

Living  
my way.

Flexible

Trustworthy & Helpful

Respectful

Consistent Quality

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

# Acknowledgement of Country

Living My Way acknowledges the Dharawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land we operate on in Menai, Sutherland Shire. We value and celebrate Dharawal culture and language, and acknowledge Dharawal people's continuing connection to the land, the sea and community. We pay respect to the Elders and their families, past, present and emerging, and through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



**Credit:** Steven Tritton

**Image description:** Aerial view above the beautiful suburb of Menai in Sutherland Shire, looking toward Alfords Point and Illawong.



# ■ Messages

## Chair Message



As I look back on the past year, it has once again been signified by celebrations, losses, challenges, uncertainties, and very real and ever-present risks of COVID-19.

Firstly, I want to express my adoration and respect for Milena Morrow, our past Chair, who sadly passed away in October 2021. I knew I had big shoes to fill when I was appointed Chair in November last year. Milena's dedication, passion and advocacy for Living My Way, its Members and the disability community was always going to be a tough act to follow. I thank my fellow Board of Directors and our new CEO, Mark Turley, for their support during my transition to Chair and for their input into the challenging decisions we had to make during the last financial year.

Throughout the year, we held firm in our commitment to prioritising our Members and our staff first, to provide a safe and high-quality services environment, and to the Values we uphold, notwithstanding the challenges we faced and mastered. We have learned to live with COVID-19, and whilst there have been intermittent impacts on our Members and on our operations, we have largely been able to continue providing uninterrupted quality services to our Members. I am pleased to report that even under difficult circumstances Living My Way has continued to perform strongly over the year, adding further to the value and variety of services to the disability community.

### **Our Members and NDIS Participants**

At Living My Way, we follow a fundamental principle that says we will always prioritise our Members first over profit. We exist to support our Members and to enable them to get on with a self-directed life of independence and freedom. This principle was demonstrated throughout the year as we applied safety measures, response programs and frequent communications with our Members and to check in on their well-being.

Changes to the SCHADS Awards threw a couple of curveballs, which greatly impacted our Members and Support Workers, predominantly casual workers. We consulted and worked through the changes with both parties to create appropriate responses for everyone.

We take pride in delivering consistent quality services to our Members. This was again evidenced as we reviewed the results of our annual Member Survey, conducted in April 2022. We received the highest Member Satisfaction ratings in LMW history, at 98%. On behalf of Living My Way, its Board and its staff, I would like to thank our Members for their honest feedback, trust and support.

### **Our Staff**

Our staff has navigated the past 12 months with grit and grace. I am incredibly proud and grateful for the resilience and bravery of our employees, who persevered through the worst of the pandemic and who continued to provide essential support to our Members. Through lockdowns, isolations, work-from-home arrangements and worker shortages that interrupted our operations, we soldiered on to service our Members.

To protect our Members and fellow employees we implemented our own COVID Vaccination Policy. It was pleasing to see that our employees responded with 100% compliance and that there were zero staff departures due to this policy.

Nevertheless, we couldn't go back to "business as usual". Our Executive Leadership team took this opportunity to look at strengthening the future of Living My Way, and strategically re-align our operational structure and processes, with our Members' essential needs and our employees' requirements in mind.

For this reason, Living My Way commenced an Employee Consultation Program in early 2022 to canvas their input into our organisational realignment. With the help and support of our employees and of our Executive Leadership team, the restructuring was completed in June 2022, including adding new portfolios across Service Quality, Risk Mitigation, Training, and People & Culture. We also extended our Support Worker training capability through a new online learning management system and our Plan Management function with a new backend IT system. Our employees responded with a high satisfaction rating of 87%. I want to acknowledge and thank our employees, the Executive Leadership Team and our CEO for their support and continued engagement during this time of change.

### **Our Organisation**

While it is our policy not to pursue profit for profit's sake, Living My Way must maintain its competitive position and sustainably deliver on its objective to empower people with disabilities to live independent lives. The last 12 months have taught us that every organisation is vulnerable to disruptions and that more disruptive events will continue to occur in the future.

