



2021

Annual Review

ability first
AUSTRALIA



About Ability First Australia

Ability First Australia is one of the largest not for profit strategic alliances between 14 of Australia's leading disability service providers. Our organisation represents the interests of around \$1.6 billion worth of support services to over 92,000 people with disability, their families and carers.

Ability First is a national body of leading disability service providers with member organisations in all states and territories. Our members have a long and trusted history, having supported people with disability for between 50 and 85 years.

Each member delivers services to people with disability independently. Ability First provides a national brand for promotion, awareness raising, cost efficiencies, strategic alliances both domestically and globally and advocacy. Our member organisations share information and best practice, benefit from economies of scale and are involved in research and learnings that benefit people with disability.



VISION

An Australia that puts ability first and ensures inclusion for all.



MISSION

To support members to be the first choice for people with disabilities and their families.



VALUES

Inclusion – We understand that diversity is a strength. We will particularly ensure that the thoughts and aspirations of people with disability, and their families, underpin everything that we do.

Collaboration – We achieve the best outcomes by working together constructively and by striving for consensus.

Generosity – We bring a spirit of willingness to our work and actively consider how we as individuals and organisations can add value to the lives of Australians with disability, and their families, through the work of Ability First Australia.

Innovation – We are keenly focused on finding better, smarter ways to do things.

Respect – Our decisions are stronger when we listen closely and when we acknowledge and take into account the different views and circumstances of others.

Integrity – We are open and honest in our communication and operate according to the highest ethical standards.



Image supplied with thanks to Scope.

Chairman and CEO Report



Andrew Rowley
CEO

Phil Cave AM
Chairman

The past year has tested the resilience of people across the world. Populations faced challenges in addressing a global pandemic, the like of which had not been seen for 100 years. Throughout lockdowns, border closures and the broader economic and societal impacts from COVID-19 Ability First Australia has maintained its focus on the continuity of member services and supporting the safety and well-being of their customers. In addition, Ability First Australia looked for opportunities to expand its services to support people with a disability live life differently.

Our government engagement program has played a valuable role in helping to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on our members. Regular briefings with key stakeholders within the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, have enabled us to provide constructive and timely feedback. We have also secured extremely good access to the recently appointed Minister for the NDIS, Linda Reynolds, and her office. As well as COVID-related issues, these open lines of communication have facilitated some productive conversations around key areas of concern such as the reform of Supported Independent Living pricing.

Earlier this year, Ability First Australia announced its partnership with the government on an exciting national initiative. The Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Systems Coordinator program commenced in July 2021 and will operate for 18 months, aiming to give younger people more choice and control over where they would like to live, and helping them to transition out of, or avoid entering, residential aged care. Via our involvement on this project, Ability First has also been appointed to the Young People in Aged Care Stakeholder Reference Group, an important body which advises the Department of Health. This is a significant piece of work and will go a long way in meeting the national targets to ensure that no person with a disability under the age of 65 is living in residential aged care.

The first phase of the Frontline Leadership project, an initiative funded as part of the Department of Social Services Jobs and Market Fund, was completed in June 2021 and has already had a positive impact on the sector. Following its success, in July 2021 Ability First was further funded by the Department of Social Services to develop a diploma level qualification for leaders in the care and support workforce. We are very excited to be working with the University of New England Partnerships (UNEP) on this initiative, which is scheduled to be completed in June 2022.

Our online consumer panel, Ability Forum, continues to be a valuable resource as part of our government engagement and advocacy efforts. Growth of the panel has been a strategic area of focus over the last 12 months, and we have certainly achieved this; there are currently around 2500 members (comprising people with disability and carers) signed up and contributing important feedback on a range of topics. These surveys are proving valuable feedback not only for our members, but for the sector more widely; findings from a recent survey undertaken by the Forum around the attitudes of people with disability towards vaccines was presented as part of the Federal Government COVID-19 Disability Advisory Committee meeting.

Ability First's unique national benchmarking platform, the Ability Roundtable, has achieved a number of successes over the last 12 months. The Ability Roundtable membership has increased to 46 organisations and now houses three specific service improvement groups, for Allied Health, for Supported Independent Living, and for Attendant Care and Community Support. With membership comprising 25% of the total NDIS Allied Health market and over 35% of the NDIS Supported Independent Living market, it has established itself as a true sector level 'designed by industry for industry' benchmarking vehicle.

Over the last year a considerable amount of work has been undertaken on the establishment of the Ability First Australia Community Housing Fund, a fully not-for-profit fund that provides capital to build Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) across Australia to participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The fund is entering a critical phase, having been officially registered with both ASIC, the NDIS Regulator and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and is in the final stages of registering as a Community Housing provider. Seed capital has been secured for approximately \$70 million, to be invested into the disability accommodation space. The Board has approved its first acquisition in WA and we are confident in a second acquisition being made in Far North QLD, both of these opportunities are in partnership with Ability First members.

Ability First's whole-owned subsidiary, Cerebral Palsy Australia, together with a consortium of other cerebral palsy focused organisations, has been funded via the NDIS's Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program to develop an Australia-wide, online information platform for people with cerebral palsy called "My CP Guide". The first phase of the project, which focuses on the life journey of people 0 – 6 years old, has launched. Other 'life stages' will be progressively launched until the end of 2021, with the final product being released in early 2022.

It has been a challenging year for everyone. We would like to thank the Board and all our members for their work during the year. It has been excellent to see the outstanding work of all our members in the face of such a challenging 12 months.

