

Living
my way.

2019/20

ANNUAL REPORT



Chairperson Message

It is with great pleasure that I present the Chairperson's Report for the financial year of 2019/20.

The past 12 months has been one like no other, and it has certainly presented a number of obstacles that I am proud to say, as an organisation, we have managed to weather the storm and continue to grow from strength to strength.

Although this year has been challenging, I am pleased to report that Living My Way has been successful in obtaining its NDIS registration under the new guidelines by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. These new guidelines will continue to ensure all registered service providers are held to a high standard and ensure that good governance is always maintained.

Progressing in line with our strategic plan, the focus of Living My Way remains on providing the best services and support to all Members. With that purpose in mind, I was very pleased to see the national launch of our Plan Management service, which was made possible by the upgrade of the organisation's systems as per our automation roadmap.

The organisation values its Members who are a priority. It is important to us that they have a voice, so we like to encourage honest feedback and suggestions through surveys as to how we can continue to improve our services. As a result of that feedback, I am pleased to report that we are in the final stages of offering a new service that will go live next year, where Living My Way will assist Members by providing Support Workers directly where the need arises.

It is especially rewarding when seeing positive results, once again, from this year's Member Feedback survey. The Living My Way brand is one that is now well established in the disability sector across NSW and has allowed for us to grow as an organisation, which will enable Living My Way to continue to support its Members for many more years to come.

This year the Board farewelled Phillipa Gormly who held a position on the Board for several years. Phillipa not only brought invaluable insight from her professional background, but also as a Member of Living My Way. On behalf of the Board, I take this opportunity to thank Phillipa for her commitment and contribution during her tenure and wish her well for the future.

To ensure the Board is navigating the organisation effectively and maintaining good governance, several Board Committees have been formed to provide a platform to deal with specific issues that require specialised areas of expertise. With that in mind, I wish to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to my fellow directors for their commitment and contribution over the past year, not only around the board table, but for serving on the various Committees, plus guidance to the CEO and CFO outside meetings.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to extend a big thank you to our CEO, Philip Anderson, who will be leaving Living My Way at the end of 2020 to start a new life in the sunny state of Queensland. The Board commends Philip for his leadership qualities and high-level skills and experience which was demonstrated as he guided the organisation through extremely complex times as we moved to transition into the NDIS landscape. This was no easy feat, particularly when searching for automated IT systems to align with the unique business model that we are. Philip has managed to leave Living My Way in a good position to thrive. He will be greatly missed. We wish Philip an abundance of good health and success in all his future endeavours.

Finally, we express a big thank you to the management team who bring their own areas of expertise, and all staff across the organisation for their commitment to supporting our Members throughout what has been a challenging year. Your hard work and efforts are truly appreciated, and we thank you for your commitment in ensuring Living My Way continues to thrive.

I look forward to us all continuing to do great work together.

Milena Morrow | Chairperson

LIVING MY WAY LIMITED

Founding Member



CEO Message

I do not think I am alone in saying the previous 12 months have been unique and challenging in ways none of us could have imagined. Although this year has come with its challenges, I am very pleased as an organisation that we have been able to pull together to continue to support our vision of 'More people getting on with life' and go above and beyond for our Members.

To ensure all Living My Way Members were supported in particular at the beginning, uncertain stages of the pandemic the Living My Way team undertook welfare checks, offered vouchers to Members who directly employ their own Support Workers for PPE, communicated weekly any COVID-19 updates and launched a webinar series.

As an organisation we developed a COVID safe plan where we were able to successfully manage the office remotely (we are very thankful our systems allowed us to do so) to ensure safety and the utmost care was provided to staff, Members and other stakeholders, and appreciate all Members patience and support while we all adapted to the new normal in 2020.

In more positive news Living My Way's Member Feedback survey has again produced some amazing results with 94% of Members finding the staff at Living My Way friendly and responsive and 95% of Members would refer us. It is always great to read such positive results, as it gives us reassurance that we are providing the high quality service and support we always aim to provide.