Following the departure of our previous CEO, Philip Anderson, the arrival of new CEO, Mark Turley, the sudden passing of our beloved Chair, Milena Morrow, and the continuous turmoils of COVID-19, we needed to create a more resilient strategy to prevent potential future disruptions that may pose as a risk to our business. If every important business decision is a series of conversations, our Strategy Day was the most important conversation for Living My Way's future. In February 2022, the Board met in-person for a Strategy Day to ensure that Living My Way's future remains healthy and sustainable.

An outcome that followed the Strategy Day was the recruitment and onboarding of three new Directors, all with specific skill sets and backgrounds. In May 2022, the Living My Way Board was strengthened with new Directors Suzanne Colbert, Richard Moore and Sarah Lukies. Importantly, each of them arrived

complete with personal lived experiences in disability and with specialist skills and experiences to add to the existing Board.

During 2021/22, Living My Way achieved a net surplus of **\$1.264 million** on revenue of \$13.178 million. Further details are in the Financial Report. Despite the healthy outlook of our financial status we are not resting on our laurels but are reinvesting in the future of our business and our member services. With our strategic plans to establish a satellite office in the Western Sydney, the new business partnership with **icare** and the strengthening of our IT systems and service provisions, a strong balance sheet, our renewed focus, and with a strengthened Board, Living My Way is looking confidently into the future.

**Peter Strohkorb** | Chair  
**LIVING MY WAY LIMITED**

## CEO Message



In another challenging year, Living My Way, its Members, its Board and our Team demonstrated why the organisation is successfully moving forward into its 30th Year of operation. Those challenges were met in cooperation, with resilience and with a determination to continue the good work that our founding Members established three decades ago.

Our mutual conversations were pitted with words like lockdown, RATS and flash flooding but our response was to dig in and to rally together. In all the challenges that the Year brought, the team at Living My Way endeavoured to keep Members close and safe - regular check-ins, a good supply of RATS and PPE during lockdown, and emergency management responses to local flooding events. We were relieved that many of our Members stayed safe and well during this time, and we welcomed the acknowledgment that we received, from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, on the continuity of service that we were able to provide during this period.

In the life cycle of an organisation, there are sometimes significant events that go to the very core of the business. In October 2022, Living My Way was saddened and rocked by the sudden passing of Milena Morrow, a founding Member and Chair of the Board of Directors. Milena was part of the fabric of the organisation from inception, and Milena's selfless contribution, passion for the sector and inclusive personality were instrumental in

forming the successful organisation that we all see today. Our thoughts continue to be with the family and for all those for whom Milena had so deeply impacted.

It was on the shoulders of Milena's work that we continued to press on throughout the remainder of the year. We embraced the opportunity to engage further with our Members, and other stakeholders, with a refresh of our digital presence namely Facebook page and our website and the creation of an Instagram page. We faced the sector wide workforce challenges by implementing a Learning Management System for all our Support Workers. We responded to the ever-changing face of the NDIS by introducing a whole of organisation re-structure, placing an even greater focus on service quality and response. And we lived out our Values with a stirring On-Country excursion, beginning our journey towards the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

The efforts of all resulted in many tremendous achievements for the organisation throughout the year. These included a successful re-registration with the NDIS; an international 'Web Excellence Award' for the LMW website; strong financial health with an increase in Member revenue; and excellent Member and Staff satisfaction gleaned through our surveys. Everyone linked to Living My Way can be very proud of these achievements.

I am very pleased to present this Annual Report and I would like to thank; the Board of Directors for their continued and professional support of LMW in its endeavours; the LMW team, particularly all our Support Workers who continued to support our Members in such challenging times; and our Members, who remained loyal to the organisation throughout the year.

**Mark Turley** | Chief Executive Officer  
**LIVING MY WAY LIMITED**

# Meet The Board

## Peter Strohkorb Chair

Peter is an internationally acclaimed Sales Acceleration Specialist Advisor. He has spent over 20 years in the corporate sector, working for multinational organisations such as Sony, 3M, Canon and Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), and 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 when he witnessed the benefits of Self Managed Home Care Program in the later stages of his mother's battle with Parkinson's disease.



