



Annual Report 2023-24 Preparing for our future



Sit back, get comfy and let us show you what happened this year...

About Able Australia 5

Able Australia at a glance..... 6

A message from our Chair..... 9

CEO's Report10

Financial Highlights 2023-24.....12

Our Strategic Priorities14

 Better Days, Every Day17

 Grow for our future25

 Make the complex simple31

Thanks to our Supporters and Partners.....34

How we are Governed.....38



Able Australia delivers **Better Days, Every Day**, with and for our clients



About Able Australia

Able Australia is a leading disability services provider supporting people with disability to live the life they choose.

Established over 50 years ago to provide support to the deafblind community, we are now a diverse not-for-profit organisation.

We continue to build on our heritage and empower the individuals we support to reach their goals.

We are a registered NDIS provider helping to create Better Days, Every Day with and for our clients.

Where are we located?	VICTORIA	TASMANIA	QUEENSLAND	ACT
Supported Independent Living	✓	✓	✓	✓
In-Home Support	✓	✓	✓	✓
Day Programs	✓	✓		
Positive Behaviour Support	✓	✓	✓	
Allied Health	✓			
Deafblind Services	✓			
Community Participation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Transport			✓	
Community Services for Seniors			✓	

Vision

Our vision is to enable the people we support to live the life they choose.

Mission

Our mission is to build on our heritage and empower the individuals we support to reach their potential by living our values of trust, respect, excellence and kindness every day.

Values

Committed to our values of trust, respect, excellence and kindness, we strive to provide the best quality support in long-term partnership with our clients and their loved ones. Below are a set of guiding principles and fundamental beliefs that allow Able to achieve its vision and mission.



Trust

For more than 50 years we have been trusted to deliver high quality, reliable services safely to those we support.



Excellence

We strive for excellence in everything we do – from the services we provide, to the outcomes we support clients to achieve.



Respect

We are respectful, upholding the rights of everyone we support and work with.



Kindness

We are kind and compassionate to all.



Able Australia at a Glance

95%
staff satisfaction scores



94%
client & family
satisfaction scores



789
employees
(64% permanent/36% casual)



123
volunteers



40+
diverse ethnic groups -
staff and clients



42
different languages
spoken by our employees



1.22M
hours of rostered support



60
residential services



12
newly-built Supported
Disability Accommodation
properties opened



5
community access hubs
and day services



2,000+
seniors supported
in the community



427
emergency relief
clients



29,755
pantry clients
(22,209 adults/7,546 children)



10,112
meals provided



18,497
trips in community
transport



123
organisations in the Able
led CEO Collaboration Group



1,100+
external training sessions
(especially to support
complex and high intensity needs)



15,000+
online training
modules completed



20
participants received
Comm Guide Training



20
staff received
training on Video
Interaction Guidance



17
staff commenced
Certificate IV Disability



295,000+
website visits



2.27M
records digitised/
managed



10,000+
calls to our 1300 number



8
research partnerships across our
CoE generate new knowledge



2
international deafblind
conference presentations



2
research reports and
report launch webinars



1
peer-reviewed
journal article published





A message from our Chair



Jenny Smith
Board Chair

The financial year 2023-24 again saw significant difficulty in the disability sector, due to continued pricing challenges, heavy compliance requirements, and high marketplace competition, with the disability sector reporting significant stress to maintain services under the current financial constraints. Able Australia was likewise subject to these pressures, and yet pleasingly managed to deliver an operating loss of \$1.89M versus a forecast loss of \$2.01M, despite investment in service growth. However, this loss was anticipated, and with favourable investment returns and a number of strategic initiatives to address the deficit and prepare Able for future growth, Able's performance was stronger than initially budgeted for.

The Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits issued by the National Disability Insurance Agency were disappointing, with 83% of National Disability Service survey respondents indicating that they are concerned about their ability to deliver disability services under the new price limits, raising fears for financial viability of disability service providers, particularly in support coordination and high intensity supports.

As a result, Able advocated as part of the CEO Collaboration for an out-of-cycle price review, which was, unfortunately, denied. There was a win with high intensity supports reinstated. The group continued to advocate for improved regulation and on behalf of the needs of registered providers and the cost of compliance that they bear in pursuit of Quality and Safeguarding excellence. While this is an important standard, it creates a two-stream market where registration and compliance is disincentivised.

With so much change in the sector, it is clear that strategic growth and the scale and efficiencies that this will bring is the route to financial sustainability in the future for Able. As such, the senior leadership has focussed on a number of

key strategic initiatives to prepare for our future. These projects have included opportunities to increase efficiencies and automation in our processes such as rostering, financial and human resource systems; fill vacancies within our homes; decrease costly reliance on external agencies; support growth in some of our business areas; and cost savings measures that we have been carrying at significant loss for some time, such as the provision of unfunded fleet vehicles.

Sadly, we had to make the challenging decision to transition out of the provision of Aged Care and Community Services in Queensland. While these services have been provided with excellence by a passionate group of staff and volunteers for many years and through the challenges of storms and flood emergencies, the continued loss through these services was no longer deemed sustainable, with our core focus on disability services.

While the environment has continued to be unpredictable this year, the changing nature of the environment was expected and we have made strong headway through our decisions about our services into the future and through our strategic projects. As a Board we consider this past year a successful one, as we continue to deliver high quality support for our clients, and prepare for our future. This success is thanks to the support and input of our clients, families, staff and volunteers, and I extend the Board's thanks for this.

I also take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board Directors for their support and time and thank the CEO and leadership of Able for their commitment as we prepare for a stronger future for Able and the Able Community.

