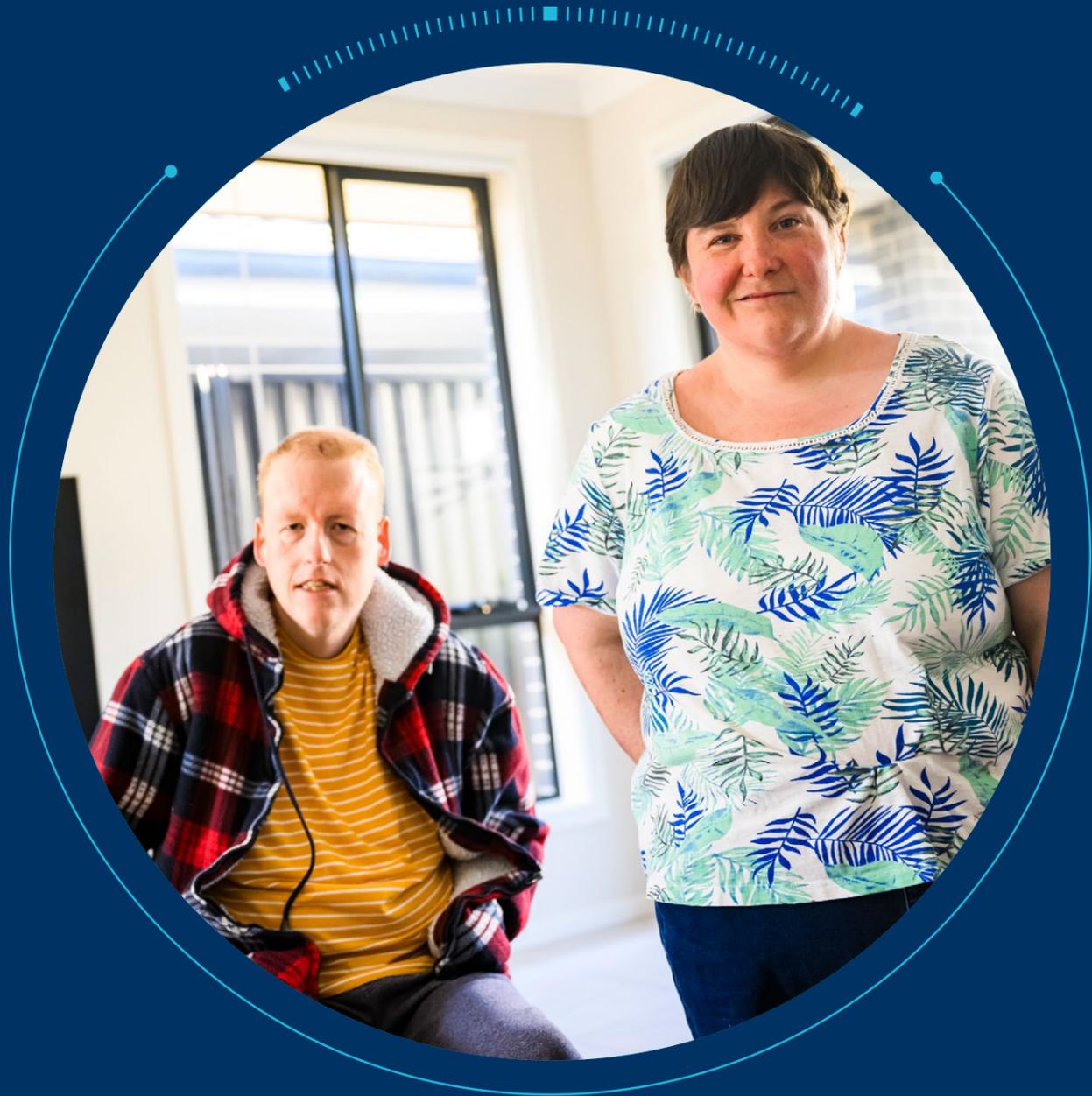




# 2023

## Annual Report



## Our Values

Integrity, respect, openness, person-centred, accountability, life-long learning.

## Our Vision

To be an organisation of excellence; a growing, flexible and proactive person-centred service.

## Our Mission

To provide exceptional services for people with disability, primarily those with an intellectual disability, and their support networks. Through person-centred support, we empower people to reach their individual goals and aspirations.



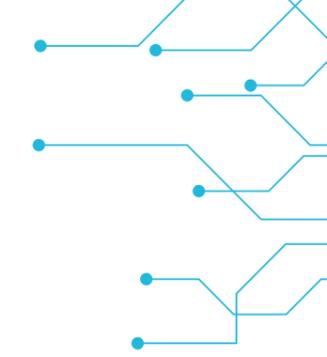
**Bolstering our governance  
in a contemporary **tech**  
environment.**



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# Chair and CEO Report

Pauline Vamos | Brett Thompson

We are pleased to present this, our first combined Chair and CEO report for Interaction's 2023 Annual Report. This represents one of the many changes that have occurred throughout the year, and it reflects changes that are forthcoming within the sector. One of the things that has not changed however, is the great service that our staff continue to provide to our participants, their families, and carers. We are indebted to our staff for the fantastic work they do each and every day.

It has been a year of change, challenges, and investment in our people and our systems. Our key focus has been implementing our digital strategy. We have implemented a new financial management system, a new payroll system, a new telephone messaging system, a human resource information system for the first time, and we are in the process of implementing new participant management software and a new rostering system. All these systems are pivotal to our organisation being sustainable in what will be an environment of continuous change, uncertainty, and challenges. These investments drive cost efficiency, better services to our participants and higher employee satisfaction.

A highlight of the year was the launch of our Online Safety Training for Young People with Disability and Their Support Networks. This was made possible by the eSafety Commissioner's Online Safety Grants

Program and a lot of hard work by Emily Griffith, Emma Pham, and Divya Saxena. This program has been shared across the country and as a free resource it provides young people with disability and their support networks with access to online safety tools to reduce the risk of cyber bullying and other inappropriate online behaviour.

It is unfortunate that such programs are required as there is a lot of important material available online, but this is tarnished by a small proportion who take advantage of those who are vulnerable.

You are all aware of the current review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the additional scrutiny being applied to all providers within the disability sector. We support the review but there is a perception that the NDIS is being abused by all providers. This is not the case, but additional scrutiny is being applied to all registered providers. Our concern is that little scrutiny is being applied to non-registered providers creating risk for all participants, providers, and the NDIS system itself.

We agree that there needs to be an increase in the governance surrounding the NDIS to ensure participants receive appropriate services and supports, but recommendations must be targeted, based

on evidence, balanced and have measurable outcomes. To achieve this, however, services need adequate data capture and reporting systems. Relying on anecdotal feedback is no longer enough, evidence needs to be objective.