## Ken Ferris

Ken is one of the founding members of Living My Way. Ken has been living with a spinal cord injury since 1982 and was one of the first Australians to receive a Self-Managed Home Care Package as part of a Commonwealth Government pilot program. He attributes his independent life achievements to living a self-directed life. Ken is an active advocate for the disability community and has sat on Boards for various disability organisations in NSW.

Ken has also worked in the IT industry for several years. Currently, he is the manager of a mobility equipment company, Wheelchairs & Stuff, and a speciality car rental company for the disability, Disability Hire Vehicles.



## Peter Whyntie Vice Chair

Peter is an independent risk management and compliance consultant with over 35 years experience in corporate, government and not-for-profit (NFP) sectors. He has assisted several NFP organisations including disability, aged care, medical research and mental health support services to enhance their risk management frameworks and governance.

Peter is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and a Fellow (Life Member) of the GRC Institute (GRCI). Peter holds a Bachelor of Economics, Diploma in Corporate Management (GIA), Internationally Certified Compliance Professional, and was a graduate of the Company Directors Course (AICD).



## Huw Thomas

Huw joined the Living My Way board in 2018 and has contributed to shaping the organisation's vision, values, strategy culture and digital transformation. He has more than 15 years' experience as a strategy and transformation consultant and executive coach. Huw regularly consults at the CEO and board level with clients in an array of industries including Westpac, Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Santos, RSL LifeCare, Foxtel, the ABC, BHP Billiton and numerous public service agencies.

Huw currently leads a multi-million-dollar consulting portfolio in a boutique firm and has driven growth and organisational maturity through sales, marketing, account management, product & IP development.



## Frank Burke

Frank has over 20 years of experience in finance and accounting, specialising in operational and commercial support in fast-growth environments. During his time in finance leadership positions, Frank has worked extensively with medium to large sized businesses from various industries, including fashion retail, telecoms, hospitality and medical devices.

Frank has led key finance initiatives to support organisations' strategic goals, 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.



# Meet The Board

## Suzanne Colbert AM

Suzanne has had 32 years' experience advocating for inclusion of people with disability. She commenced her consultancy business in 2021 after stepping down as the founding CEO of the Australian Network on Disability (AND). AND assists private, public, and not-for-profit businesses to be inclusive of customers and employees with disability. Suzanne was a carer for her late husband, John Little, who was a wheelchair user.

Suzanne has contributed to many Federal and State Governments advisory committees including the National People with Disability and Carer Council; the Australian Human Rights Commission Reference Group on Willing to Work: A National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australian and Australians with Disability; the NSW Disability Employment Advisory Committee (Advisory to NSW Public Service Commission); the Disability Employment Service Reference Group and the City of Sydney's Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.

Suzanne was awarded an AM for her work on inclusion of people with disability in business. In 2013, she was inducted into Disability Employment Australia's Hall of Fame and was included in the AFR/Westpac 100 Women of Influence. Suzanne is Patron of Achilles Running Club in Australia.



## Sarah Lukies

Sarah is an experienced senior legal counsel with broad corporate, company secretary (ASX), commercial and specialist insurance expertise. Sarah is currently Senior Legal & Governance Counsel at Xero Limited and a Non-Executive Director of West Gippsland Healthcare Group.

Sarah was previously a Non-Executive Director and Chair of Kalparrin Incredible Kids. Sarah is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia, a graduate of the AICD Company Directors Course and holds a Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Business, and a Master of Business Administration.



## Richard Moore

Richard Moore is an experienced Chair, Non-Executive Director and Senior Executive specialising in leadership and strategy, advocacy and stakeholder relationships, capacity building and organisational growth and development. He has a significant portfolio of governance experience that was developed alongside a successful career in executive management in Australia and overseas. Richard has strong experience on audit & risk, finance and quality & safety committees. During his 12 years at the helm of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Queensland & Pacific Division, he advised in governance and strategy across numerous industry sectors and all organisational types.

