.

2. **Filling Supported Independent Living Vacancies:** We aim to ensure that all vacancies in our Supported Independent Living (SIL) services are filled promptly, providing more individuals with the opportunity to live independently with the support they need.

3. **Increasing Numbers in the Hub:** We plan to increase the number of clients in our Hub, creating a vibrant and inclusive community space where individuals can engage in various activities, build relationships, and access essential services.

4. **Growing Community Supports:** Our commitment to growing community supports remains strong. We will continue to develop and expand our programs to meet the diverse needs of our clients, ensuring they receive comprehensive and personalised care.



5. **Strategic Planning and Property Upgrades:** Strategic planning sessions are scheduled to explore opportunities for property upgrades. These upgrades will enhance our facilities, making them more accessible and comfortable for our clients.

6. **Systems Improvements :** We are dedicated to improving our systems to streamline operations and enhance service delivery. This includes adopting new technologies and processes that increase efficiency and effectiveness.

7. **Focus on Quality Supports :** Maintaining a high standard of quality in our supports is a top priority. We will continue to refine our practices to ensure that our clients receive the best possible care and support.

8. **Training of Staff:** Investing in our staff is crucial to our success. We will provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to ensure our team is well-equipped to meet the needs of our clients.

9. **Building Partnerships :** We recognize the importance of partnerships in enhancing the lives of our clients. We will continue to build and strengthen relationships with other organisations, stakeholders, and the community to provide comprehensive and integrated support services.

These initiatives reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and our dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of those we serve. We look forward to the future with optimism and determination, confident that our efforts will lead to even greater outcomes for our clients and community.



# Anowah's Leadership Team





## Contact

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**Anowah Community Living Ltd**  
ACN 642 699 803  
ABN 23 922 372 767  
NDIS Provider Number: 4-3LLK-290