Thank you as well to our sponsors, corporate partners and generous donors for their continued support. We look forward to many more successes in the year ahead.

Current Position Summary

Established in 2003, Ability First Australia is a not-for-profit strategic alliance of 14 leading disability service providers operating across Australia.

Our membership is responsible for the care and coordination of services to over 92,000 Australians every day, around 20% of the NDIS market.

Ability First members employ more than 20,000 staff and provide around \$1.6 billion worth of services each year, primarily with government funding.

Services are provided from ages 0-65+. They cover the whole range of Core Supports, Capital Supports and Capacity Building Supports outlined in the NDIS Price Guide, although this varies from member to member.

Our members specialise in services for people with multiple and complex disabilities.

Ability First provides a national focus for our members and helps to build their collective capacity to maintain best practice services. We do this by providing platforms for shared problem solving and innovation, and developing strategic partnerships with relevant partners.

Ability First's purpose is to support members to be the first choice for people with disabilities and their families.

Ability First operates primarily without government funding, providing a return on investment on membership fees, with additional revenue streams through fee-for-service and commercial products.

Strategic Objectives

Ability First has three Strategic Pillars. While the overarching vision of each pillar remains consistent, the priorities under each are reviewed annually.



Partnerships

Shaping policy for NDIA and Government

The go-to organisation for information on complexity and intensity

Speak with one voice



Knowledge

Best practice

Market research

NDIS

Benchmarking (productivity, innovation)

Shape the Future



Organisational Sustainability

Procurement

Shared service

Commercial opportunities

Work smarter

Member Services

Our members deliver the following adult and children's services:

- ✔ Support Coordination
- ✔ Respite/Short Term Accommodation
- ✔ Housing (Permanent or Long Term)
- ✔ Transport
- ✔ Personal Equipment/Technical Support (i.e. for self)
- ✔ Assistive Technology
- ✔ Therapy (including Behavioural)
- ✔ In Home Care/Support (periodic)
- ✔ Complex high needs care
- ✔ School holiday programs
- ✔ School Supports
- ✔ Before and after school care
- ✔ Community Activities
- ✔ Centre Based Activities
- ✔ Life Skills
- ✔ Vocational Programs
- ✔ Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE)
- ✔ Disability Employment Services (DES)
- ✔ Specialist/Allied Health Services (e.g podiatry)
- ✔ Sexuality/Relationship Services
- ✔ Partner in Community (ECEI)



Image supplied with thanks to Rocky Bay.

Our Members



Ability WA has been supporting Western Australian families for more than 60 years. We are committed to providing our customers and their families the services and supports they need, from early infancy through to adulthood. Ability Centre has built its reputation as a leading disability services provider by providing excellent service, allowing our customers to thrive.

abilitywa.com.au



annecto is a profit-for-purpose community-inclusion organisation. We're best at building relationships and creating connections; helping people define their own goals to realise their full potential. We do this by connecting older people, people with disabilities and their families and carers with others who will help them achieve what's important to them.

annecto.org.au



Cara is one of South Australia's leading disability service providers. We work in partnership with people living with disability, their families and the community, to create a better life. Our services include full-time supported accommodation, recreation and respite, with Home & Community Support and we have a dedicated Specialist Services team.

cara.org.au



For more than 66 years, Cootharinga North Queensland has been proudly supporting North Queenslanders with disability. We are committed to providing a range of tailored services that are relevant to the goals, choice and needs of our diverse and varied customers and to achieving our vision of "Building a better world with people of all abilities!"

cootharinga.org.au



CPL – Choice, Passion, Life is a profit-for-purpose organisation that works with people at every stage in their life, from early intervention and education, to personal growth, independence and employment. We're one of Queensland's only integrated service providers where, in all of our locations, our clients can access therapy, employment, home and community support services all from CPL.

cpl.org.au



LiveBetter is a provider of customer-focused aged and disability services in regional Australia, centred on support in the home and connections to the community. LiveBetter takes a person-centred approach, ensuring services provide practical assistance to help people live their best lives. They deliver over 80 programs from offices, homes and centres in more than 45 communities across regional NSW and Queensland.

livebetter.org.au



Montrose has 85 years of experience working with people with a disability. They provide psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy along with in-home care, respite and a Lifestyle & Leisure service. They are a profit for purpose organisation with any surpluses invested back into providing services for children and families.

montrose.org.au



Multicap is one of Queensland's largest disability service providers. We are focused on achieving one goal – a better quality of life for people with disability. Multicap's services including supported independent living, short term accommodation, in-home support, assisted employment, life skills development and recreational activities are delivered from over 100 different locations across Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

multicap.org.au



Northcott is a not-for-profit disability service provider that works with customers to realise their potential. As one of Australia's largest not-for-profit disability service organisations, we provide services from metropolitan and regional locations throughout NSW and the ACT, employing over 2,000 staff and providing empowering, personalised services to over 14,000 people with disability, their families and carers each year.

northcott.com.au



Novita is one of South Australia's largest community-based disability services organisations. Novita provides a range of high quality services including rehabilitation, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, speech pathology, diagnostic services and more. We also offer a range of programs including day options, group activities and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), and mobile services such as in-home support.