The investment we have made in our technology this year will position Interaction to meet the governance requirements of the forthcoming recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. However, this investment is not encompassed within the NDIS pricing model as it is considered a component of doing business in the sector. Whilst it is understood that good governance ultimately reduces waste and errors, which in turn reduces costs, the initial investment presents a sunk cost to those providers that make the investment.

We had the opportunity to provide a submission to the NDIS Price Review this year and part of this included participating in a survey undertaken by National Disability Services, the peak national body representing providers. The findings were quite startling as it demonstrated that across all providers who participated, the NDIS Price was well below the cost of doing business. The NDIS Price reportedly includes the cost of direct staff, the cost of governance systems and processes, worker's compensation, insurance, and the remaining

overhead costs associated with operating the business. Across the range of Supported Independent Living providers, the NDIS Price was approximately 20% lower than the total cost of providing the service. This is due to the fact the rates for costs such as insurance, worker's compensation and shift penalty rates are well below what is occurring within the market, let alone the impact of inflation.

A current example is the recent minimum wage increase of 5.75% that was applied to all our staff, as per the Award increase, but the NDIS Price increased by 5.3% for the Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Community Services areas only. The price was not adjusted for Support Coordination or Behaviour and Allied Health Services for example, despite wage increases being applied to these practitioners. When there are gaps, they must be met by the provider and the participants, we believe this was not the intent of the NDIS and creates the risk of lowering standards and an increase in unregistered providers.

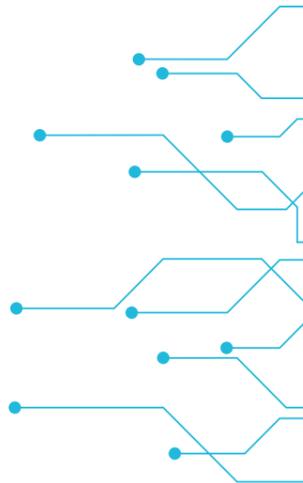
In setting our budget for this financial year we knew we would finish with a loss in part due to our investment in technology, some of the pricing impacts outlined above and some other one-off expenses that will not recur. The Board and management are closely reviewing every aspect of our strategy to ensure sustainability through growth and innovation.

There will be challenges and opportunities as the disability sector addresses the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission, Australia's Disability Strategy (2021-2031), the review of the NDIS, the Disability Services Act, Disability Employment Services and the National Strategy Care and Support Economy. We know there will be additional reporting requirements and the level of governance will continue to increase. We will continue to advocate to ensure it achieves the aim of improving the lives of people with disability, providing participants

with the ability to exercise their right to choice and control, whilst also advocating for appropriate funding to meet the additional costs borne by providers.

As a Board and management, we embrace the future and its challenges. As members, carers, and participants we thank you for your continued support.

#DefendOurNDIS  
In the leadup to the Federal Election, Interaction participated in the online and in-person campaign to help #DefendOurNDIS. On the National Day of Action, Interaction staff came together to highlight the importance of the NDIS, and the need to advocate for adequate funding for all participants - because Every Australian Counts.



# Board of Directors Profiles



## Pauline Vamos, Chair

Pauline is a governance, public policy, risk, and advocacy specialist. She is a Chair and a Non-Executive Director of both not for profit and public organisations and has over 30 years' experience in financial services.



## Rob Binskin

Rob specialises in business management and information technology systems, and currently holds the position of Business Solutions Manager at BaptistCare NSW and ACT.



## Dr Michael Fairley

Michael is a child and adolescent psychiatrist with a special interest in intellectual delay and has been in private psychiatry practice since 1982. Michael consulted with Interaction's Behaviour and Allied Health Services team for several years before joining the Board of Directors.

## Gail Bennell

Gail is a Certified Practising Speech Pathologist and Allied Health Manager with an extensive history of working exclusively with children and adults with disability. Due to business commitments, Gail stepped down from the Board in May 2023.



## Allan Dodd

Allan is a Fellow of CPA Australia and Justice of the Peace. In 1972, he started his accounting career in public practice, to later become Principal Partner for several years. After retiring in 2015, Allan joined Interaction's Board of Directors.



## Rachel Riley

Rachel is co-founder and Head of Strategic Operations of ASX listed tech company, Ansarada Limited (ASX:AND). Rachel is a qualified Chartered Accountant (ICA) with a Bachelor of Business. Rachel joined the Board in November 2022.



## Gavin Pearce

With a career in financial services spanning over 40 years, Gavin has significant management experience in strategic business development and growth at CEO level for 25 years. Gavin held the position of Chief Operations Officer of Zurich Life & Investments.

## Board Observer Report

In my role as a Board Observer since February 2023, I have been impressed by the Interaction Board's strong commitment to governance from a person-centred and human rights perspective.

As an autistic person and NDIS participant, I encounter barriers to fully participate in a socially and economically inclusive society. Diversity and inclusion are often discussed in boardrooms, but how these are implemented varies across organisations.

Many organisations believe in equality and promote this by treating all staff equally. However, this is confused with equity, which is not synonymous. The idea of equity acknowledges each person has unique needs and challenges, and endeavours to provide them with the resources they need to succeed.

Providing the opportunity for someone like myself to act as Board Observer reflects a commitment to equality. However, actively supporting and valuing their lived experiences goes a step further, showcasing a deeper dedication to equity, which is what I experienced at Interaction.

I have valued Interaction's ongoing commitment to social justice which I have seen from the Board of Directors all the way through to the front-line workers. It has been interesting to observe Interaction's efforts to streamline its operational processes, increasing productivity and efficiency as it strives to retain its market position in a fluid and competitive environment. I hope my unique perspective can contribute to the future growth of the organisation.

I would particularly like to thank Pauline Vamos for her efforts in advocating for the increased representation of individuals with lived experience on boards, and to Brett Thompson, and the Executive Leadership Team for making me feel welcome.

## Tomas Rowlandson

# Committee Reports

## Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) consists of Brett Thompson (CEO), Lauren Asmussen (Executive Officer and Company Secretary), Robyn Downie (CFO) and Luana Atger (General Manager, Accommodation).

In 2023, the ELT moved from weekly meetings to fortnightly meetings with an alternating focus on performance management and planning. This structure allows time for the ELT to focus on issues that fall within each agenda. The ELT reviews the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan, Strategic Plan, Enabler Action Plan, Emergency Disaster and Recovery Plan, Business Continuity Plan and Risk Plan to ensure that Interaction's operations are focused and considered while encouraging the growth of the organisation.

To further improve Interaction's feedback channels, the ELT changed the frequency of the Participant and Family Survey and Staff Culture surveys from every second year to annually. Carried out by an independent organisation, these more frequent surveys allow the ELT to better respond to families, participants and staff on how and where Interaction can improve supports.