Jenny Smith
Board Chair



CEO's Report



Lynette McKeown
Chief Executive Officer

The Able team continues to work tirelessly for our clients, despite the relentless changes and challenges across the disability sector over the last year. The rally cry that drives all we do is to deliver 'Better Days, Every Day, with and for our clients'. I am proud of our team which has continued to put our clients at the centre of what we do, despite the pressures the sector is experiencing.

During the year the Royal Commission into Disability and NDIS Review were concluded with a number of recommendations being made. We are supportive of these reviews on making Australia a better place for people living with disability.

We were successful in achieving our NDIS Practice Standards accreditation, continuing to uphold our high-quality standards across our services. This is thanks to the ongoing focus on quality and safety of our staff.

Our commitment to our clients has never been stronger, with our Client Advisory Committee being a touchpoint of our direction as we obtain feedback into our current and future operations.

We have also advocated for the benefit of people with disability through the CEO Collaboration. We campaigned for fair and independent pricing and made multiple submissions to the NDIA about the pricing challenges, policy changes and implications for clients, Able, and others across the sector.

The NDIS rolled out the PACE trial, a computer system, in November 2023, following a trial in Tasmania, for which Able provided significant feedback. This resulted in Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding being ringfenced, which is a considerable win for SIL clients.

We launched a successful brand advocacy campaign "Just like you" in Tasmania, featuring our clients and the activities they love to do. This was a way of challenging the public to see things that they have in common with people with disability, rather than seeing differences.

In many ways we have led with the needs of our clients at the front of how we work. This is both in our day-to-day operations as well as into the sector and indeed into the broader Australian community.

With strong growth ambitions to support Able's sustainability, our strategic initiatives (to reduce costs, make processes more efficient and ready for scale) are making headway. These have supported a better-than-expected financial outcome this last year, whilst still with an operational loss. Likewise, we remained focused on growing our NDIS business, for a sustainable future, and were kept busy searching for a values-aligned partner which met our merger criteria.

At the same time, we have worked to reduce providing unfunded fleet vehicles. While we were grateful to have provided these services over the years, Able has greatly subsidised client transport by approximately \$4.5M since the onset of COVID-19, which again, was no longer feasible.

During the year, major changes to workplace laws came into effect with the amendment to the Fair Work Legislation, Secure Jobs, Better Pay. This has meant that so-called 'zombie agreements', ceased and a period of collective bargaining commenced.

Sadly, in April we announced our intention to move out of Aged Care and Community Services in Queensland.

These services have been operating at a significant loss of more than \$2.2 Million since 2018. As a not-for-profit organisation and with only a small portion of aged care services, we are not in a position to continue to support this. We have worked to transition these services to other providers as of 1 October 2024. I take this opportunity to commend our staff and volunteers for the excellent work done over the years in service of the community.

I am forever grateful to our donors, bequestors, funders and supporters. They give so generously to support our programs and opportunities that are not funded and that clients would otherwise not get to experience. Philanthropic giving is important to what we can offer to enhance the lives of clients. I thank you for your kindness and support.

Thank you to all of our staff who go above and beyond every day, working to provide the best possible supports so that clients can achieve their goals. I have every confidence that the services we provide are delivered with the support that we can be proud of and would want for our own family members. Thank you to each and every one of you, as well as our Leadership Teams, and the Board of Directors, for your support and commitment as we deliver Better Days, Every Day, in our work at Able.