novita.org.au



Rocky Bay is a leading provider of disability services, offering choice and independence to thousands of people of all ages living with disability in Western Australia. With a focus on quality and service excellence, Rocky Bay works with people of all ages living with any disability, to deliver innovative therapies, leisure and learning programs, the latest equipment and technology and training and employment opportunities, in the home, at our centres and in the community.

rockybay.org.au



Scope is one of the largest not-for-profit disability service providers in Australia, supporting more than 6,000 people and their families, particularly those with complex needs. Our mission is to enable each person we support to live as an equal and empowered citizen, through a range of services including: Integrated therapy, supported independent living, short-term accommodation and assistance, lifestyle options for individuals and groups, communication access and support coordination.

scopeaust.org.au



St Giles Society Limited is a not for profit organisation who has been supporting Tasmanians living with disability since 1937. Based in Launceston with operations in Hobart, Devonport, Burnie and Penguin the organisation was formed to provide after care support to children with polio. Overtime it has developed to now provide therapy, accommodation and attendant care support to Tasmanians aged from birth to 65.

stgiles.org.au



CPL Chief Transformation Officer, David Beal, and Cootharinga Chief Executive Officer, Matt Kinnane.

Spotlight on CPL

On 1 July 2020, Cootharinga North Queensland and CPL – Choice, Passion, Life merged to create arguably Queensland’s largest disability services provider.

Prior to the merger, the two organisations – both members of Ability First Australia – shared a lot in common. Both had been formed by families seeking greater services for their children and founded within three years of each other in the decade following World War II.

Though established in different parts of Queensland – CPL in the south east corner and Cootharinga in the State’s north – both had grown over time in response to community need to offer a similar suite of services. However, most importantly, the two organisations shared very similar values and a shared vision for a more inclusive society for people with disability.

Initial discussions between the Boards of CPL and Cootharinga revealed the extent of the opportunity. Namely, that a merger would allow the two organisations to deliver greater outcomes and societal change for people with a disability than could be achieved individually.

The merger was completed on 1 July 2020 with Cootharinga becoming a wholly-owned subsidiary of CPL. In recognition of its strong legacy, Cootharinga has maintained its own brand and identity, continues to be led from Townsville, and is delivering services to its 1,000+ customers as it has always done.

Though there has been little change experienced by customers as a result of the merger, CPL and Cootharinga are already realising many organisational benefits through access to additional expertise, improved business processes and the sharing of resources, skills and knowledge.

Collectively, Cootharinga and CPL employ around 3,200 and support more than 11,000 people across a vast geographic footprint that stretches from the very tip of Queensland to the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales and west into some of the most remote communities in Australia.



choice • passion • life



Cootharinga
North Queensland
Ability First!

The focus now is ensuring the CPL Group – which includes not only Cootharinga, but disability and arts organisation, Access Arts – has a strong, positive, shared culture to position it to move forward with a single vision and strategy focused on continuously improving services and experiences, growing purposefully, and creating and leading real change for people with disability.

Partnerships

Ability First continues to be represented on a number of key advisory groups run by Government agencies and Department of Social Services (DSS) and has been an active consultation partner with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on various initiatives.

We have developed a reputation as a valuable contributor to government policy, and this has allowed us to continue achieving progress in a range of areas:

- Consultation with the Agency on Pricing Reviews and Portal issues
- Participant in the Agency's pilot program of assessment tools for people with complex disability
- Representative on an Industry Reference Group for the NDIA, alongside National Disability Services and key peak organisations
- Representative on a Market Oversight Advisory Group for the Department of Social Services
- Representative on NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Representative on Young People in Aged Care Stakeholder Reference Group

- Successful engagement with local and federal government MPs
- Co-chaired meetings between NDIA and Ability First Australia executive leadership teams
- Representative on the Federal Government Covid-19 Vaccination Task Force

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Ability First Australia has maintained an open dialogue with Government, working together constructively to minimise impact to service providers, and has been one of a handful of organisations invited to attend weekly briefings with the Minister for NDIS, Linda Reynolds, and her office, CEO for NDIA, Martin Hoffman, the Department of Social Services and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.



Ability First Australia board members at Rocky Bay with Senator The Hon Linda Reynolds CSC

Ability First Australia Property Fund



Image supplied with thanks to Liveable Homes Australia and CPL

Ability First Australia Community Housing Ltd (AFACHL) has been established by Ability First Australia as its sole member. AFACHL has obtained registration as an SDA Provider under the NDIS, is registered with the ACNC as a charity and the ATO and is in the process of registering as a Community Housing Provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing. AFACHL's aim is to be the central not-for-profit capital platform to acquire, develop, own, and maintain housing and accommodation facilities to be used by participants of Ability First Australia members and in time, other service providers, to those living with disability.

AFACHL anticipates concluding its initial portfolio of seed existing SDA properties owned by Ability First members in coming months and has recently agreed firm terms with a third-party developer to acquire several new off the plan homes in Perth, Western Australia in close collaboration with Ability First Australia member, Ability WA. These homes will be ready for occupancy towards the end of 2022.

AFACHL is also in detailed discussions with several builder developer groups who are very experienced in designing and building SDA homes with a view to contracting one or more parties to build quality new homes in areas in need across Australia. These homes will be targeted for use by SIL participants of Ability First members, who provide care to over 95,000 people living with disability across this vast country.

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) is housing that has been purpose built for people who are unable to live in mainstream housing because of their extreme functional impairment or very high support needs. The SDA model aligns with the National Disability Insurance Scheme's core principles of choice and control: it aims to give people with disability more choice about where and who they live with, ultimately delivering better outcomes and greater quality of life.