Internally, the ELT concentrated on improving communication channels for all staff, particularly frontline workers. This was in the form of Monthly Focus articles, where a particular topic is presented to staff via email and Microsoft Teams, a new Staff Newsletter, and regular updates on our SharePoint page.

Following on from the improvement of internal systems and processes in 2022, the ELT has supported the organisation in the implementation of multiple software rollouts across Finance, Payroll, Human Resources (HR), and its participant record management system. These programs have been implemented to provide a seamless working environment for staff, which in turn improves services for participants.

In line with sector requirements, the ELT also managed and monitored mandatory training for all staff across various topics including return to work rehabilitation, emergency and disaster management and much more.

The ELT farewelled Helen Amos (General Manager Community Services) this year as she embarked on a career change with a move into the role of Behaviour Support Practitioner within Interaction's BAHS team.

## Finance and Risk Committee

As Chair of the Risk Committee and a recent addition to the Board, I am honoured to be part of Interaction. Since assuming the Chair role in February 2023, I have witnessed the organisation's unwavering commitment to excellence and the provision of exceptional services for people with disability.

Before delving into our accomplishments, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Allan Dodd, the prior Chair, for his invaluable contributions and leadership.

### Progress and Foundations for Growth

The past year has been transformative for Interaction and its Finance and Risk Committee. We have navigated challenges in the sector while diligently laying the foundations for sustainable growth. The introduction of new systems, including a new financial system, HR, and payroll systems, marks a significant milestone in our progress. These new systems provide increased visibility over key services and profit centres, enabling us to conduct deeper reviews, make informed decisions to enhance operational leverage and pursue opportunities aligned with our strategy. Moreover, the integration of technology allows us to increase efficiency and reduce manual tasks and associated costs, leading to greater productivity and a foundation for scalable growth.

### Strategic Financial Management and resilience

Interaction, like many others in the sector, has faced challenges in navigating cost increases and funding gaps. Although we welcome recent NDIS pricing increases in SIL and community supports, it is crucial to acknowledge the persistent funding gaps between the services provided and NDIS funding. These gaps present financial challenges that require strategic financial management to sustain our operations effectively. Additionally, the disability services sector has witnessed substantial increases in insurance premiums, award and compensation increases, all impacting our operational leverage.

The Finance and Risk Committee, in close collaboration with the Board, has demonstrated remarkable resilience and foresight in navigating and making changes to enhance operational efficiency and strategic positioning.

### Risk Management and Governance

As the disability sector undergoes considerable changes, we have responded proactively to adapt to the evolving landscape. Throughout the year, the Board and Executive Leadership Committee conducted risk workshops to assess and manage existing risks while proactively identifying new risks affecting the organisation. These exercises have been instrumental in driving positive

outcomes, including enhanced training, improved results, and successful external audits. The implementation of new policies and ongoing policy reviews has further solidified our risk management framework. To safeguard sensitive information and protect stakeholders' interests, we have taken significant steps to enhance our cybersecurity and IT health. Our achievement of Essential 8 maturity level 1 during the financial year reflects our dedication to data security.

As we embrace change and continue to respond to evolving challenges, Interaction remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering exceptional services. We are confident in our capacity to navigate the shifting landscape, secure in the knowledge that our strategic groundwork and resilient risk management will enable us to thrive.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all members of the Finance and Risk Committee. Central to laying new foundations and navigating impacts has been Robyn Downie, our Chief Financial Officer. Robyn and her team, alongside our CEO, have worked hard to deliver new foundations, navigate challenges and constant change in the sector and move forward on opportunities.

Together, we will forge ahead, creating a lasting and positive impact on the lives of our participants and the broader community.

**Rachel Riley**  
Committee Chair



## People, Practices and Culture Committee

The People, Practices and Culture Committee provides oversight of organisational culture and Interaction's performance and remuneration practices, and Board renewal.

**A highlight for the year was the very good results in the Staff Engagement and Alignment Survey. 80% reported being aligned with the organisation (a feeling of being connected) and 69% were engaged (focusing on their work, whilst at work). These are good results when compared with other organisations, linked to staff reporting the organisation holds them to high ethical standards, the organisation is focused on participant outcomes and leaders set a good example with respect to work, health, safety, and well-being.**

To ensure that this continues into the future, the Committee will focus on feedback from exit interviews, the improvement of annual performance appraisals and reviews, and ensure that there are adequate training and development opportunities for staff in every area of the organisation. While the Royal Commission report is yet to be published, we are monitoring the interim findings to assess any opportunities to enhance comes to a close, Interaction's policies concerning employee conduct and risk to ensure that we are providing best practice supports to our participants.

Work, health, safety and well-being is a priority for the organisation and a lot of improvements have been made in the last year. These include focusing on supporting any injured workers to return to work as soon as possible, encouraging staff to access the Employee Assistance Program where required and ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities associated with our comprehensive Return to Work Program.

At a governance level, the Committee regularly reviews remuneration policies, as well as oversight and evaluation of Board and CEO performance. I look forward to reporting on a productive 12 months ahead in the 2024 Annual Report.

**Gavin Pearce**  
Committee Chair

## Safety and Quality Committee

The Safety and Quality Committee monitors quality and safeguarding sector developments and reviews organisational policies, processes and systems to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and standards. The Committee is passionate about upholding participants' rights across all areas of discussion. The Committee increased its membership to include broader program representation across different levels of service delivery.

Key achievements for the Committee included:

- **Participant-led Practice Review Committee and 2023 calendar of topics that informs Interaction's current and future processes and policies. This has resulted in the formation of an Easy Read Policy Review Committee led by participants.**
- **Reviewing the Public Hearing Reports of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and recommending internal actions for continuous improvement;**
- **Reviewing forty-one policies over the July 2022 to June 2023 period for CEO, Board and participant endorsement;**
- **Developing and implementing policies and related processes in response to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission practice alerts and updated NDIS Quality Indicators framework;**
- **Conducting its annual internal quality audit. This process involved cross-departmental reviews of program practices, site visits and participant feedback; and**
- **Regular oversight of compliance audit requests and responses ensuring all matters were addressed within their set timeframes.**

**Lauren Asmussen**  
Committee Chair

## Stakeholder Engagement Committee

The Stakeholder Engagement Committee, consisting of participants, parents and staff, has continued to meet every second month. 2023 has been a busy and productive year for the Committee, with several events including Family Day and Carers Week. The Committee assisted with various Interaction projects by providing feedback and insight from a parent/carer and participant perspective, as well as supporting Interaction in providing feedback channels for participants and families.

The Committee reviewed the results of the annual Family Survey, provided practical feedback and insight into new initiatives such as the Participant Oral Healthcare Checks held at our Bella Vista office, and reviewed compliments and complaints.