Lynette McKeown
Chief Executive Officer

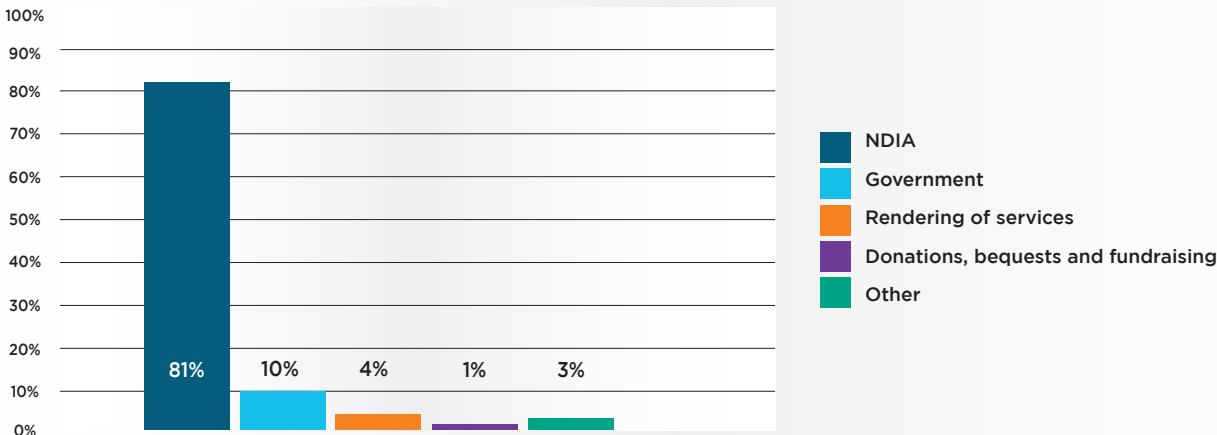


Financial Highlights 2023-24

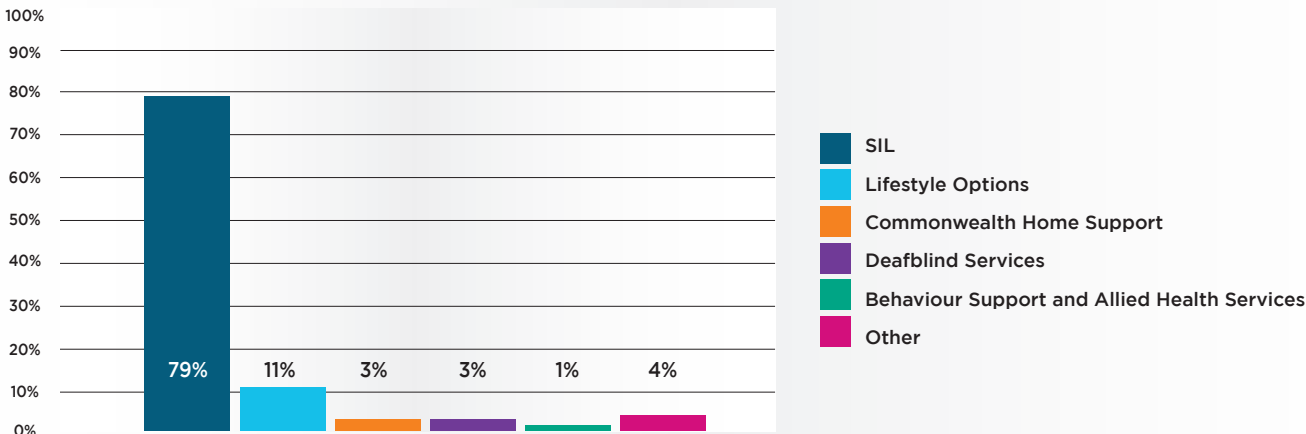
Able Australia Services 2023-24 Summarised Financials

Revenue and Expenditure	\$'000s 2023/2024	\$'000s 2022/2023
Revenue and Income	73,088	66,473
Total Expenditure	74,974	70,444
Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,886)	(3,971)
Assets and Liabilities		
Total Assets	32,318	32,749
Total Liabilities	15,548	14,093
Net Assets	16,770	18,656
Cash and Investments		
Cash and Cash Equivalents at 30 June	756	850
Investments	13,541	12,394

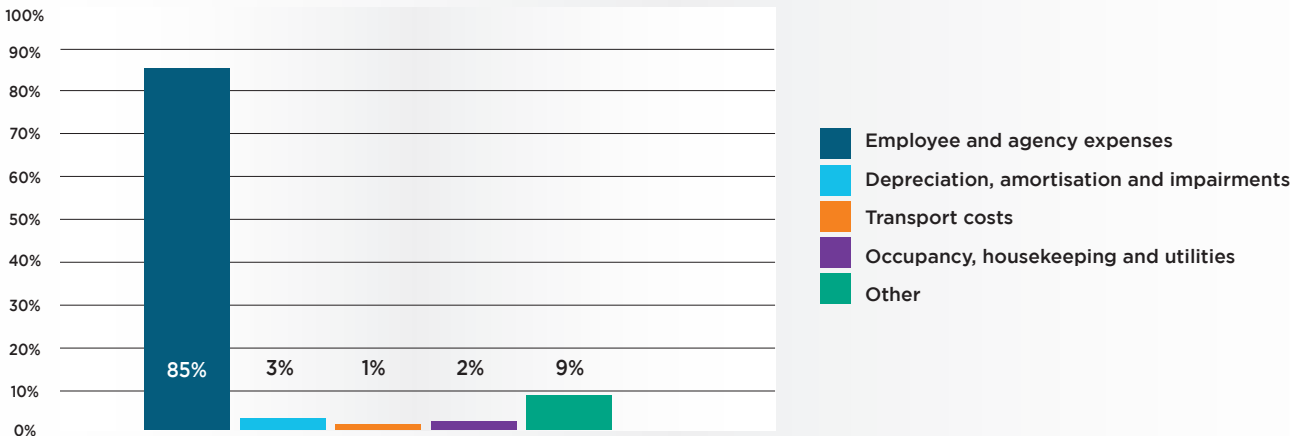
Revenue by Source



Revenue by Category



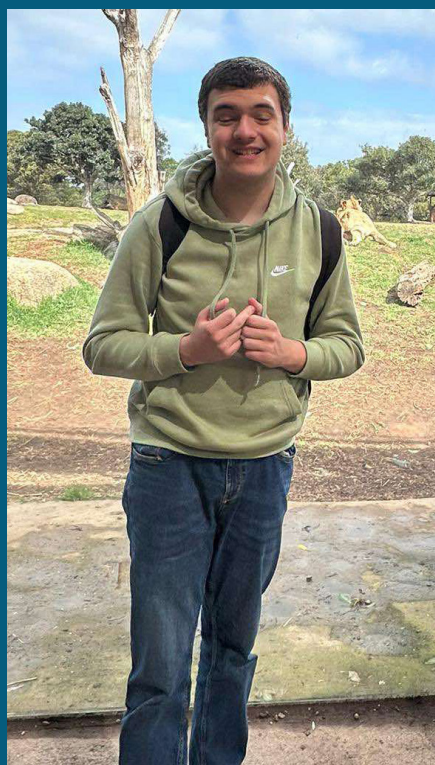
Expenditure by Type



Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement Information have been derived from Audited Financial Statements. Audited Financial Statements are available on the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission website, www.acnc.gov.au



Our Strategic Priorities



The focus of our Strategic Plan 2022-25 – and our commitment to our clients and community – is to deliver **Better Days, Every Day**, with and for our clients.

Developed with a rich variety of input and feedback from our clients, Client Advisory Committee, families, employees, Board and other stakeholders, we considered a wide range of perspectives in developing our future direction as we strive to empower the people we support to reach their potential and live the lives they choose.

Our Strategic Plan 2022-25 is based on three strategic priorities to guide our actions as we seek to achieve our vision for the future:





Better Days, Every Day

Our clients, families, employees and volunteers are central to the design, delivery and continual improvement of our services, and are the reason Able can provide the highest quality services.