Continuing the positive news, we were thrilled in December to move into our new, bigger office just around the corner from our old one. A key requirement when choosing our new office was to have a space that was able to accommodate more for our Members, and that it does. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 we have been unable to have our open day, along with a number of other Member events as planned but when safe to do so we will certainly be inviting all Members to visit our new home.

We were also pleased to receive our NDIS registration under the newly formed NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission for the next 3 years. In order to meet the NDIA's guidelines and requirements we have continued implementing our automation roadmap with a focus on systems that automate, streamline and produce efficiencies whilst maintaining compliance with our registration and the SCHADS award (which our Members Support Workers are employed and paid under).

From a staffing and service perspective we have expanded our service offerings and continued to ensure we have the right skills and experience to support our Members. We have strengthened our employment team and altered some roles within the financial services team including the appointment of a Chief Financial Officer. It has been a pleasure to work with the Management Team to develop a strong and well considered business plan which has certainly played a key role in ensuring we could continue business as usual when working remotely.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the staff at Living My Way for their continued hard work and dedication to the company and our Members. This year in particular, to see the tireless work and high quality of support provided in challenging times in more ways than one has been truly appreciated. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed by myself, the Board and most importantly the Members.

I also wish to extend my thanks to Milena Morrow and the rest of the Living My Way Board. It has been great working with a Board with a mix of skills and experience which proves invaluable to be able to leverage to support the organisation. In my opinion this also provides good governance and a strong foundation to continue a long future in the disability sector.

Looking forward, I hope the next 12 months are safer and healthier for all and we can look back on this year and take away some learnings and appreciation for things we didn't think we would learn in our lifetime. I am proud to be the CEO of this empowering organisation, and to have been able to come out the other side of this challenging year.

On a personal note, as I come to the end of my time at Living My Way, I wanted to say a massive thank you to the Board, Management Team, staff and of course all the Members who have been a joy to work with over the last 3 years, and I cannot wait to watch the success of this organisation from afar.

Philip Anderson | Chief Executive Officer
LIVING MY WAY LIMITED

Our Values

Trustworthy And Helpful

We hold ourselves accountable to a high standard in all interactions.

Flexible

We are responsive and adaptable to changing needs of our members and the industry.

Respectful

We treat all individuals with dignity and integrity.

Consistent Quality

You can depend on us to be there for you when you need us.

Our vision is **More people getting on with life.**

Since its inception in 1992, Living My Way (formerly Allowance Incorporated) has taken huge strides in giving people with a disability the opportunity to strive towards an independent life. With nearly 30 years of experience behind us, Living My Way aims to continuously improve and offer quality support to our Members.

With an individualised and holistic approach, we support Members by providing support to directly employ Support Workers, Plan Management, Support Coordination (including Specialist Support Coordination) and Occupational Therapy. Led by a Board consisting of several Members with a disability from varying professional backgrounds, Living My Way fully understands the importance of choice and control.

Our future looks bright in this evolving landscape and we look forward to supporting our current and future Members for many years to come.

This financial year, Living My Way supported **288 Members**

New Members
in 2019/20

*At 30 June 2020



Living My Way
Staff Members 24



Living My Way
Board Members 8



Living My Way
**Members Advisory
Committee Members 10**

94%~ of Members find Living My Way staff **friendly and responsive**

~According to the 2020 Member Feedback survey

95%~ of Members **would refer** Living My Way

Provided Support for people with disabilities on
4 different funding sources



National Disability Insurance Scheme



Moved office into new Premise



Commonwealth Continuity of Support



Supported Members during COVID-19 Lockdown by providing regular communications and Weekly Webinars



Insurance



Created a Free Easter Holiday Activity Pack



Self – funded



Staff Completed Mental Health First Aid Training Course

Recognising Living My Way's **Longest Serving Members** of **28 years**

YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS

After years of waiting for the NDIS, 57-year-old Frances felt an unexpected fear come over her after receiving her plan and her funding.

Unsure what to do, or even how Plan Management could help her, she was daunted, lost, and confused about what her next steps should be to get the proper care she requires.