**"I can say that I have felt very honoured to be included on the Committee and have felt that all my comments are taken onboard. The highlights of my time on the Committee have been the successful family days that have been run by the staff with improvement every year. The content of the meetings and being kept updated on all improvements taking place within Interaction.**

**As a parent I feel very comfortable the way everything is moving forward."**

**Sue Waesch** (Parent of Interaction participant)

**"I've really enjoyed being part of this Committee and hearing different perspectives. I think it's been so valuable having staff, participants and participants' parents working together and sharing ideas. I feel that our role as an organisation is to support our participants and their families to achieve their goals and we can't do this if we are not listening to them!"**

**Dianne Robinson** (Interaction staff member and parent of participant)

We look forward to sharing news of another exciting 12 months in next year's report as the Committee continues to find opportunities to improve Interaction's service offerings and host events to encourage connection between participants and families.

**Brett Thompson**  
Acting Committee Chair

## Workplace Health and Safety and Wellbeing Committee

The refreshed Work Health & Safety and Wellbeing Committee is comprised of members of both office-based and support staff. The Committee meets to review reported hazards and incidents across all Interaction sites, develop schedules for consistent and regular workplace inspections and to address any concerns rising from these inspections. As safety of Interaction staff is a key concern for the Committee, work health and safety training opportunities are identified and assessed according to the needs of each service area.

To support the wellbeing of Interaction staff, the Committee continues to support the People and Culture team in the Wellness Wednesdays initiative, where each week issues such as interpersonal communication and conflict resolution is explored. An Employee Assistance Program provider continues to give all Interaction staff access to free counselling sessions and other supports when and where they need it at no personal cost.

**Cassandra Shelley**  
Committee Chair



### Business Systems Steering Committee

The Business Systems Steering Committee was created to oversee the significant number of new systems being implemented at Interaction. The Committee members are Naveen Bharathi (Business Systems/Project Manager), Rob Binskin (Director), Brett Thompson (CEO), Lauren Asmussen (Executive Officer), Tom Sander (The IT Department), Robyn Downie (CFO) and Luana Atger (General Manager, Accommodation).

A review of Interaction's business management systems found that a lack of integration between applications was causing inefficiencies in the management of the provision of supports. In response, Interaction identified the need for new systems that would optimise internal processes, improve collaboration, reduce the use of collaboration tools and manual processes, and have a centralised source that would enhance overall organisational performance.

Over the last 12 months, the first phase of these projects has seen the implementation of Wiise and Employment Hero.

Launched in April 2023, Wiise is an accounting and financial management software that provides Interaction with access to detailed accounting, general ledger, accounts receivable, accounts payable, purchase and sales invoices, and a chart of accounts specifically designed for NDIS claims.

Launched in May 2023, Employment Hero's Keypay automates Interaction's payroll by importing timesheet data, gross to net reporting, leave accruals, super calculations and ATO reporting. Keypay also allows for the automation of Award interpretation and pay conditions in compliance with Fair Work Australia regulations.

Employment Hero's Human Resources Information System (HRIS) was also launched in May 2023. This system has streamlined Interaction's human resources processes by creating a centralised employee database for improved data management. As part of this implementation, Interaction introduced self-service features and the use of a mobile app, empowering staff to view and manage their data efficiently.

The next point of focus for the Committee is the implementation of Easy Employer and Lumary, which will allow Interaction to provide an end-to-end scheduling and claims management solution with an emphasis on compliance and quick access to any information within the system.

The implementation of these new systems will allow for improved operational efficiency and reduced manual errors, increased employee productivity and collaboration and enhanced customer satisfaction through personalised interactions.

Ongoing plans for the Committee are to:

- Continuously monitor and optimise the systems for maximum performance.
- Explore possibilities of integrating all systems via API.
- Leverage and introduce reporting to gain deeper insights.
- Regularly update the systems to stay aligned with technological advancements.

I look forward to sharing these results with you in next year's report.

**Naveen Bharathi**  
Business Systems Project Manager



### Practice Review Committee

The newly formed Practice Review Committee is a mix of participants and staff from different roles who meet once a month to discuss a chosen Interaction policy or procedure. The Committee discusses how the selected policy or procedure impacts each group of people (participants, frontline staff, office staff) and what changes can be made to the policies or procedures, and what those making decisions about policies and procedures should consider in future.

The Committee meets in cafes and pubs to give members the opportunity to build relationships while discussing agenda items. All members are committed to identifying and implementing positive change for the benefit of Interaction participants and staff.

A tangible and immediate outcome after one of the Committee's first meetings was to establish a monthly social group for participants. The social group is open to both Interaction and other participants who want to make new friends.

The Committee also identified that participants felt they weren't consulted in policy reviews. As a result, two participants from the Committee have been heavily involved in the review of all Interaction easy read policies.

Over the next 12 months the Committee will continue to be open and transparent in its commitment to continuous improvement.

**Kristina Strbac**  
Committee Chair

### CELEBRATING THREE DECADES OF SUPPORT!

2022 marks 30 years since the establishment of Interaction's very first PWS-specific accommodation program. For many years, this was the only program of its kind in Australia.

Originally, the property was home to Karen, David and Robert. Andrew now lives with Karen and David and has done so since 2003. At Interaction's 2022 AGM, Karen, David and Andrew were presented with gifts by our Chair, Pauline Vamos, to mark the occasion.



### INTERACTION PROUDLY SPONSORS KICKABILITY!

We are thrilled to share that Interaction is an official sponsor of Kickability, Pennant Hills Junior Demons' inclusive AFL program. Kickability is for young people aged 5-16 years who are living with disability or may require additional support to play AFL.

Interaction has worked closely with Pennant Hills Junior Demons to provide a sensory space for kids to access during games should they need it.





# Accommodation

Our Accommodation space has seen major change over the past year. The restructure altered the way in which our accommodation services are managed and as the change rolled out, the streamlining of processes and policy implementation aligned with it. The new Accommodation Manager role is now firmly imbedded across Accommodation services and the benefits for participants, families and staff having this dedicated role in place have become more apparent as the year progressed. All the teams have worked together to support participants and families with the changes in the structure and what that meant for each person.

I would like to thank the Accommodation team for their continued service to our participants, particularly over the past three years as we navigated the pandemic. The stricter COVID-19 requirements in place for disability services have meant that our participants have been safe as well as our staff. We have worked together

to ensure the risks are minimised and have managed any cases with dedication and without hesitation.

Over the year we have welcomed new participants into our services and continue to work with our Marketing team to spread far and wide information about Interaction Disability Services and the work we do. Our Senior Management team actively pursue new opportunities for growth and development of new services along with filling the few remaining vacancies we have in our existing properties.

Supporting all this work are the people and systems that sit behind the scenes ensuring we can work as efficiently as possible so the focus can remain primarily on support and service delivery. We welcomed the rollout of new HR and Finance systems and look forward to the new participant database and staff rostering system that are in the final stages before implementation.