We are committed to the principle of listening to the voice of our clients as we seek to support clients to achieve their goals and live the life they choose. We never compromise on quality, and are informed by evidence-based practice, as we lead the sector in service excellence.



Able Australia’s proud commitment to our clients, families and employees is to deliver Better Days, Every Day, with and for our clients. This last year has seen us continue to keep this at the centre of the services we provide, our decision-making and the way we act within the Able and broader community.

Audit excellence

Audits play a crucial role in Able Australia’s mission of achieving Better Days, Every Day by ensuring the highest standards of service delivery, compliance, and accountability. Regular audits help identify areas for improvement, ensure resources are being used effectively, and maintain the quality of care and support services. Through transparent and thorough auditing processes, Able Australia continuously enhances its operations. This creates a positive impact on the lives of those Able supports while maintaining trust and integrity within the community.

We are proud to have continued to excel in audit accreditations during this reporting year, including:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards
- Australian Community Industry Alliance Audit around governance and clinical governance audit, where Able was commended for having examples of excellence in practice, including risk management
- Aged Care Quality and Safeguarding Commission Audit
- Food Services Audit

Quality and Safeguarding Practices

Quality practices, active support, and supported decision-making are central to ensuring we deliver Better Days, Every Day with and for our clients. Quality practices provide a foundation of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement, ensuring services meet high standards and address individual needs effectively. Active support, through a Person-Centred approach, empowers clients to engage in meaningful activities, fostering independence and enhancing their daily experiences. Supported decision-making ensures that clients have a voice in shaping their own lives, promoting autonomy and dignity. Together, these practices enable Able to deliver tailored services, empowering support that makes a difference in the lives of those Able serves.

Supervision Project with Monash University

Key to implementing the suite of Better Days projects is creating an effective staffing base which will support the change. As such, the Quality and Innovation team have been focusing on models of staff supervision and support.

We are working with Monash University on a study which aims to explore supervision from the perspective of three key staffing groups in the disability workforce (disability support workers, team leaders and area managers) working with people with disability in supported accommodation services.

The research focus questions were:

- What is the experience of supervision for staff working in supported accommodation services with people with disability?
- What are the supervision needs of staff working in supported accommodation services with people with disability?

- What factors support or hinder supervision of staff in supported accommodation services?
- What are the preferred methods for provision or receipt of supervision for staff working in supported accommodation services for people with disability?
- What frameworks or professional/operational guidance is available to inform supervision practices?
- What is the outcome of supervision for staff in supported accommodation services?

This is a qualitative study using focus group methods. Focus groups have been completed, and the project group was successful in receiving a seeding grant from Monash University.

This is a great opportunity to work with an experienced and well regarded research team, to generate new knowledge for the sector.



During the year, Able's staff participated in Safeguarding Practice Governance training, serving to identify opportunities to further strengthen processes and measure risk, reflecting our commitment as a learning organisation.

A working group on Active Support and Practice Leadership is rejuvenating our approach based on Prof Christine Bigby's best practice model. August and September have been designated as months with a particular focus on embedding active support for the organisation.

With the NDIS Commission developing a practice guide and quality indicators added to the NDIS Practice Standards, Able is committed to enhancing supported decision-making, ensuring the people we

support have increased autonomy and choice in their lives. We have rolled out information and training to frontline staff to ensure that our teams are best equipped and embed the practice of supported decision-making with our clients in our everyday work.

The NDIS Royal Commission also highlighted the need for information accessibility. Able has a strong approach and commitment to providing information in formats that clients can access. Able has implemented a guide, process and training to support an accessible language approach. This includes the proficiency of language used in our communications and providing information in Plain English, Easy English and Auslan. We have a staff base which is skilled in key word sign and tailored communications to meet the needs of our clients.

Hello Possum!

The Tasmanian team, along with Marketing and Engagement were successful in receiving the next round of funding from the Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation. The Grant was used for a range of activities as part of our Health and Wellbeing Program. Activities focussed on healthy eating, exercise, mental health, relationships and leisure. As part of the focus on mental health, the team, along with a local artist, painted a mural. It features a possum and Tasmanian flora, including fagus, Tasmanian pepperberry, native buttercups, and milkwort. It was commissioned to create a bright, welcoming entrance for all who visit. Clients played a key role in choosing the final design and also joined in the fun, painting alongside the artist Mel. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.



Research

Able is unique in its' Centre of Excellence – Deafblind (CoE), which focusses on developing research and information about deafblindness which will make life better for people with deafblindness, across Australia and internationally. In addition to research, our CoE also provides training, information and advocacy and consultancy in deafblindness, to further the support of people with deafbliness.

The CoE Deafblind continues to excel, being involved in seven research projects over the year:

1. Accessible mainstream technology and people with deafblindness – Swinburne University
2. Deafblind communication: building professional competency – Monash University
3. Individualised Supported Living (ISL) training evaluation – University of Melbourne
4. Exploring methodologies for establishing prevalence of deafblindness in children: a scoping review
5. Development of a Core Set for Deafblindness using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – University of Montreal, University of Melbourne
6. Development of a global definition of deafblindness – Deafblind International
7. Outcomes of using the My Assistive Technology Outcomes Framework in Africa

Research outputs have included:

- Individualised Supported Living Staff Development Project Report and report launch webinar.
- Article – scoping review of 'health communication of infectious diseases with people with intellectual disability' submitted for publication. Work undertaken with MRFF funded project in collaboration with Deakin University.

The CoE Deafblind has also provided expertise to the Department of Housing in the development of bespoke housing for people with deafblindness, including recommendations in contrast and tactile way-finding features in accessible design.

Heidelberg House and Assistive Technology

In 2021, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) announced plans to build a new home for our clients of our Heidelberg house. In early 2023, the plans were approved by DFFH and the home is currently in construction. Residents visit the site frequently to assess progress as the site is only a few doors up from their current residence.