AFACHL will lease its properties under secure tenancy agreements to approved NDIS participants, which together with vital collaboration agreements with Ability First Australia member organisations, will ensure that their customers are provided with premium, well-maintained, secure long-term homes that suit their individual requirements, supported by SIL services provided by Ability First members.

Ability First Australia's Frontline Leadership Role Clarity Project

A pathway to attracting, retaining, and growing a skilled NDIS workforce

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has brought significant change to providers, workers, and participants in the disability sector. As part of these changes, the roles and responsibilities for the Frontline Leader* and many other positions in provider organisations have changed considerably. Ability First Australia and its members believe that investment in frontline leadership is crucial to the long-term viability and success of the NDIS and has been funded by the Department of Social Services to undertake an innovative project that defines the role, competencies, and capabilities of the Frontline Leader.

The first phase of the project was completed in June 2021 and has already had a positive impact on the long-term viability of the NDIS, by facilitating career pathways, informing recruitment practices, and by increasing capacity for leaders to be successful in their roles. The findings from the first phase of the Frontline Leader role have been published online, via the Ability First website.

In July 2021, Ability First Australia was funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to register a bespoke diploma level qualification and develop learning resources for accredited units that address the needs of Frontline Leaders and emerging leaders in the Care and Support Workforce.

This qualification, including a series of micro credentials, will help build workforce capability, workforce attraction, retention, and career development. It is scheduled for completion in June 2022. We are working with University of New England Partnerships (UNEP) and a wide range of providers in the development of the learning pathway, skills, and competencies and in defining a series of micro-credentials.

*Frontline Leaders are defined as staff in a provider organisation who directly manage/lead the delivery of services by Disability Support Workers (DSWs) and associated frontline staff.



Image supplied with thanks to LiveBetter



Young People In Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Systems Coordinator program

The Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Systems Coordinator program is a national initiative funded by government and operated by Ability First Australia.

The program commenced in July 2021 and will operate for 18 months, aiming to give young people (under 65 years) greater choice and control over where they would like to live and what supports they need to either transition out of, or avoid entering, residential aged care.

The program team works collaboratively with other government and non- government organisations to help explore alternative home and living options, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the national YPIRAC strategy targets will be met.



The Australian Government's targets* seek to ensure there are:

No people under the age of 65 entering Residential Aged Care by 2022

No people under the aged of 45 living in Residential Aged Care by 2022

No people under the age of 65 living in Residential Aged Care by 2025

*apart from in exceptional circumstances

The program will identify and provide important information to help address the barriers faced by younger people and their families. Research being undertaken during the program's implementation will highlight areas of good practice and sustainable models that may be adopted more broadly across Australia.

All Systems Coordinators are field based and aim to offer as much as possible face to face support, COVID-19 restriction permitting, with younger people and their families as possible

Key features of the program include:

NATIONAL REACH

Experienced Systems Coordinators with expertise in understanding complex needs will be operating in each state and territory to work individually with the younger person living in residential aged care.

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

Each Systems Coordinator remains the single point of contact with the younger person throughout their time with the program.

ACCESS IS SIMPLE & FREE

Eligibility for the NDIS is not a requirement to be part of the program and involvement in the program is voluntary.

Key milestones achieved to date:



By end of October 2021:

recruitment of over 20 Systems Coordinators, and commencement of working with over 50 identified younger people living in residential aged care in QLD, WA, VIC, and NSW.



By end of January 2022

Anticipated growth of workforce, up to 36 Systems Coordinators

Benchmarking to drive sector-level innovation and best practice.

- Collects benchmark data to support sophisticated, real-time analysis of performance
- Promotes interstate collaboration and networking amongst disability service organisations
- Encourages innovation and shared problem solving to drive improvements across the sector

The biggest testament to the success of the Ability Roundtable is the 25% year-on-year growth in membership for the past three years, without losing a single existing member. Our members value the Roundtable as a unique national platform that delivers deep insights into performance and provides a collaborative space in an increasingly competitive market.

The Roundtable currently houses three service-specific improvement groups, for Allied Health, for Supported Independent Living, and for Attendant Care and Community Support. Benchmarking by service type ensures clarity of purpose and maximises capacity to drive innovation and improve practice amongst peers. Our members represented over 25% of the total NDIS Allied Health market and over 35% of the NDIS Supported Independent Living market. The Ability Roundtable is a true sector level benchmarking group.

We had a number of successes during the year. Highlights include:

The only third-party benchmarking group approved by the National Disability Insurance Agency to submit data to its annual Financial and Workforce benchmarking activity;

All benchmarking reports moved online to give members the ability to interrogate the data on-demand, using powerful filters to dive deep into the drivers of performance; and

We began to provide longitudinal year-on-year reporting to support members to monitor changes in performance over time.



Join our community. Have your say.



An online consumer panel which has the potential to gain real-time market insights from people with disability and carers.

Launched in 2019, Ability Forum is a world-first online community that disability service providers can use to seek consumer insights in real time to better target their services and products.

Putting consumers at the centre of service provider decision making, the Ability Forum aligns exceptionally well with the NDIS and its emphasis on consumer choice and control in a market context.

The Ability Forum runs regular surveys that allow us to better understand the views of people with disability and their carers on a range subjects such as current services, possible new services and products, and even how implementation of the NDIS is going.