He has worked in private, not for profit and public sector organisations. His experience spans various industry sectors including oil & gas, health, and Not-For-Profit organisations.



## Sanjeev Gupta

For over 25 years, Sanjeev has led many large and diverse teams to deliver complex digital transformation projects. He is passionate about using innovative digital technology to drive new revenue streams and use analytics, Big Data, social platforms and cloud systems to grow and strengthen the organisation's value. Sanjeev is currently working as General Manager, Technology and Innovation at ORIX, and previously worked as Chief Information Officer at Greenstone Financial Services, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, HCF Australia and Cover-More Group.





# About Us

## Our Values

### Trustworthy And Helpful

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

### Respectful

We treat all individuals with dignity and integrity.



### Flexible

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

### 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 June 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 varying professionals who are advocates for people with disabilities or have lived experiences with disabilities. The Board fully understands the importance of free will, 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.

Provided support for people with disabilities on **4 different funding sources**

1. NDIS
2. Insurance
3. Disability Support for Older Australians (DSOA) - previously known as CoS
4. Self-funded
5. icare

### Living My Way Services



**Support Worker  
Services**



**Occupational  
Therapy**



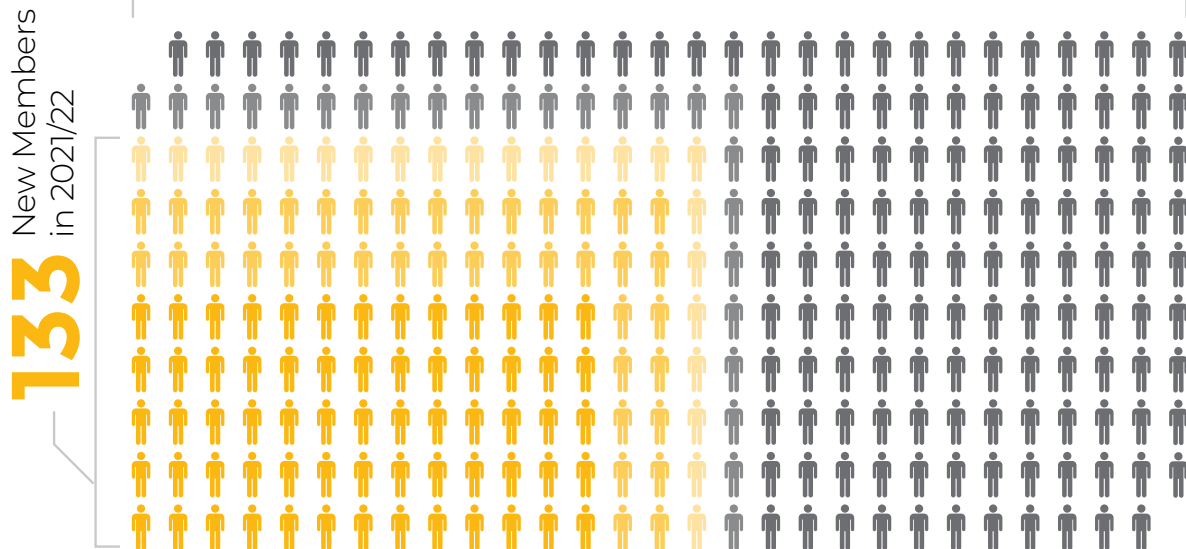
**Support  
Coordination**



**Plan  
Management**

## Year in Highlights

**296** Living My Way's Members supported this financial year



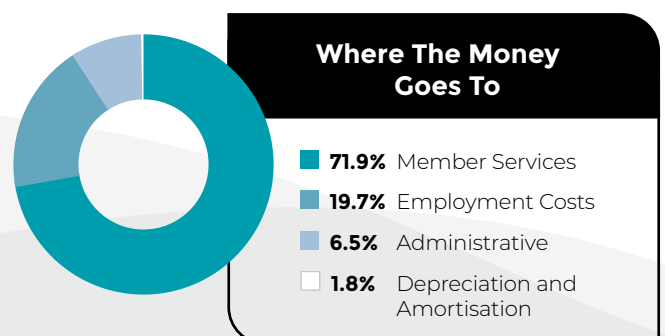
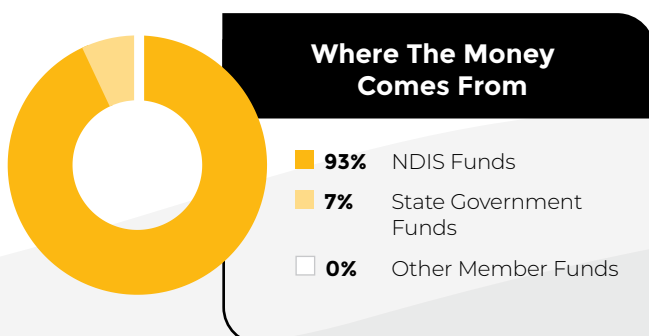
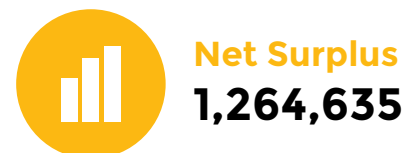
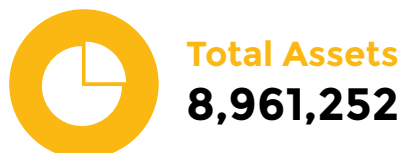
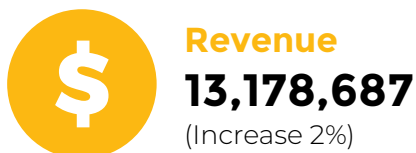
Membership grew by **133** which mirrored a growth in service demands.

**429** total number of Members reported as of 30 June 2022

Our NDIS funded support increased by **3.1%**

## 2021/22 Financial Highlights

Despite COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions, the organisation achieved 2.4% growth in 21/22 to \$13.2 million in revenue. 21/22 expenses includes an increase in Member services as well as staff benefits to retain qualified employees and investments in updated systems and technology to increase productivity and efficiencies for Members.