DFFH met with the Deafblind Services Teams and Able's Deafblind advisor to ensure that all aspects of the design of the new home are designed with Deafblind client needs in mind. As part of this they worked to maximise the use of assistive technology into the new build.

Clients and their families were heavily involved in the design process to ensure the house met the client's needs. The design project was completed in December 2022 and due to some delays, the house will now be ready to move into in the second half of 2024. It is hoped that the handover from the builders to Homes Victoria will occur at the end of 2024. Homes Victoria is currently providing us with weekly updates which are shared with our clients and staff.

Able is working closely with Homes Victoria and our clients' support coordinators to ensure that clients have Supported Disability Accommodation approvals in place by the move in date.



Advocacy

We proactively build a stronger sector and awareness of the needs of people with disability across our operations, including through the CEO Collaboration, our CoE and through our brand marketing work (see page 26).

In response to the NDIS Annual Price review, the CEO Collaboration submitted a joint response on the inadequacy of the disability support worker cost model, and is calling for a loading to support registered providers who adhere to far higher standards and are not compensated for these heavy compliance costs.

The CEO Collaboration also met with Luke Turner, Senior Advisor to Minister Shorten to discuss a

proposed pricing model for a 'Registered Provider Loading', and made a submission to the NDIS Commission and NDIA CEO on reversing the removal of complex behaviour support from the High Intensity descriptors, resulting in providers unable to register for this level of support and be funded appropriately. These changes to NDIS funding have forced some providers to exit complex behaviour support clients, as it is not financially viable to support at the standard price point.

It is the view of the CEO Collaboration and Able that the pricing models are currently unsustainable. It is in the best interests of clients and the sector more broadly to ensure that we get this right, for the sake of a stronger NDIS.

Deafblind Awareness week case study

Deafblind Awareness Week included a collaboration between many organisations raising the awareness of deafblindness in the community through yarn bombing. This included Federal Ministers wearing yarn bombing in Parliament.



Deafblind International World Conference

Able CEO, Lynette McKeown together with Dr Meredith Prain, National Head of Research and CoE attended the Deafblind International World Conference in Ottawa, Canada. Dr Meredith Prain presented on Accessible websites and communication. It was a successful event, collecting information about best practice, latest developments in assistive technology and developing partnerships for the future.

Worksafe Grant

Having received a WorkSafe grant, Yooralla, Able and genU engaged consultants to undertake a review and develop a report on hoist safety in disability services, entitled: 'Lifting Safely, Living Fully: Elevating Mobility, Dignity and Quality'. This report will provide a guide for best practice in hoist use in disability.



Able Australia received a Business Distinction award from the Logan City Chamber of Commerce, for outstanding work in the local community of Jimboomba.



Day on the Bay

A beautiful winter's day was enjoyed at the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron for the annual Day on the Bay, in collaboration with Deafblind Victoria.

Clear blue skies and calm water made for perfect conditions for everyone to enjoy every moment on the water. We spotted dolphins and seals in the picturesque bay.

There was so much enjoyment for everyone who attended. Some clients enjoyed their first boat ride and hearing the boat's engine as we sped along the water, soaking in the sea air.

There was even a bonus ride in a mustang for clients who were after some adrenaline!





Grow for our future

We have a strong ambition to grow to provide our supports to more clients in existing and new ways. This includes leveraging our expertise through our

disability services and Centre of Excellence - Deafblind while developing a whole-of-life perspective to provide services to meet client needs.



Our vision for growth is starting to come to fruition, and an even brighter future is on the horizon for Able.

Opportunities for growth

During the year we secured a number of opportunities for Able, including a partnership as the preferred Supported Independent Living provider for a number of apartments in Victoria. We are working with Housing Choices to fill these homes and commence support.

We are also now providing Specialist Disability Accommodation management services for a number of properties in Tasmania, and are aiming to secure clients and service providers into these homes in the near future.

Brand awareness in our growth markets / Advocacy stance

With an increasing focus on opportunities for growth within the Tasmanian market through Specialist Disability Accommodation partnerships and other growth initiatives, the need to grow our brand awareness and reputation is key. With this in mind, we have focussed two brand campaigns in the Tasmanian market, targeting referrers to our services, as well as people with disability and their families.

In 2023 our 'Together we are Able' campaign focussed on raising brand awareness of Able, driving people to look at our Day Services and Supported Independent Living options. Targeting family decision-makers and referrers working in disability in Tasmania, the campaign ran from June – September 2023, using positive stories on catch-up TV, digital outdoor, digital display, Facebook and content seeding in Hobart and Launceston. This campaign performed well with over 1M impressions, and over 2.4k traffic to our landing page. Our benchmark metrics such as video completion rates were 8% higher than industry standards.

An example ad is here: youtu.be/b_yMmnwjPGc



This year, our 2024 brand campaign challenges the public to think about people with disability positively – to see what they have in common, rather than difference.

Our 'Just Like You' campaign uses everyday activities such as gardening, cooking and dancing to highlight how people of all abilities have dreams, goals and activities that they enjoy – just like people in broader society. By showing the public that they can connect with people with disability, we are positioning Able as a leader in disability; advocating for people with disability; and driving awareness of the Able brand in the minds and hearts of people who may be considering our services now or in the future.

We have taken the approach of inviting local clients to be our talent so that our stories are true and resonate. There's no gloss – just a beautiful human connection between a person doing something that they love, and the person watching who is welcomed into that story.