"I'd been waiting a very long time for the NDIS roll out, and if it weren't for the help of Living My Way, I'd probably still be sitting here trying to understand the plan I've been given," Frances said.

A wheelchair user since the age of five, Frances has Spina Bifida. Although she is accustomed to her way of living, it was only after speaking to a friend that she felt she could navigate her next steps.

"I was speaking to one of my friends who started NDIS before me, and she was with Living My Way" she said.

"Back then I didn't know the difference between Plan Management or Self Management, and she was saying that being able to be Plan Managed was a good thing because I could basically use anyone I wanted for my services, so that's why I chose to do that."

Over the last three years, Frances has been able to get an understanding of her NDIS, thanks to the assistance and consistent quality of support of the Plan Management Team at Living My Way.

"They've really helped me. The girls are very on the ball and I have never had any problems. The people I use for different services have never had problems either, so that's been great."

Frances also appreciates how seriously the staff at Living My Way are about each Member; a refreshing change to how she feels many people with disabilities are treated in broader society.

"People sometimes assume that just because you're in a chair, you're going to be like another person they know that's in a chair, but that's not the case. Everyone's different and everyone has different needs," she said.

"I've never felt that way about Living My Way. You are not just a number or someone on a piece of paper. You're a person with their own needs and interest, and I feel like an actual person when I talk to them."

Frances' goal through the NDIS is to maintain her independent lifestyle. "I have an Exercise Physiologist that I do things with, and that is really important to me," she said.

"I need to keep up my strength for my daily life, like for transferring, and I aim to be as independent as I possibly can."

"It's a big reason why I chose to be Plan Managed, because it gives me more freedom to use the providers I want to use, which also keeps me motivated."

Outside of Exercise Physiology, Frances likes to keep herself busy by volunteering at her local school helping the students with their reading programs and attending a daytime program at her community centre.

Without the support of Living My Way, she believes her time would be filled doing paperwork and administration to keep her NDIS up to date and would miss out on enjoying other moments of her life.

"That's why I chose to be Plan Managed. It gives me more freedom, and I can get help to work out what I want to do with the funds and manage the budget."

"Somebody said to me the other day, 'oh, why don't you just do it yourself,' " "And I said, 'Oh, no way, I don't think I could cope.'"

Frances

Living My Way Member

Assistive technology has given local Sydney artist Andrew a new lease on life, allowing him to continue with his passion as his mobility has unfortunately begun to decline.

Diagnosed with neuromuscular condition Muscular Dystrophy at the age of 28, it was almost serendipity that Andrew found his way to art.

Prior to his diagnosis, Andrew worked as a builder's labourer and a cook, but as he lost his ability to do the things he loved, he was forced to discover new passions.

"Things were changing for me so rapidly, but I'd always been interested in drawing and painting. Eventually I did a university entrance course to go and study but I didn't know what I wanted to study."

"Part of that entrance course, we did a subject in art and that ignited my interest. I went and studied art at TAFE for three years and did a diploma and then an Advanced Diploma of Fine Art. Eventually I went to university and did a Bachelor of Fine art."

Now a painter and drawer, Andrew has experienced such a rapid decline in his strength and mobility that he has been unable to produce any major works this year.

But with the assistance of Living My Way's Occupational Therapy team, Andrew has been funded for a piece of technology that will give him a mechanical arm support.

"It works like an exo-skeleton. It will go around my right arm and it will give me a range of movement. Hopefully that means I'll be able to paint again."

Andrew has accomplished so much in fine arts including having his work displayed at the Sydney Contemporary Art Fair and has also submitted an entry for the Archibald Prize, called 'Waiting for the NDIS.'

"It was a big self portrait of a slightly cranky-looking, pensivelooking me, waiting for the NDIS and wondering, because I'd been waiting for years," he said.

Now that he does have NDIS funding, Andrew's quality of life has dramatically changed.

"Going back 10 years, I only needed a manual wheelchair to go outside of the house because I couldn't walk very far, and gradually, my needs have increased," Andrew said.