Since launching, Ability Forum has grown to almost 2500 members and conducted a number of surveys, including the experiences of people with disability throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



the national voice



Cerebral Palsy Australia a national voice for cerebral palsy awareness

Since 1952, Cerebral Palsy Australia (formerly known as CP Australia and the Australian Cerebral Palsy Association) has provided a national voice for cerebral palsy awareness.

Furthermore, Cerebral Palsy Australia has positively contributed to the community through research and service development for children and adults with cerebral palsy.

Cerebral Palsy Australia focuses on the promotion and advancement of the rights, interests, welfare and social inclusion for people with cerebral palsy by:

- Assisting in obtaining appropriate funding
- Supporting and encouraging innovation and improved service practices
- Encouraging, conducting and supporting research concerning cerebral palsy
- Working with governments in developing policies for services and support of organisations working with people with cerebral palsy and the people who support them

Cerebral Palsy Australia is operated by Ability First Australia.

A game changing strategy to improve outcomes for people with cerebral palsy

Ability First is a founding member of a national coalition which, together with Cerebral Palsy Alliance Research Institute, Australasian Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine and Cerebral Palsy New Zealand, has developed an Australian and New Zealand Cerebral Palsy Strategy.

This is the first comprehensive strategy designed to improve the quality of life of Australians with cerebral palsy.

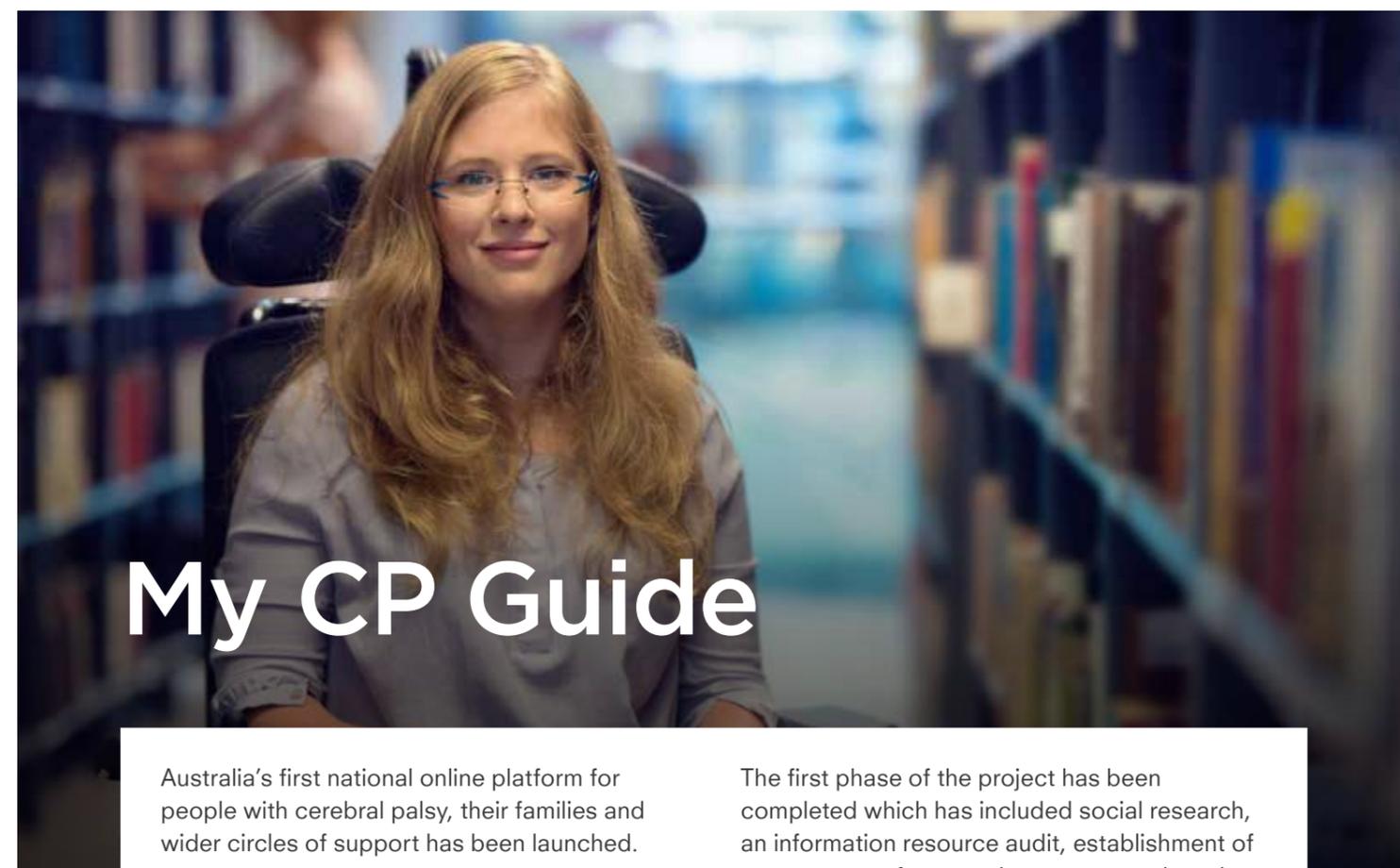
Backed by an economic study by Deloitte on the impact of cerebral palsy in Australia, the strategy, which launched in March 2020, will provide a framework for key stakeholders, including governments, to improve the quality of life of people living with cerebral palsy through:

- Improving social and economic inclusion
- Improving health and disability support
- Increased funding, research and innovation



In developing this Strategy, our mission is to improve the quality of life for Australians and New Zealanders with cerebral palsy, and their families. Drawing on our vast experience, together we can make a real difference."