This campaign was in the Tasmanian market for May-August, using Catch-up TV

- Content Seeding through digital display on targeted online websites, including News, Health and similar media
- YouTube pre-roll advertising
- Paid and organic digital and social media marketing
- Digital billboards placed in strategic high-traffic places in Hobart and Launceston

To date this campaign has performed exceptionally well, already driving over 3k traffic to our unique landing page, with 2.7k of those people who have never visited the Able website, building strong brand awareness for Able, and advocating on behalf of people with disability.

This campaign will shortly be rolled out in Victoria to build our brand further and support our Victorian growth objectives.

<https://ableaustralia.org.au/just-like-you>



Sensory Room

Lifestyle choices Birribi, in Launceston, provides a safe environment for our clients with cognitive, behavioural and physical disabilities to engage in a range of sensory experiences. The team applied for a Stronger Communities Program grant to achieve this goal and was successful. Thanks to the grant we have been able to purchase items such as sensory lighting and lamps, noise cancelling headphones, sensory squeeze balls, books, and art equipment. Federal Member for Bass Bridget Archer visited the Newnham location, meeting with clients and their carers. “It is clear that so much effort and care has been taken into creating a space where participants can engage in a range of sensory experiences,” Mrs Archer said. “I also had the opportunity to chat with some wonderful participants, carers and local staff who are passionate about creating a community where everyone feels seen, heard, valued and respected.”

The therapeutic multi-sensory room at Newnham was funded by the Stronger Communities Program (Bass Region), from the Commonwealth of Australia - Department of Industry, Science & Resources.



National Deafblind Camp

The National Deafblind Camp was held at Phillip Island Adventure Park for 33 deafblind campers who were supported by 65 staff and volunteers. For four campers, this was their first deafblind camp and one camper had never met another deafblind person. Campers attended from Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland. The focus was on improving mental health through reducing isolation by increasing connection with other deafblind participants nationally.

The feedback was that it was the best camp that has occurred due to clear organisation, well-chosen activities and the focus on connection with people who are deafblind. Campers reported that staff and

volunteers knew how to support deafblind people without having to be reminded or asked (which can be a significant mental health issue for clients). One of the favourite activities the campers reported enjoying was the dancing, using tactile vibrating vests.

Financially, the National Deafblind Camp was sustainable, with the upside of increased revenue to the Communication Guide training program and interpreting service due to demand from the camp.

A clear sign of the success and value of the camp was the number of campers asking “when and where will the next camp be?”

The Able Australia Deafblind Camp was kindly funded by the Lionel and Yvonne Spencer Trust.





Make the complex simple

In seeking to deliver the highest quality services to our clients, we will transform the way we work, to ensure that our efforts are focused where they matter most: frontline service delivery.

To design client, family and employee experience around their needs, we will adopt new technologies, use simplified systems and streamline our processes.



As we continue to set our sights on pursuing opportunities for growth, we have also recognised the need to ensure that we have the capacity and capability to scale. We have implemented a number of strategic initiatives to support these ambitions.

We've streamlined our administration by implementing digital solutions for automated invoice and expense processing. This allows our staff to dedicate more time to our clients, enhancing the overall service experience.

A new human resources management project has brought online a far more efficient automated leave application and approval system.

A large focus has been to optimise our rostering processes and systems including shift approvals, resulting in better staff-to-client matching and more efficient rostering with reduced usage of agency staff.

In terms of our facilities management processes, we implemented a centralised property management system, using a national supplier, greatly improving our ability to promptly respond to maintenance requests.

Building disability career options

As a means of promoting the disability sector as a future career option, we provide student placement to a range of students. These include Occupational Therapy Students from Monash University and Swinburne University and Art Therapy students from Latrobe University.

We work closely with Latrobe University to support placements for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy students in Tasmania, in a joint effort to encourage Allied Health in Tasmania.

We continue to provide placements for Cert III and IV in several disability courses in Victoria and Tasmania.

The exposure to students and new learning is immensely positive for our staff and clients. We have

also recruited from these students as they have graduated.

Guest Lecturer Positions

Mr Edmund McMahon
Griffith University Gold Coast Campus, School of Engineering and Built Environment, Architecture and Design.

Ms Claire Fraser
Art Therapy Lecture
La Trobe University Art Therapy Students

Financial sustainability

We have had to make the difficult decision after many years of no increases to our rental charges and with sustainability pressures exacerbated by pricing limits, we have had to align our rental charges with the NDIS price guide. Likewise, we have had to review and reduce our fleet, to ensure that we are moving towards a financially sustainable model. While this is challenging to many who have grown accustomed to having a vehicle with ready availability, Able has subsidised this cost to the tune of millions of dollars for many years, and is not in a position to continue to do so. Many disability service providers removed their fleet vehicles in the years before Able has done so. To ensure that clients have the best possible outcomes within a sustainable model, we are working with clients and families to develop transport plans and alternative options to reduce the reliance on vehicles.