The outcomes from the Participant and Family Survey indicated a need to look at the maintenance and upkeep of our

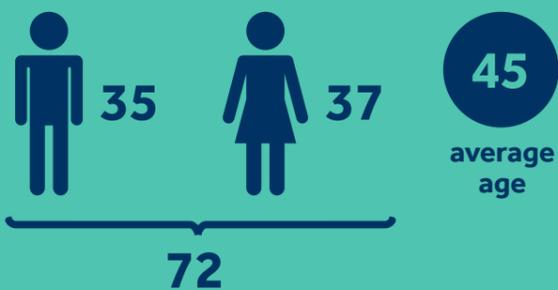
services. To encourage further feedback and involvement from participants and families, a Working Group was established. This group has met to discuss the maintenance requirements for Interaction properties, and how Interaction can improve its accommodation service.

Over the past year we have worked together to have in place a new streamlined WHS Audit system which supports the capture of any issues at the services. Again, the whole team work to ensure all risks are mitigated and the standard of our homes is maintained or increased.

We continue to provide Accommodation services with dedication and a commitment to our organisational values. We are open to feedback at any time and look forward to this as part of our continuous improvement within the department.

**Luana Atger**  
General Manager, Accommodation

## Number of accommodation participants



## Properties



## Troy Completes the Challenge Walk!

The Campbelltown City Challenge Walk is an annual event where attendees complete a 6km course in the beautiful Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan.

This year, Troy participated in the walk for the very first time and was successful in completing the full track! Supported by Interaction staff member Toufic, Troy finished the walk in 1 hour and 14 minutes. Well done, Troy!



## Thank You Hollard!

Interaction participants Andrew and Daniel were lucky enough to have a team of very generous and hard-working volunteers from Hollard give their house a refresh!

The team spent the day gardening, cutting branches, deep cleaning and doing maintenance jobs followed by a BBQ lunch cooked by Andrew.

Thank you Hollard, we are very grateful for your support!





# Support Coordination

The Support Coordination team has welcomed a new manager this year, as well as welcoming back two of our Support Coordinators from maternity leave. We have had two Support Coordinators upskill to become Specialist Support Coordinators and a new permanent member to our team.

We have been out and about representing Interaction at expos, meet and greets and other networking opportunities to grow our support coordination network, as well as our case loads and expanding out of Sydney.

The team always have participant interests at heart and are always willing to go above and beyond to achieve results for their participants. I'm proud of the amazing work my team has put in this year and continue to put in.

When speaking with some of our families, they described to me a few of the things they receive from their Support Coordinator:

“ I live in Queensland just wanted to let you know that my sister is and has been supported by a great team. As you can imagine living so far away it is good to know that she has wonderful support around helping in building her confidence towards her independent living”

“ We commend your Support Coordination Team for their remarkable support to our son and us, his family, since we first reached out in 2016. The Team have been tremendous supporters to our journey through what is a huge learning process for us and which has resulted in our son gaining his much deserved and essential help in his rehabilitation and transition to his new life situation.”

**Jessica O'Connor**  
Specialist Support Coordinator

## Some achievements from our Support Coordination participants

- Trips to Canberra, Coffs Harbour, Kiama, Blue Mountains, Newcastle
- Achieved driver's L's and now working on getting P's
- Visits to see a beloved pet dog
- Getting out of the house
- Exercise during Covid
- Learning to control emotions
- Building better relationships
- Accessing rehab gym and making good progress
- Meeting people with similar conditions
- Joined Hip Hop dance group
- Meeting new people with same interests and age group
- Went whale watching
- Returned to work
- Attended a job interview
- Attending church
- Connected with women's groups
- Went swimming
- Played basketball
- Riding horses
- Joined hydrotherapy
- Attended a musical
- Attended regular physio
- Improved and maintaining balance, coordination and core strength
- Numeracy & literacy skills and completing handbooks independently
- Maintained employment and made new friends
- Landscaping around the home while adding to the plant collection
- Assisted to remain living in their own home
- Remained in regular contact with family over phone and visiting

## Beth meets Paralympian Ellie Cole

Interaction participant Beth joined a local celebration for International Women's Day. Beth joined in the craft and colouring activities and was thrilled to listen to retired Australian Paralympian Ellie Cole's inspiring story.

Beth was lucky enough to speak with Ellie and get a photo together.





# Community Access and Self Care

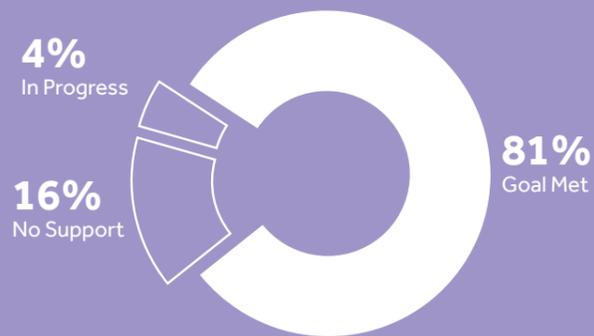
The last 12 months has yet again seen the ongoing commitment our team of Support Workers have for Community Access and Self Care participants. Community Access and Self Care Coordinators are focused on supporting our frontline staff as a means of ensuring that participants receive the best possible supports, and our staff have what they need to make this happen.

We were thrilled to see one of our Support Workers, Michelle Liu, named as Interaction's Employee of the Year for the patient and dedicated care she offers participants. Thank you to each person who nominated a colleague for Employee of the Month or a participant for Goal Kicker of the Year. We love to hear about these achievements.

As can be seen in the list below, Interaction participants had a very busy and eventful year. We would like to acknowledge two achievements in particular – one participant commenced university study, and another found a new job working in a kitchen. We are incredibly proud of the goals being met by our participants.

The Community Access and Self Care regularly monitor a goal tracking system for participants receiving supports. These goals are tracked with the help of our Support Workers and their shift reports. This year, 611 goals were met by participants, and 163 goals are currently in progress.

### Goal Achievement



### SOME OF THE GOALS ACHIEVED BY PARTICIPANTS THIS YEAR ARE:

- Trial employment
- Attended work with support
- Visited families living far away
- Line dancing
- Joined a gym
- Swimming lessons
- Went bowling
- Played basketball
- Guitar lessons
- Pottery classes
- Attended Leisure Link activities
- Visited Vivid Sydney
- Hydrotherapy
- Music therapy
- Taking all different forms of public transport
- Attending church
- Bushwalking
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise
- Excursions to Newcastle and Canberra
- Travel training
- Keeping a clean and tidy home
- Dubbo Zoo visit
- Trip to Canberra
- Trip to Western Australia
- Moving into SIL Accommodation

In the new year, our program will continue to grow and deliver supports to our wonderful participants.