# MEMBER SURVEY 2022

## Learnings in a Snapshot

As part of our commitment to the Members we support, we conducted an annual Member Survey as a key component of the LMW Quality Management and Improvement Policy. All learnings are embraced in the continuous improvement cycle of the organisation.

**97.2%**

Members happy with staff friendliness and responsiveness.



**98.3%**

Members feel that our staff have the expert knowledge that meets their needs.

**98.3%**

Members recommend Living My Way.



"My son and I are extremely happy (blown away, actually) with the support, advice and management received from Living My Way. This is so refreshing after having a less than positive previous experience with another Plan Management service.

At this point I'm still learning about NDIS and the possibilities available and I would certainly trust and respect LMW's advice."

"Access to their wisdom and experience. Already my son has a brighter and more positive future and is accessing amazing relevant and practical services that will certainly give him improved independence."

"I definitely recommend the services which Living My Way has been providing to me to other people."

"I know that I have the right support in getting the best funding I can for my son, who has a complex NDIS funding. It is a peace of mind to know that Mia will get the job done, with efficiency, clarity, support and care."

### Member Feedback



**98%**

of our Members are satisfied with our services.

**Learnings from this year's Member Survey will be implemented as part of business improvement initiatives.**

**New feedback we captured from our Members this year:**

1. What can we do to help guardians/carers of our Members who are struggling and under a lot of stress.
2. Promote other LMW services to Plan Management members. A few Members are not aware we have other disability services and how they can make their enquiries.
3. Some Members have expressed that they would like to meet the the Executive Leadership team, specifically the CEO in person. We are confident we can make this happen!



Level of Happiness ➡➡



## 6 Pillars of our **Strategic Initiatives** for 2022 - 2024

Over the next three years, Living My Way will focus on six strategic areas of work; to enhance the essence of what we do, strengthen Member relationships and widen service proficiencies and improve process efficiencies with these six substantial goals.