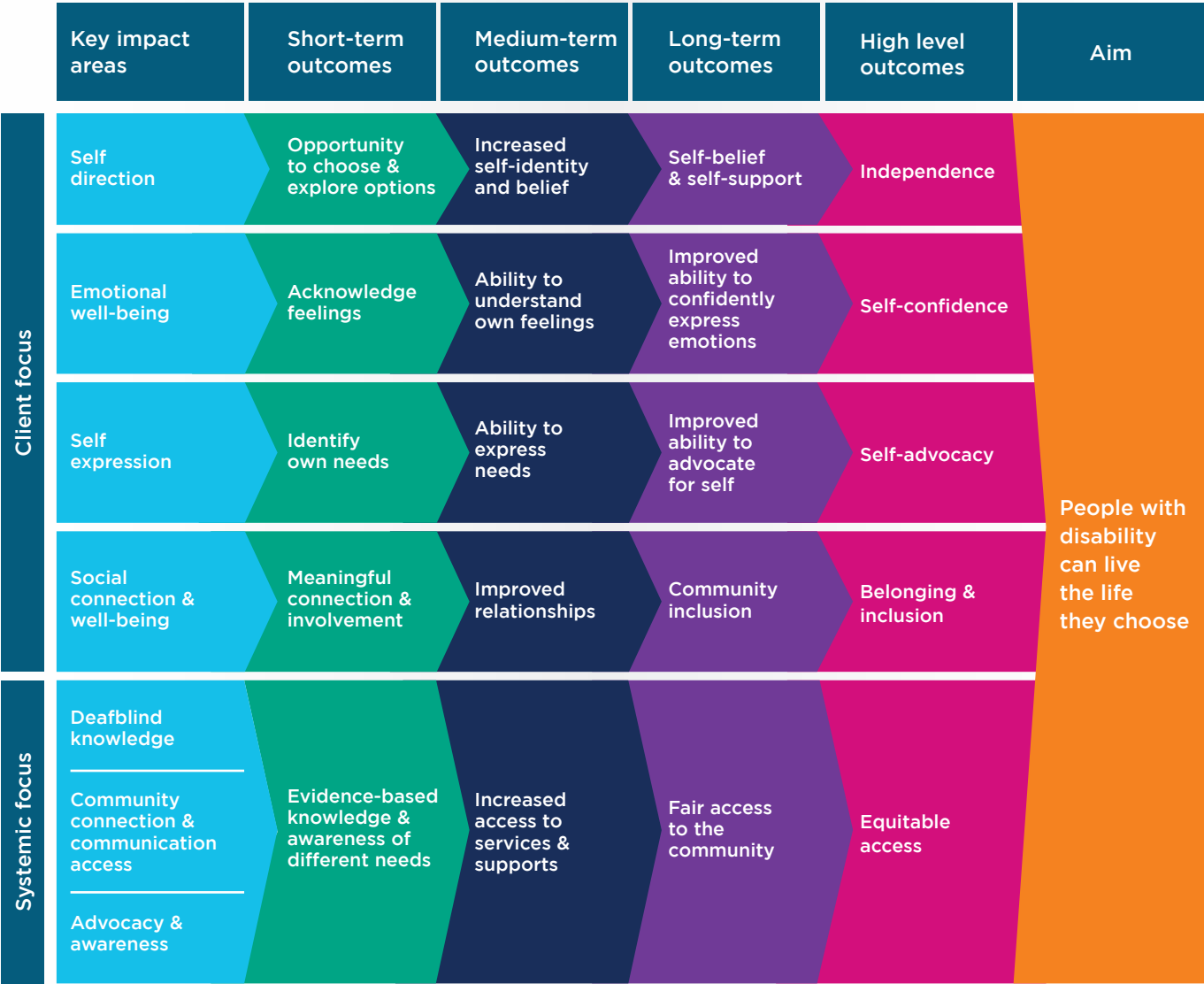
With the withdrawal of cheques approaching in the next few years – and with the predominant method of donation being cheques – our fundraising team has implemented BPay as a method of donation, reducing our reliance on cheques and educating our donors on how to donate through this method. The uptake of BPay as a donation method has been positive and the number of cheques used is decreasing, without negative impact on our fundraising revenue.

During the year we successfully negotiated our Tasmanian Enterprise Agreement with 95% of voting staff voting in favour, and are preparing for our Victorian Collective Agreement and Melbourne City Mission Residential Agreement negotiations.

Developing our Theory of Change

A theory of change is a visual and written model describing the strategies, actions and resources that an organisation uses to achieve impact and outcomes through its work. Early in 2024 we developed Able's Theory of Change with input from staff and reviewed by our Client Advisory Committee. Our Theory of Change works alongside our Better Days Every Day Framework and enables us to talk with funders and stakeholders about the impact of our work using this contemporary model of describing impact.

Theory of Change



<https://ableaustralia.org.au/about-us/our-theory-of-change>



Thanks to our Supporters and Partners

We greatly value the genuine commitment of Able Australia's generous donors to help people with disability, including deafblindness, to live their best life. With this ongoing support, we have raised over \$730,000 this year to provide our clients with programs and services that would otherwise be unfunded.

Our Donor Care Team regularly shares with donors wonderful updates on our clients and the services and activities that their kind donations are funding. We acknowledge that many of our donors have been financially supporting our programs for people with disability and deafblindness for over thirty years. We are immensely thankful for our long-term donors and extend a warm welcome to those who have recently begun supporting Able's work.

Through targeted fundraising appeals by post and online, we raised \$330,000 this year for much-needed programs and experiences for clients. We are also grateful for the 240 members of the growing Able

Community regular giving program, whose monthly donations make a substantial contribution to our programs for people with disability.

We have continued to successfully achieve additional funds for new programs and services for clients through our grants program. In 2024, grants funded projects including the Able Deafblind Camp, a new sensory room for clients and the health and wellbeing program for our young adult clients. This year, we have achieved over \$115,000 from grants from various government initiatives alongside trusts and foundations.

Able Australia was deeply grateful for the several gifts in wills received in 2023-24. These generous gifts allow us to create a meaningful legacy in honour of our donors. Thanks to this invaluable support, we will be able to make a lasting positive impact on the lives of people with disability for years to come.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to all our donors, supporters and partners, especially during these challenging times for the Australian economy. Your continued generosity has made it possible for us to implement innovative and impactful programs for people with disability that would not have been feasible otherwise.