## Introducing our Easy Read policy review committee, Amy and Daniel!

Amy and Daniel have been Interaction participants for many years and have been actively involved in providing administrative support to us in the past few months. They are stellar Committee members, offering any criticisms or shortcomings they feel in our easy read policies, and clarifying anything they don't understand. This helps us test the language and layout we use with each policy to ensure it is easy to understand for all!



Meet Jen, Priceline's makeup expert! Jen has worked at Priceline for more than 10 years and recently invited Interaction along to see what a day at work is like for her. We were impressed by her knowledge of the store and how easily she assisted customers.



# Behaviour and Allied Health Services

The Behaviour and Allied Health Services (BAHS) team consists of a practice manager, admin officers, psychologists, provisional psychologists, counsellors and behaviour support practitioners. The number of clinicians in our team and the number of participants receiving support have grown significantly over the past 12 months. There are currently 188 BAHS participants across Sydney, Wollongong, and the Central Coast regions. The expansion of the team has also allowed for the addition of a second administrative officer to support our clinicians, allowing them to focus on their participants and support delivery. There has been a continued expansion on the Central Coast and the team has moved into office space to accommodate the needs of our therapy participants and local clinicians.

There are two main areas of service delivery in the NDIS that the BAHS team currently provides - Improved Relationships and Improved Daily Living. With varying degrees of complexity, Improved Relationships includes all aspects of behaviour support, implementation, and training. Participants and their support networks are offered both mobile and

clinic-based behaviour support services. Supports such as individual psychological therapy, assessment and counselling fall under the Improved Daily Living category.

We are excited about expanding our services in both previously offered areas and in new areas. Training and supports continues to be provided to participants, support staff, and families. Behaviour Support, Safety Intervention, and Dementia Care are among the training delivered in 2023. BAHS will also continue to play a key role in delivering supports to participants with Prader-Willi Syndrome.

In order to sustain positive outcomes for participants and their families, BAHS will continue to improve its systems and service delivery, focusing on providing quality goal-driven services in consultation with our participants and their stakeholders.

**Kim Konowec**  
Practice Manager



Aiden has been working very hard towards his weight loss goal over the last couple of years and since joining a new day program he has managed to lose an impressive 15 kgs! Those who know and support Aiden know what an impressive feat this is for him.

With staff support, Aiden continues to smash his goals, and improve his health by routinely attending day program, participating in regular exercise, and eating healthier meals. We are all very proud of the hard work that Aiden has put into achieving his goal!



# Activities and Events

## Family Day

Interaction's successful Family Day events continued in 2023. Participants, families, carers, and staff enjoyed the events with entertainment, lunch, and a chance to catch up with friends.

A very big thank you to local sponsors for their generous donations of gift vouchers and lucky door prizes.



## Carers Week

Every year, Carers Week is celebrated around Australia. This year, Interaction invited carers to attend a private gold class movie screening in acknowledgement of the amazing work they do. A relaxing morning with refreshments and the opportunity to meet like-minded people was enjoyed by all.



# Christmas Party

It was wonderful to have everyone together at our 2022 Christmas party, the first time we have been able to hold this event in-person in 3 years. Everyone enjoyed dinner, dancing with DJ Darran, and a gift from Santa. The photobooth was a hit with our participants and their happy faces say it all!



# People and Culture Report

Interaction has grown its employee numbers by 6% in the last financial year, bringing our total number of staff to 267. The staff turnover rate is at 3% which is low in comparison to other sectors, especially in this period of skill shortages.

Once again, we have seen consistency in the number of staff between the ages of 25-44. Interaction continues to maintain a notable percentage of employees over the age of 45, most of whom have a loyal and lengthy employment with our organisation.

We saw significant growth in our Support Coordination team, and Accommodation remains our largest service area in terms of staff numbers. The People and Culture team focused on providing the necessary supports to frontline staff throughout lockdowns and restrictions to assist in the organisation's ability to provide continuity of service for all participants.



**24%**  
**Full Time**



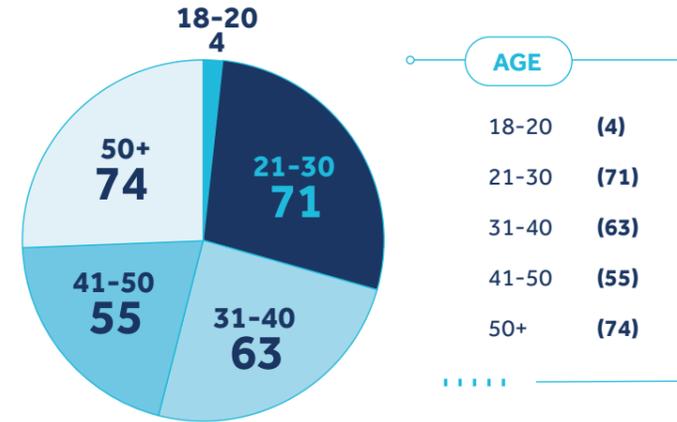
**26%**  
**Part Time**



**50%**  
**Casual**



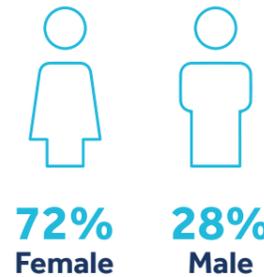
### STAFF BREAK DOWN BY AGE



### STAFF BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Accommodation                  | <b>69%</b>   |
| Support Coordination           | <b>2.6%</b>  |
| Community Access and Self Care | <b>16.4%</b> |
| BAHS                           | <b>6.5%</b>  |
| Administration etc             | <b>5.5%</b>  |

### GENDER BREAKDOWN



# Staff Satisfaction Survey

At Interaction, we strongly believe that if our employees are happy, there will be a roll-on effect resulting in positive relationships with our participants. To ensure that we are providing the support our staff need to be able to best perform in their individual roles, we engage an external agency to survey all employees.

In the most recent survey, Interaction staff responded that the top 3 things that Interaction does well are:

**87%**

Upholding the highest ethical standards

**87%**

Focusing on participant outcomes

**85%**

The person I report to sets a good example when it comes to health and safety

Interaction staff responded that our greatest strengths are:



Workplace health and safety



Risk management



Privacy and confidentiality

**84%**

of respondents said they are proud to work at Interaction.



Looking after their participants well, allowing them to make their own decisions.



Interaction fully supports their staff at all times.



Looking after employee health and safety.



Commitment to meet disability service standards.



Managing everyone respectfully.



Flexible working, staff training support.



Management is always approachable.



Maintaining interpersonal contact with participants and families.



Always finding ways to improve service standards.



Great culture from top management.



Supporting participants to be at the centre of their decisions while upholding their duty of care.

# Participant and Family Satisfaction Survey

Focusing on the needs and wants of participants and families allows Interaction to provide the best possible supports. The annual Participant & Family Satisfaction Survey carried out by Insync helps us to better understand the quality of our current practices as well as areas for improvement.