**Prioritise our Members**  
by focusing on providing  
person-centered service



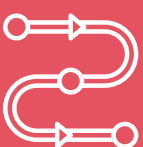
**Grow our services and**  
market share



**Support our Staff to**  
adequately resource the  
business



**Engagement with Staff &**  
Members to achieve  
high-levels of satisfaction



**Streamline processes to**  
ensure all systems meet  
business needs to enable  
growth and Member  
satisfaction



**Govern our business**  
to ensure ongoing  
sustainability

## ■ From Our Employees

Kylie is no stranger to most of our Members who have Support Workers. As one of the first points of contact at Living My Way and having years of experiences in the disability sector, Kylie understands our Members very well.

“Having compassion is very important in the disability sector. Most people that I speak to will quite often say to me, ‘I don’t want sympathy. I want empathy.’ So, having the ability to be compassionate and empathetic towards a person living with a disability is really important to build and maintain that relationship.”

“People with a disability don’t want sympathy. Members are trying to live their life their way and feel as empowered and independent as possible and treated with integrity. It’s important that we have compassion and the empathy while supporting them. It’s important that our Members know we have their backs.”

**Kylie**  
LMW Employee

Ainslie shares her knowledge and learnings on self-care while working full-time and caring for a child with a disability.

“As a mum who has a child with disability needs, I always felt that I needed to “drive my own bus”, taking my own steps to ensure that my son gets the best care that he needs. I was always searching for the most suitable support systems and if the support does not meet his requirements, I’ll keep looking to ensure he gets what he needs to help him improve his development skills and give him a quality of life that I felt he deserved.”

“As a full-time carer, I was also aware that it is important I look after myself because all the energy and efforts I’ve put into caring for my son can be draining and challenging at times. My advice to all carers is to take some time-out and focus on you and your wellbeing. Reach out to others who can help you and provide the support you need.”

“If you are not well or you don’t look after yourself, you are not going to be able to look after your child or family member that needs support.”

**Ainslie**  
LMW Employee



## From Our Members



Over the past five years Caroline's diabetes has resulted in her developing additional disabilities, including physical disability and vision impairment, however now things are starting to turn around for her, thanks to the work of Living My Way's Support Coordination team.

Caroline says she owes her new mindset and positive attitude to her Support Coordinator at Living My Way.

"This is a step in the right direction to living the best life I can," she said.

"I'll stick with Living My Way as I think they are great. I do not know where I would be if I did not have my Support Coordinator."

"I love how personal the staff are. I feel like I am talking to a friend, you can talk to them about everything. I have got a great relationship with my team. Pete (husband) and I even get birthday cards."

**Caroline - Member**  
Support Coordination



Ben and Jo have entrusted Living My Way with Ben's Plan Management since 2017, and since then, he has acquired a range of skills that have contributed towards greater independence.

"We're proud of how far Ben has come since his first NDIS plan. He's able to catch public transport on his own to places he has initially been supported to travel to, he can order his own meals when out in the community and pay himself, he has a range of options to choose from for outings and is able to make or heat up basic food for lunches."

"Importantly Ben is building the skills to make friends and build relationships with his peers."

While it is the work Ben has done it is his providers that have helped him.

**Ben - Member**  
Plan Management

# Year In Photos



Elder Dhawaral Elder Uncle Shayne, Dr Lana Leslie and CEO Mark Turley experiencing the spiritual land and culture of the Dhawaral peoples around the Shire.



Reconnecting with our peers of disability at the Sydney Disability Expo.



Video shoot with Andrew Farrar-Pugh sharing his story and experience getting his Guide Dog.



Organisation realignment project kicks off with an all-staff workshop.



With COVID-19 still considered a risk, AGM2021 was successfully held as a virtual meeting.



Good to be back! Nepean Disability Expo.



The LMW team ready to rumble and excited to be out and about!



Paul Carey proudly showed off how he enjoys his freedom.



For the first time in a long time, the Board met in person for Strategy Day.