"Living My Way's Occupational Therapists are keeping pace with that and helping me maintain a level of independence and be a functional person. "

While Andrew's Occupational Therapy journey began in hospital, it was the complexity of his NDIS funding and plan that he sought the assistance of Living My Way.

"The NDIS is so complicated and there is so much to wade through that I really just wanted to hand off a lot of that responsibility to a professional organisation.

"I liken it to getting a tax accountant to do your tax for you. It's just so much easier and it's stress-free when you engage the services of a professional that is more familiar with the guidelines and what you can and can't do.

"Living My Way is my go-to because they always know the answer and if they don't know the answer, then they go and find out for me."

In the five years Andrew has worked with Living My Way, he has received a power chair, shower cover hood, and "every piece of equipment that I rely on throughout the day, Living My Way has played a hand in it."

"It doesn't just make life easier, it makes it possible."

"Without them, I honestly don't know how I'd be able to function."

Andrew

Living My Way Member

FROM THE MEMBERS

Staff Recognition

Recognising Living My Way's
Longest Serving Staff Member
of **18 years**

Gail Miles



Staff celebrating **10 Years' Service**

Christine Burke
Kris Wilson



Living My Way Team

Management Team

Philip Anderson

Aiyaz Ali

John Fawcett

Lauren Hopper

Melissa Elkin

Support Services Team

Amber Moore

Cassandra Eamens

Catherine Watts

Christine Burke

Helen Loukaitis

Joanne Love

Kate Colefax

Employment Services Team

Frances Addabbo

Renee Turner

Financial Services Team

Donna Yule

Gail Miles

Julie McPherson

Karen Clarke

Kris Wilson

Nada Halabe

Administration Team

Anika Stowers

Dakota Davies

Haley Freestone

Susan Tandi



Milena Morrow
Chair

Milena is one of the founding members of Living My Way and has been the Chair since 2014. Originally from Sydney, and now residing in northern NSW, Milena was one of the first people in Australia to receive a self-managed attendant care package in the 1980s as part of a Commonwealth Government pilot study, and has never looked back.

Milena has had over 16 years' experience in financial management and training. Her experience in the disability sector includes over 20 years of employment, and 11 years in governance. She was also a business owner for several years offering computerised accounting solutions and consultancy services to small businesses. A member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Milena is an accomplished public speaker, writer and editor with a Diploma in Professional Editing through the Australian College of Journalism.

Other positions held have been: Vice-chair of the Tweed Shire Council Equal Access Advisory Committee (Chair across 3 different terms of Council); Chair of Lifebridge Australia Ltd, and Member of the North West Alliance Ability Links Leadership Group.

As a person with a lifelong disability, Milena is a strong advocate for all members of the community to live a purposeful, fulfilling and inclusive life, and is committed to raising awareness around disability to dispel misconceptions and break down invisible barriers.



Peter Strohkorb
Vice Chair

Peter Strohkorb is an internationally acclaimed Sales Acceleration Specialist Advisor who has spent over 20 years in the corporate sector, working for multinational organisations such as Sony, 3M, Canon and CSC, as well as with several SMEs and membership-based organisations. Peter holds qualifications in Marketing and Management from the prestigious Macquarie Graduate School of Management (MGSM) in Sydney, Australia. He is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

Peter was inspired to support Living My Way because he witnessed the benefits of self-managed in-home care in the later stages of his mum's fight with Parkinson's disease, which she unfortunately lost at the age of 80.



Frank Burke

Frank has over 20 years' experience in the finance and accounting field, specialising in operational and commercial support in fast growth environments. During his time in finance leadership positions, he has worked extensively with medium to large sized businesses from a range of industries including fashion retail, telecoms, hospitality and medical devices. Frank has led key finance initiatives to support the strategic goals of organisations, working closely with the management team, providing insight and analysis for informed decision making ensuring effective financial control and risk management within dynamic organisational environments.



Sanjeev Gupta

With over 25 years of Industry experience, Sanjeev has led many large and diverse teams and delivered many complex transformation programs. He is passionate about using Digital to drive new revenue opportunities and use Analytics, Big Data, Social and Cloud to create value. He is currently working as Chief Information Officer at Greenstone Financial Services and previously worked as the Chief Information Officer for Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, HCF Australia and for Cover-More Group supporting all geographies and lines of business.