**In the most recent survey, participants and families responded that their top 3 experiences with Interaction are:**



## PARTICIPANT NEEDS AND SUPPORTS

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| I am involved in decision making about the support I receive                 | <b>91%</b> |
| Interaction understands my needs   | <b>91%</b> |
| I feel safe when supported by Interaction staff                              | <b>90%</b> |
| Interaction provides quality services  | <b>90%</b> |
| Interaction staff are trained to support me                                  | <b>88%</b> |
| Interaction helps me set and work towards achieving my goals and aspirations | <b>85%</b> |

## ACCOMMODATION SUPPORTS

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Staff respect my privacy in my home                       | <b>95%</b> |
| My home is safe to enter and exit (e.g., lighting, ramps) | <b>93%</b> |
| I enjoy the quality of food                               | <b>88%</b> |
| My home is free of rubbish                                | <b>83%</b> |

“ Great knowledge base and experience regarding the NDIS.

“ Support and understanding of the clients’s needs.

“ Staff always friendly and understanding.

“ Staff are genuinely concerned for my family and are diligent in their duties.

“ They are professional, and they listen to what we need. They also follow up.

“ Honesty, knowledge and good communication.

“ Our family member is as happy, comfortable, cared for, and encouraged as she can be.

“ A safe and friendly environment.

“ Very professional and dedicated.

“ Some long-term permanent support workers have made a genuine positive difference in my child’s life. I am deeply appreciative of them.

# Employee of the Year

We congratulate all staff nominated for Employee of the Month Awards. Listed are the recipients, along with the Employee of the Year, who were recognised by Interaction's CEO and Executive Leadership Team.

## Employee of the Month

**Nada Naboulsi**

Keeping an open mind and staying focused in difficult and complex situation.

**Lauren Asmussen**

Successful management of the IT changeover.

**Kylie Edmondston**

Overseeing the review of Interaction's electricity and gas supply across the Support Office and all Accommodation sites, resulting in huge savings.

**Kerry Ringrose**

For family recognition of your engaged and caring approach to supporting participants.

**Emmanuel Ufot**

Showing compassion and kindness for a participant when he was unwell.

**Vickki Ha**

For kind, considerate and thoughtful demeanour when supporting a participant.

**Holly Nicol**

Being responsive, professional and supportive to her team and participants throughout recent changes and IT updates.

**Dianne Robinson**

Achieving organisational savings for accommodation services and assistance in organising prizes and preparations for Family Day.

**Candice Joseph**

Taking on the role of Key Worker with positivity and genuine passion.



## Employee of the Year

**Michelle Liu**

Going above and beyond for a participant during a difficult time with positive feedback from the family for your hard work and dedication.

# Goal Kicker of the Year

Goal Kicker of the Month is a way for us to recognise the hard work our participants put in to achieving their goals. The 2022 Goal Kicker of the Year was announced at the Christmas Party and all monthly winners are listed below.

## Goal Kicker of the Month

**Tracy Oates**

Moving into her own home.

**Terry Whitehouse**

Showing great confidence when accessing the community independently.

**Lana Gievski**

Travelling overseas independently.

**Adrian Grogan**

Assisting with Family Day and cooking the BBQ for attendees.

**Jack Fogarty**

Securing a new job after a lengthy search.

**Ben Barber**

Starting his own dog-walking business and selling his woodwork at the markets.

**Melissa Hawes**

Focusing on her health and exercising regularly to lose weight.

**Cheyene Davis**

Showing incredible confidence during a live filming project.

## Goal Kicker of the Year

**Tiana Tallon**

Tiana was awarded Goal Kicker of the Year for providing incredible support to an Interaction staff member who had a medical episode. Tiana stayed calm, called an ambulance, and provided the correct first aid while awaiting paramedics. Her brave actions led to an amazing outcome. Well done, Tiana, you're a very deserving winner!

For her outstanding efforts, Tiana was also awarded a Certificate of Recognition by NSW Ambulance. The award was presented to her by NSW Ambulance's Associate Director of Clinical Operations Ian Johns.

The special ceremony to recognise Tiana was also attended by NSW Ambulance Protocol Officer Jordi Blakely, The Hills Shire Council Mayor Dr Peter Gangemi, Interaction's Chair Pauline Vamos, CEO Brett Thompson, the Executive Leadership Team, Interaction staff and Tiana's family.



# 2022-2023 Contributions

Interaction sends a special message of thanks to every person who made a donation this past year. Your support is valued and has enabled us to continue to provide excellent services and resources to the people we support.

## INTERACTION'S ONLINE SAFETY TRAINING

In 2021, Interaction was named as a grant recipient under the Office of the eSafety Commissioner's Online Safety Grants program. After 18 months of development, Interaction's Online Safety Training for Young People with Disability was published. The final product is five training modules for young people with disability, and three training modules for parents, carers and educators.

With input from sector experts such as ySafe, Australia's leading cyber safety training experts, Interaction consulted with participants, families and carers throughout the project. Making sure that participants were represented was a key consideration throughout the project.

As young people with disability have diverse learning needs, accessible and inclusive design was the focus during the design of the custom-built online learning platform that included AUSLAN interpretation, closed captioning, easy-read documents, text to audio, and other tools. For parents, carers and educators, the inclusion of sector-specific information was key.

Interaction is very proud to be able to offer this vital resource to the community at no cost, and we encourage you to make use of the training.



**Successful**  
grant recipient

# Finance Report

In the fiscal year 2023, Interaction embarked on a profound journey of transformation, guided by a strategic vision to enhance data visibility, safeguard financial data and increased data integrity. This transformative endeavour involved substantial investments in Financial Systems, Payroll Systems, and Human Resources Systems, equipping us with the tools necessary for precision and efficiency in our financial operations.

Our commitment to continuous investment and improvement extended to Rostering Systems and Client Relationship Systems, where ongoing development efforts sought to streamline operations and foster stronger, more meaningful client relationships. Concurrently, we undertook a comprehensive restructuring of our Financial Reports, reimagining them for greater clarity and insight. Workflow processes were reengineered to optimise resource allocation, enabling us to channel our increased investment into value-added activities that pushed us forward.

As we reflect upon these transformative efforts, we recognise that our pursuit of quality and communication has been a driving force behind our operations. We are committed to utilising the full potential of these improvements, leveraging them to overcome challenges, and steering our organisation toward a future of sustained growth and resilience.

Whilst the year finished on a negative surplus, a marked departure from the prior year, we embrace this challenge as an opportunity for deeper self-analysis and strategic refinement. Interaction is firmly dedicated to the diligent management and mitigation of risks, the maximisation of operational efficiency, and the exploration of avenues that facilitate sustainable growth. Our unwavering focus remains dedicated to delivering long-term value to our stakeholders.