## Milena Morrow

### Co-Founder and Former Chair

Milena Morrow did not let anything stop her from achieving her dreams and reaching her potential. She was not only an accomplished human rights advocate, public speaker, author, business owner, editor, and financial management expert, but also a mentor and Chairperson for multiple organisations. She showed exceptional leadership during her years as Chairperson for Living My Way and was a disability advocacy pioneer. We admired Milena and were in awe of her ability to effect societal change.

Milena was born in Australia in the 1960s. Given the lack of awareness and understanding at the time, people with disabilities were treated as helpless individuals, who could not be expected to contribute to society or ever hope to have a life of normalcy. When Milena was nine months old, symptoms of a spinal muscular atrophy known as Werdnig-Hoffmann disease began to appear, and society's mistreatment of her soon followed. Strangers stared, parents dragged their children away from her, and people ignored her.

Undeterred by these challenges Milena successfully graduated from secretarial school and soon got her first job. However, her employers refused to invest in the electric typewriter she needed. It was clear to Milena that one of the biggest obstacles for people with disabilities was the attitudes of some able-bodied people, and that this needed to change. Milena refused to be defined by the limitations that others place on her and instead she leveraged the empathy, resilience, and insights that her disability had given to her and fought for the change that she wanted to see. She created awareness, championed access and inclusivity, dispelled misconceptions and broke down invisible barriers.

When Milena was in her early twenties, she was selected to be one of 24 participants in the groundbreaking Attendance Care Allowance Model Pilot Study, which was essentially a precursor to the NDIS. Following this study, Milena co-founded Living My Way. Milena was on the Board from its inception in 1992 and was elected to Chairperson in 2014. We are so grateful to Milena for always being available to us, and for everything she did to help our Members.

Milena passed away suddenly in October 2021 at 63 years old. She defied the limited expectations that society originally had of her by leaving this world as an inspirational leader who was an admired, respected, and valued member of the community. A person who contributed more to society than most people could ever hope to achieve. Milena will be lovingly remembered by her husband and best friend of over 30 years, Robert Morrow, her immediate family, and close friends. Our team adored Milena and were in awe of her abilities. We miss her, and will continue her legacy of empowering people with disabilities to be in the driver's seat of their own lives.



## In Memoriam



# Kenneth Beattie

## **Co-Founder of Living My Way**

---

Few people have contributed more to Living My Way's culture than Kenneth (Ken) Beattie, who co-founded our organisation and passed away in July at 69 years old. Ken was a helpful and considerate man, who championed the idea of helping people to become independent so they could just get on with life. He was a laid back and happy person whose favourite song was "always look on the bright side of life". Ken always looked for the good in people and was kind to everyone he met.

Two days after his thirtieth birthday, Ken's spinal cord was injured. Ken's injury left him permanently dependant on a wheelchair to move around independently for many years, and required him to leave his wife and young daughter for months at a time for hospital visits and rehabilitation. Despite his hardships, Ken never fell apart. Instead, he would often say "you can't change the past, you just have to move on with the future" before getting on with things with minimal fuss.

During his months apart from his family at the Royal North Shore Hospital and rehabilitation clinic, Ken became a mentor and a role model for new patients with spinal injuries. He led by example, showing others that it is possible to be independent, capable, and just get on with life without holding back. He demonstrated this by starting and running his own business for nine years and working for the same employer for 37 years.

Ken brought this mindset to the table in 1992 when he co-founded Living My Way. 30 years later, his legacy lives on as the beating heart of our organisation. He has inspired us to help thousands of people to be independent and just get on with life, and we will continue to do so in his name. His legacy will endure through our work, and through the lives of those that he mentored and cared for, especially his wife of nearly 44 years, daughter, and grandson. Ken built strong relationships with our team over the years and continues to inspire us today. We will miss him.

# Living my way.

“

**I guess you can always find a service, but it's really about the people at Living My Way. They make things easier than they normally are, and takes the pressure off us.**

Living My Way Member

”

Address:

**Ground Floor  
44-60 Allison Crescent,  
Menai, NSW, 2234**

Mailing Address:

**PO Box 67, Menai Central, NSW, 2234**

ABN: **47 110 995 518**

Registered NDIS Provider