Rhys Kennedy, Chair of Cerebral Palsy Australia



My CP Guide

Australia's first national online platform for people with cerebral palsy, their families and wider circles of support has been launched.

My CP Guide, a project led by Cerebral Palsy Australia, Ability First Australia, the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, and Cerebral Palsy Support Network, has focussed on authentically representing their members, clients and participants on the issues that are most important to people with cerebral palsy. Most significantly, the partnership between the organisations, and the project, has facilitated and embedded people with cerebral palsy at the very centre of its development and implementation.

Funded as part of a recent National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) funding round the platform:

- Increases the quality and consistency of information available to people with cerebral palsy, families, carers and relevant supports and services,
- Improves the capacity of people with cerebral palsy to exercise choice and control, and
- Enhances the ability of relevant supports and services to respond to the needs and expectations of people with cerebral palsy.

The first phase of the project has been completed which has included social research, an information resource audit, establishment of a governance framework to assess and grade existing resources, an information gap analysis, the establishment, and engagement of a consumer advisory group for the duration of the project, and a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) which focuses on the life journey ages 0 – 6 years old. The platform design enables users to search via topics or by 'life stages' to help them navigate the information most relevant to them.

In this first phase, users can review over 200 pieces of curated and evaluated information resources relevant to 0 - 2 and 3 - 6-year-olds. Other life stages will be progressively launched until the end of 2021. The next phase of the project will deliver improvements to the user experience, including tailored and personalised content based on the user's selection criteria. The project will also develop bespoke information resources to fill information gaps, particularly for people over the age of 18 years old.

The final product will be released early 2022.





Better Start Early Days Workshops

Supporting over 2050 families in taking the first steps of the journey with their child with disability.

Cerebral Palsy Australia is the lead agency of the First Step Alliance, a consortium that has a national contract to deliver workshops to families and carers of children up to seven years with disabilities who are eligible for Better Start funding.

The Early Days Workshops are designed to orient families to the disability landscape. They provide families with information about funding, equip them with skills to get the best value from the supports they receive, provide them with tools to plan for the future and allow them an opportunity to build resilience and share experiences and lessons learnt.

We have offered workshops across Australia, in remote communities, regional centres and major cities. This broad reach is made possible by the extensive local networks of our member organisations who delivered the workshops. We have also run many webinars for people who are not able to make it to our workshops, extending our reach even further.



Image supplied with thanks to Montrose



Affiliation with Easterseals

- Ability First has a strategic alliance with the largest Disability Service provider in the United States, Easter Seals.
- Easter Seals offers a variety of services to help people with disabilities address life's challenges and achieve personal goals. Easter Seals provides over \$2 billion worth of services to their clients through over 550 sites nationally.
- Ability First is the only global affiliate of Easter Seals in the Asia Pacific region. Our members enjoy all of the membership entitlements of the Easter Seals US based affiliates, at no cost to them.
- In 2014, Easter Seals and Ability First established a Professional Staff Scholarship Exchange Program for its US and Australian based affiliates and member organisations. To date over 60 people have benefitted from this program.
- Ability First is represented on the Global Partners Committee of Easter Seals. This Committee comprises of affiliates from Canada, the United States and Mexico. They regularly discuss issues relating to the United Nations, global fundraising initiatives and sharing information, research and best practice.





Fourth Annual Golf Day

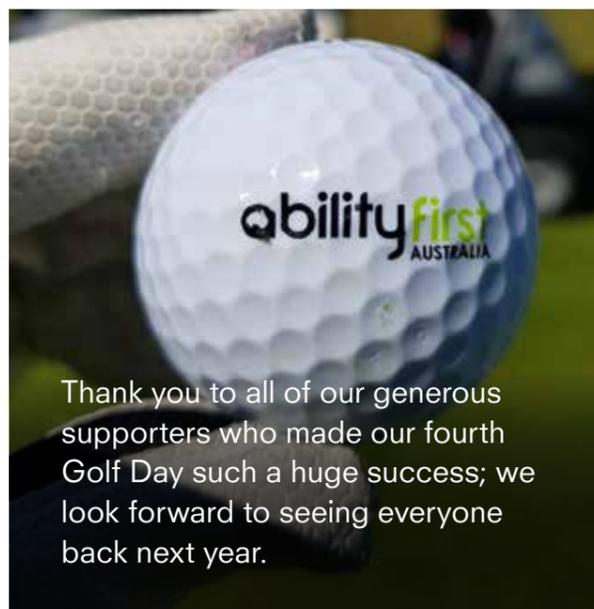
On Thursday 22nd April 2021 Ability First Australia's corporate partners participated in the Fourth Annual Golf Day fundraiser at the iconic Lakes Golf Club.

26 teams enjoyed playing an 18 hole Ambrose competition. A 'nearest to the pin' novelty hole also gave players some extra incentive to compete for prizes.

Over lunch, players heard from Alan McConnell, coach of the GWS Giants AFLW team and Cora Staunton, star player and leading goal kicker from the Giants. Both sporting legends were interviewed by Northcott clients Ben Keyte and Andy Waite.

Congratulations to ScotPac who were crowned overall winners of the day.