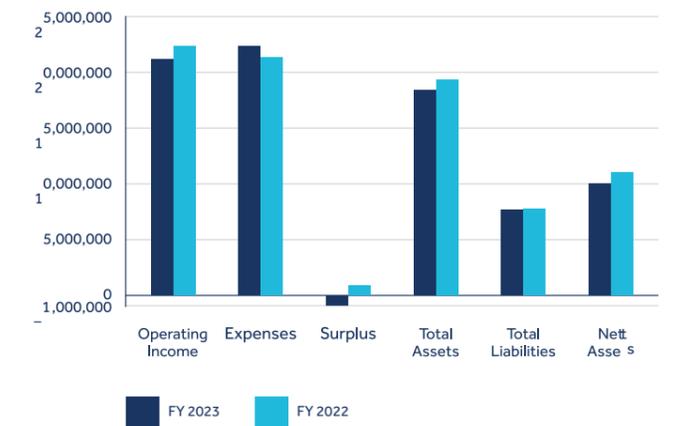
While these negative surplus results present us with formidable challenges, they simultaneously offer a platform for comprehensive evaluation of self-analysis and strategic refinement. Interaction recognises the importance of collectively scrutinising the contributing factors, reassessing our financial strategies, and identifying areas for improvement. Our commitment to addressing these challenges is unwavering.

Interaction's financial reports were thoroughly constructed in strict adherence to the applicable Australian Accounting Standards and full compliance with the requirements outlined in the Corporations Act of 2001.

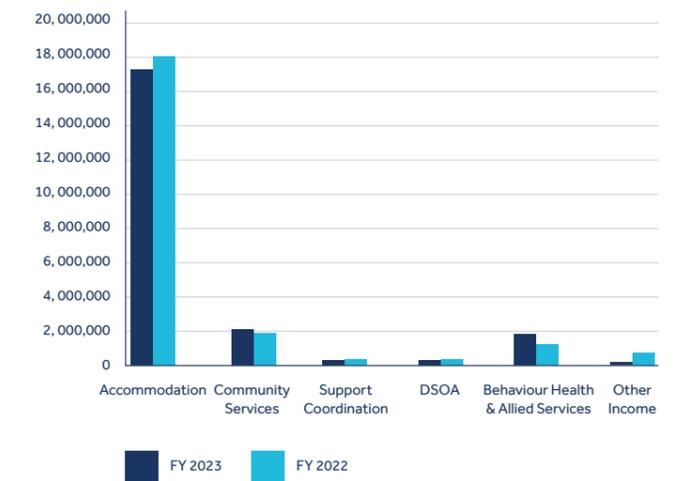
**Robyn Downie | Chief Financial Officer**

## Financial Highlights

FY 2023 vs FY 2022



FY 2023 vs FY 2022 - per Service & Supports



## Statement of Financial Position

AS AT 30TH JUNE 2023

|                                | 2023              | 2022              |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                | \$                | \$                |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                  |                   |                   |
| <b>Current Assets</b>          |                   |                   |
| Cash and cash equivalents      | 1,784,345         | 2,158,824         |
| Trade and other receivables    | 1,059,280         | 1,556,103         |
| Total current assets           | 2,843,625         | 3,714,927         |
| <b>Non-current assets</b>      |                   |                   |
| Property, plant and equipment  | 14,616,197        | 14,846,338        |
| Right-of-use assets            | 322,776           | 405,192           |
| Total non-current assets       | 14,938,973        | 15,251,530        |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>            | <b>17,782,598</b> | <b>18,966,457</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>             |                   |                   |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>     |                   |                   |
| Trade and other payables       | 650,060           | 608,249           |
| Borrowings                     | 464,760           | 491,631           |
| Lease liabilities              | 148,133           | 139,713           |
| Employee benefits              | 1,272,876         | 1,110,600         |
| Total current liabilities      | 2,535,829         | 2,350,193         |
| <b>Non-current liabilities</b> |                   |                   |
| Borrowings                     | 4,433,821         | 4,746,066         |
| Lease liabilities              | 187,695           | 277,542           |
| Employee benefits              | 558,223           | 520,831           |
| Total non-current liabilities  | 5,179,739         | 5,544,439         |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>       | <b>7,715,568</b>  | <b>7,894,632</b>  |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b>              | <b>10,067,030</b> | <b>11,071,825</b> |
| <b>FUNDS</b>                   |                   |                   |
| Accumulated funds              | 5,482,962         | 6,487,757         |
| Reserves                       | 4,584,068         | 4,584,068         |
| <b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>             | <b>10,067,030</b> | <b>11,071,825</b> |

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

|  | 2023               | 2022               |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
|  | \$                 | \$                 |
| <b>Income</b>  | 21,812,005         | 22,272,884         |
| Employee benefits expense                            | (15,178,590)       | (16,159,697)       |
| <b>Gross Margin</b>                                  | 6,633,415          | 6,113,187          |
| Interest received                                    | 11,399             | 4,240              |
| Other income   | 30,728             | 251,600            |
| <b>Gross Income</b>                                  | <b>6,675,542</b>   | <b>6,369,027</b>   |
| <b>Other Expenses</b>                                |                    |                    |
| Indirect wages & on-cost                             | (3,802,925)        | (1,748,357)        |
| Depreciation expense                                 | (473,819)          | (505,224)          |
| Finance expenses                                     | (313,149)          | (213,148)          |
| Loss on disposal of assets                           | -                  | -                  |
| Motor vehicle expense                                | (148,295)          | (356,911)          |
| Occupation costs                                     | (105,488)          | (145,426)          |
| Other client expenses                                | (746,093)          | (609,103)          |
| Service charges                                      | (1,107,724)        | (1,225,951)        |
| Other expenses                                       | (797,817)          | (290,554)          |
| Professional fees                                    | (185,027)          | (212,481)          |
|  | <b>(7,680,337)</b> | <b>(5,307,155)</b> |
| <b>Surplus (deficit) before income tax</b>           | <b>(1,004,795)</b> | <b>1,061,872</b>   |
| Income tax expense                                   | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Surplus (deficit) for the year</b>                | <b>(1,004,795)</b> | <b>1,061,872</b>   |
| <b>Other comprehensive income</b>                    | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Total comprehensive income(loss) for the year</b> | <b>(1,004,795)</b> | <b>1,061,872</b>   |

## Statement of Changes in Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

|   | 2023              | 2022              |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Opening retained equity                       | 11,071,825        | 10,009,953        |
| Surplus/(loss) for the year                   | 1,004,795         | 1,061,872         |
| Net gain on revaluation of land and buildings | -                 | -                 |
| <b>Closing retained equity</b>                | <b>10,067,030</b> | <b>11,071,825</b> |

# Out and About





**1300 668 123**

[www.interactionservices.org](http://www.interactionservices.org)