Supporters and Partners

- Australian Government Dept. of Industry Science & Resources
- Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation
- City of Melbourne
- Deafblind Australia
- Deafblind Victoria
- HMA Foundation Pty Ltd
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Joe White Bequest
- Joan and Ronald Filmer Foundation
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund
- Monash University
- National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)
- SensesWA
- State Trustees Fund - Phyllis Nerelle Turner
- State Trustees Fund - William Arthur Shipperlee
- Swinburne University
- Teele Family Foundation
- The Lionel and Yvonne Spencer Trust
- The Russell Foundation
- University of Melbourne



Client, family and staff experience

Our client, family and staff experiences are an important element of what Able has to offer. Our survey rates show high level of satisfaction across these groups, at approximately 95%. As part of this, we focus much of our fundraising efforts on building the experiences we can offer to clients, which they may not otherwise be able to access.

During the past year we have secured funding for a range of fantastic programs, including:

1. Deafblind Camp - Building Better Days was a 3-day camp held in April 2024 for 33 deafblind people from around Australia. This camp was full of fun, adventure, connection and relaxation with accessible activities including Yoga, Art Therapy, Exercise, Archery, Flying Fox, Giant swing and a Rock'n'roll themed disco party!

Funded by The Lionel and Yvonne Spencer Trust (22-23FY but program was run in 23-24).
2. The Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation has funded our 'Health and Wellbeing Program for our clients of our Young Adult Program in Tasmania' with activities designed to build their capacity for self-care. Clients have enjoyed a variety of activities including pottery, martial arts, excursions, cooking and first aid.
3. We achieved the following Australian Government Stronger Communities Programs grants for capital items:
 - TAS \$10K for resources for a Therapeutic Multi-Sensory Room including sensory lighting, massage chair, noise cancelling headphones and art equipment (refer to page 28).
 - VIC \$10K for vital resources to assist clients with physical support needs at Able North day service program. These included a bariatric hoist with slings and flotation slings to use during assisted recreational swimming.
 - ACT \$10K for outdoor recreational resources for clients including Adult trikes with safety equipment, games and sensory equipment.
 - ACT \$10K for communal outdoor activities for clients including a BBQ, furniture, plants and landscaping.

4. City of Melbourne financially supported the Able Art exhibition in December 2023 to display artworks by Able clients for family, friends and supporters.

This year's Tax Appeal campaign 'making dreams come true' achieved an income of \$153,558 from 816 donors. Our email direct marketing (EDM) activity is achieving strong open and click-through rates, with our EDM activity driving \$4,705 in Tax Appeal income.

Revenue generated through our Trusts and Foundations program has been very successful, achieving \$115K in grants. This strong result affords Able the opportunity to provide enhanced client experiences including the Deafblind Camp in 2024.

Our Donor Regular Give program is improving with some system improvements and tailored communication with members of Able:Community.

Our Raffle is an important means of retaining donors and reengaging previous donors. Income is growing steadily, with dips showing at Christmas and Tax time when we focus on our Appeals.

We continue inspiring donations and seeking new donors and have a targeted campaign for bequests. Able received a generous \$55k bequest in November 2023.



How we are Governed



Our Governance Framework

Able Australia's governing body, the Able Australia Board, is responsible for ensuring that Able has an appropriate governance structure and culture in place.

This includes:

- Compliance - meeting statutory and regulatory obligations.
- Performance - staying up to date, relevant and assisting the Chief Executive Officer to lead the company in the best possible way.

Able Australia is a charity registered and regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC). The ACNC assists registered charities in dealing with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (Corporations Act) and the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

The Board

The Able Australia Board is accountable to all Able stakeholders for the proper pursuit of Able Australia's purpose as stated in its Constitution.

The primary role of the board is to ensure Able Australia carries out its purpose as expressed in its constitution, which is:

'...to relieve the suffering, distress, sickness, poverty and helplessness of people in need by, without limitation:

- a. providing support services and programs for people with disability;
- b. enabling access to essential goods and services for people who are vulnerable and isolated due to age, frailty or mental health impairment.'

The Board ensures that Able Australia complies with all of its contractual, statutory and legal obligations, including the requirements of relevant regulatory bodies.

To do this, Able's Board is supported by four sub-committees:

Finance, Investment and Risk Committee

- Strategically and regularly oversees and guides Able Australia's financial, audit and investment performance, key organisational risks, legal and regulatory compliance, business development and fundraising.
- Oversee remuneration functions.

Client Quality and Safeguarding Committee

- Oversees and guides Able Australia's focus on the quality, safety and efficacy of client services, oversees reportable incidents, feedback and complaints, sets and monitors strategy in relation to client experience, and provides oversight and assurance in relation to client quality and safeguarding practices.

People and Engagement Committee

- Oversees and guides Able Australia's workforce strategy, performance and engagement.
- Guides Able Australia's external stakeholder engagement initiatives and effectiveness.

Client Advisory Committee

- Increases client, carer and community participation in strategy, operations, planning and policy development at Able Australia.
- Provides direction and leadership for Able Australia in relation to the integration of client, carer and community views into all levels of strategy, operations, planning and policy development.
- Provides strategic advice to Able Australia on priority areas and issues from a client, carer and community perspective.
- Advocates on behalf of clients, carers and the community, including the promotion of greater attention and sensitivity to the needs of diverse, disadvantaged, isolated and marginalised clients and communities.
- Facilitates two-way communication between client, carer and community groups and Able Australia.
- Monitors key quality and safety measurements and client experience data, initiatives and outcomes.

Our Accreditation Frameworks

Able Australia operates within these six accreditation frameworks:

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Registration and Certification
- The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- Transport Accident Commission (TAC)
- Australian Community Industry Alliance
- Victorian Human Services Standards
- Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF)



National Office

413 Canterbury Road
Surrey Hills VIC 3127
1300 225 369

Able Australia Services

ABN 83 024 339 234
ACN 005 783 175

info@ableaustralia.org.au
ableaustralia.org.au