The day raised over \$80,000, which will go towards supporting our Cerebral Palsy Information Hub.



Thank you to all of our generous supporters who made our fourth Golf Day such a huge success; we look forward to seeing everyone back next year.



PROUDLY SPONSORED BY:

Headline Sponsor:



Major Sponsors:



Sponsors:



Board Members



Phillip Cave AM – Chairman

Phillip is a merchant banker beginning his career as an Executive Director of Macquarie Bank Limited. He is an accomplished Chief Executive Officer, Director, Chairman, and Board Member and has over thirty years experience with a proven track record in major corporate turnaround projects, structured finance and corporate advisory services within Australasia. Companies that Phillip has been a major shareholder in and either a Director or Chairman of include: Parbury Limited, Wormald, Sunbeam-Victa and Hygienic Lily. He was formerly Chairman of Golden Circle, Dick Smith Electronics Limited and Bisalloy Steel Group and is currently Chairman of Excelsia College, Solgen Energy Group, Scotts Refrigerated Logistics and Chairman and Founding Partner of Anchorage Capital Partners.

He has been involved in Disability Services for over 30 years and was Chairman of Northcott Disability Services for seven years. He has participated in 25 Variety 'bashes' and in 2006 was admitted into the Hall of Fame of Variety, for the Children's Charity. In 2007 Phillip was awarded by the Australian Government, a Member of the Order of Australia (A.M.) for service to the community, particularly through the provision of support services to Children and Young Adults with Disabilities and to business as a Company Director.



Andrew Rowley – Managing Director & CEO

Andrew joined Ability first Australia as Managing Director in 2012. Andrew comes with over 20 years' experience in the not-for-profit, education and commercial sector. He has extensive experience in strategy and establishing and securing revenue streams. While being passionate about helping those less fortunate, he is focused on ensuring accountability and outcomes whilst maintaining core values and mission. Under Andrew's leadership, Ability First Australia (AFA) has established itself as the only strategic alliance in the disability industry. AFA is playing a critical role in supporting 14 large service providers transition into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), one of Australia's largest social reforms since the introduction of Medicare in the 1980s. Andrew is a fellow of ADAPE Australia, a member of the CEO Circle and serves on the Board of Rowing Australia.



Guy Cowan – Independent Director

Guy Cowan has been a non-executive Director for the past 10 years. He is currently Chairman of Queensland Sugar Limited and a Director of Santos Ltd. He is also a Director of two private companies. Previously he was a Director of Coffey International and Ludowici Limited. He was a Shell appointed alternative director of Woodside between 1992 and 1995. Guy had a 23 year career with Shell International in various senior Commercial and Financial roles. His last two roles were as CFO and Director of Shell Oil US and CFO of Shell Nigeria. Guy was CFO of Fonterra Co-operative Ltd between 2005 and 2009. He holds a BSc (Hons) Engineering from the University of Sussex and is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.



Julie White – Independent Director

Julie White has over 35 years' experience in the not-for-profit and corporate sectors, including her former role as head of the Macquarie Group Foundation. She is also the former CEO of Chief Executive Women, Chair of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia Australia, Chair of Reach Out Australia, Member of the Centre for Social Impact Advisory Council and a member of Chief Executive Women and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Alongside her non-executive roles Julie is a strategic adviser on social investment to business and to not-for-profits in strategic planning, corporate governance and corporate and community engagement.

Julie was named as one of the Australian Financial Review BOSS Magazine's True Leaders in 2008 and was named in January 2009, by ABC Limelight magazine, as one of the top smart arts 09 executives. Julie was also named as a finalist in the Telstra Business Women's Awards for 2009. Previously, Julie has worked as a community social worker in local government in Australia and overseas, established state-wide community legal education programs for the NSW Government, and has worked in educational development and fundraising.



Liz Cohen – Director, Member Representative

Liz has led Cara through a period of significant change, transformation and celebrated organisational milestones since joining Cara in 2015. Under Liz's leadership, Cara has transformed from a block funded 'Not for Profit' to a values driven, commercially thinking 'Profit for Purpose' that is committed to providing high-quality services so that people with disabilities can lead fulfilling, everyday lives.

Cara now works alongside more than 700 children and adults with disability and employs more than 1000 staff, known as Possible People. Liz has led the organisation towards a new vision, business model, brand and promise, while welcoming record numbers of staff to the organisation, growing revenue and expanding Cara's services to new customers.

Liz has more than 30 years' experience in the disability, education and health sectors. In 2017, Liz was named a finalist in the SA Telstra Business Women's Awards. She is the Deputy Chair of the Health, Disability, Aged Care and Community Services Industry Skills Council SA. Liz has been elected to the board of Ability First Australia, which is a strategic alliance of leading disability service providers, and she is on the board of the YMCA of South Australia. Liz is also a member of the SA State Committee of National Disability Services (NDS).



Jo Jessop – Director, Member Representative

Jo has been the Chief Executive Officer of Multicap since 2006, leading organisational renewal and transformational change including transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

She has extensive senior management experience across a number of not-for-profit and commercial purpose driven sectors. She is a Director of both the Brisbane South Primary Health Network and National Disability Services.

Jo is passionate about providing high-quality human services outcomes and improved opportunities for vulnerable people, especially those living with disability.



Michael Tait – Director, Member Representative

Michael has spent over 30 years in senior management positions within the health, hospitality, property development and disability sectors. During this time he has operated in Polynesia, Indonesia, Australia, UK and Europe for both national and internationally based organisations.