Ken Ferris

Ken is one of the founding Members of Living My Way. He acquired a Spinal Cord Injury in 1982 and was one of the first people in Australia to receive a self-managed attendant care package in the 1980s as part of a Commonwealth Government pilot study.

He attributes his achievements in life, to the freedoms of 35 plus years which self-directed living has provided.

Ken was an active disability advocate for many years and sat on Management Boards for a variety of disability organisations.

He has also worked in the IT industry for a number of years.

Currently he is the manager of a mobility equipment company – Wheelchairs & Stuff and also a speciality car rental company – Disability Hire Vehicles.



Angela Li

Angela was involved in an accident in 2002 and had to become reliant on a wheelchair. It turned her life upside down and it took her a while to get her life back on track.

Before her accident, Angela worked as a bookkeeper, insurance agent, holiday tour guide and sales representative.

It is important to Angela that she is able to live fully whilst receiving care that coincides with the rhythm of her life. After starting out with another care provider, she soon realised the value of a good carer and the importance of good training.

She loves the flexibility of employing her own carers and creating her own rosters to suit her lifestyle. In her spare time, Angela likes to cook, try new recipes, travel, and garden. Her garden is her pride and joy and has lots of fresh produce and flowers. To enhance her mobility Angela also goes to hydrotherapy three times a week.

In 2008, she became a Living My Way Board Member. Learning and participating in the operations of this organisation, is very important to Angela as Living My Way personally gave her more control over her life and how she wants to live it. She is excited for what the future brings for this thriving organisation.



Huw Thomas

Huw is an expert consultant, coach, facilitator, leadership developer and strategist. Since starting his career in global top-tier consulting firm, Accenture, he has led teams in banking and held leadership positions in several boutique consultancies. Broad exposure to diverse business models, organisational cultures, value streams and technologies allows him to bring innovative, market-leading advice and value to his clients.

He has consulted at the CEO and Board level with clients from an array of industries including Telstra, Westpac, Foxtel, ABC, CBA, BHP Billiton, News Corp as well as the Commonwealth and NSW Public Service.

In addition to delivering client value, Huw has driven growth and organisational maturity in consulting firms through sales, marketing, account management, product development, people leadership and thought leadership.



Peter Whyntie

Peter is a governance, risk management and compliance specialist whose experience spans over 35 years across the corporate, government and not-for profit sectors. Following his retirement as a partner of a major consulting firm he now provides independent risk and compliance consulting services. In recent years Peter has assisted a number of NFP organisations engaged in medical research support, aged care support and mental health services to enhance Peter is a governance, risk management and compliance specialist whose experience spans over 35 years across the corporate, government and not-for profit sectors. Following his retirement as a partner of a major consulting firm he now provides independent risk and compliance consulting services. In recent years Peter has assisted a number of NFP organisations engaged in medical research support, aged care support and mental health services to enhance their risk management frameworks and governance. Peter is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia (GIA), where he is a member of the Risk and Technology Committee. He is also Course Director of the Advanced Risk Management subject of the Institute's Graduate Diploma of Applied Risk Management and Corporate Governance. Peter holds a Bachelor of Economics; Diploma in Corporate Management (GIA); Internationally Certified Compliance Professional, Fellow (GRC Institute) and was a Graduate of the Company Directors Course (AICD). their risk management frameworks and governance. Peter is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia (GIA), where he is a member of the Risk and Technology Committee. He is also Course Director of the Advanced Risk Management subject of the Institute's Graduate Diploma of Applied Risk Management and Corporate Governance. Peter holds a Bachelor of Economics; Diploma in Corporate Management (GIA); Internationally Certified Compliance Professional, Fellow (GRC Institute) and was a Graduate of the Company Directors Course (AICD).

Living
my way.

“

I know that Living My Way take all their Members really seriously. You're not just a number or someone on a piece of paper, you're a person with their own needs and interests

Living My Way Member

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