Michael is Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Rocky Bay, a leading disability services provider in Western Australia with a proud 80 year history. Employing over 1000 staff and volunteers, Rocky Bay provides a range of services and support to over 3500 children and adults (and their families) living with disability.

Since joining the community services sector in 2006, Michael has been actively involved in many projects and committees within both the more specific disability services and also the broader community and not for profit arenas. Michael is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Directors and the Australian Institute of Management and holds tertiary qualifications in business and a Masters in Business Administration.

Aggregated Financials

INCOME STATEMENT	2021	2020
Revenues		
- Government	1,327,583,305	1,138,398,805
- Fundraising	13,736,163	11,159,950
- Other	247,189,347	293,634,633
Total Revenues	1,588,508,815	1,443,193,388
Expenses	1,421,955,896	1,308,585,539
Surplus/ (deficit)	166,552,919	134,607,849
BALANCE SHEET		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	299,296,214	269,433,681
Trade and other receivables	110,259,494	71,004,702
Inventories	1,385,734	1,467,648
Other financial assets	177,216,924	191,487,351
Other	15,681,419	8,068,879
Total Current Assets	603,839,785	541,462,261
Non-Current Assets		
Other financial assets	207,765,435	125,415,755
Property, plant and equipment	238,345,181	232,461,127
Other	104,246,211	86,138,807
Total Non-Current Assets	550,356,827	444,015,689
Total Assets	1,154,196,612	985,477,950
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	80,172,966	91,297,140
Other financial liabilities	63,528,166	68,626,275
Borrowings	9,177,510	12,879,005
Provisions	122,673,623	62,351,852
Other	55,509,817	106,189,491
Total Current Liabilities	331,062,082	341,343,763
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provisions	21,313,221	16,740,433
Borrowings	104,354,228	101,040,373
Total Non-Current Liabilities	125,667,449	117,780,806
Total Liabilities	456,729,531	459,124,569
Net Assets	697,467,081	526,353,381
Members' Funds		
Retained Earnings	650,403,638	488,200,281
Reserves	47,063,443	38,153,100
Total Members' Funds	697,467,081	526,353,381



Image supplied with thanks to St Giles

Governance

Background to Ability First Australia

Ability First Australia was incorporated in 2003 as a national company supporting seven of Australia's oldest and most respected disability NGOs. All were established from the 1920's onwards to support children living with the results of polio, cerebral palsy and related conditions.

Ability First Australia's establishment was an acknowledgement of the fact that the collective experience, knowledge and expertise of these NGOs acquired over a long period of time, would be enhanced even more if they were supported by strategies driven from a national office.

Today, Ability First Australia supports 14 of Australia's leading disability service providers who continuously provide innovative and responsive services aimed at meeting the needs of people living with a wide range of disabilities.

Ability First Australia's objectives are to build the capacity of its members by:

- Developing national strategies to raise funds in order to preserve the current level of service delivery across the nation, as well as to allow its members to engage in the creation of innovative service models
- Developing close working relationships between its members that will result in:
- The professional training and development of staff and the sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise
- National benchmarking and development of best practice in service delivery
- Securing full advantage of Ability First Australia's and its members' affiliation with Easter Seals in the USA
- Supporting the members through their transition to the NDIS services exceeds \$1.6 billion per year of which approximately 80% is provided by State and Federal Governments

Across all states and territories our members provide these life changing services from 250 local sites to over 92,000 clients, their families and carers. These services range from early intervention, childhood and family support, independent living skills, respite and accommodation, leisure access and recreation and job training and open employment.

Ability First Australia Board

As of 1 July 2013 AFA's operating structure is as follows:

5 Independent Directors - "Independent Director" means a Director who:

- is not part of the Group's day-to-day management;
- is free of any business or other relationship that could materially interfere with – or could reasonably be perceived to interfere with – the independent exercise of their judgment; and
- has not been an employee or office-holder of, or consultant to, a Member or a Related Body Corporate of a Member, for a period of 24 consecutive months or such other period determined by the Board;

3 Member Directors:

- May be Board members or CEO's of the members.

International Affiliation

In recent years there has been growth in the relationship between Staff and Directors of Easter Seals (USA) and Ability First Australia. There have been regular telephone conferences and face to face visits. On a number of occasions, staff from Australia have attended Easter Seals Annual Training Conferences and some have even presented at these conferences.

The affiliation is valued highly by both Ability First Australia and Easter Seals, recently this collaborative relationship has been strengthened by Easter Seals Canada and CONFE Mexico becoming global partners with Easter Seals and Ability First Australia.



Image supplied with thanks to Northcott.

Supporters

We gratefully acknowledge the support we have received from our donors, sponsors and supporters:

Corporate Partners

Anchorage Capital Partners
KPMG
MinterEllison
The CEO Circle Pty Ltd
Facilities First Australia
Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Chairman's Circle

Phil Cave AM
Kym Godson
Dennis Guy
Allan Moss AO
Bob Critchley
Warren Douche
Robert Millner
Assunta Pellicano
Nunzio Pellicano
Julian Harris

Your generosity allows us to work towards an Australia that puts ability first and ensures inclusion for all.

Thank you for our outstanding support.



abilityfirstaustralia.org.au

info@abilityfirstaustralia.org.au

Phone: 61 2 8259 7725

Level 39, 259 George Street

Sydney NSW 2000