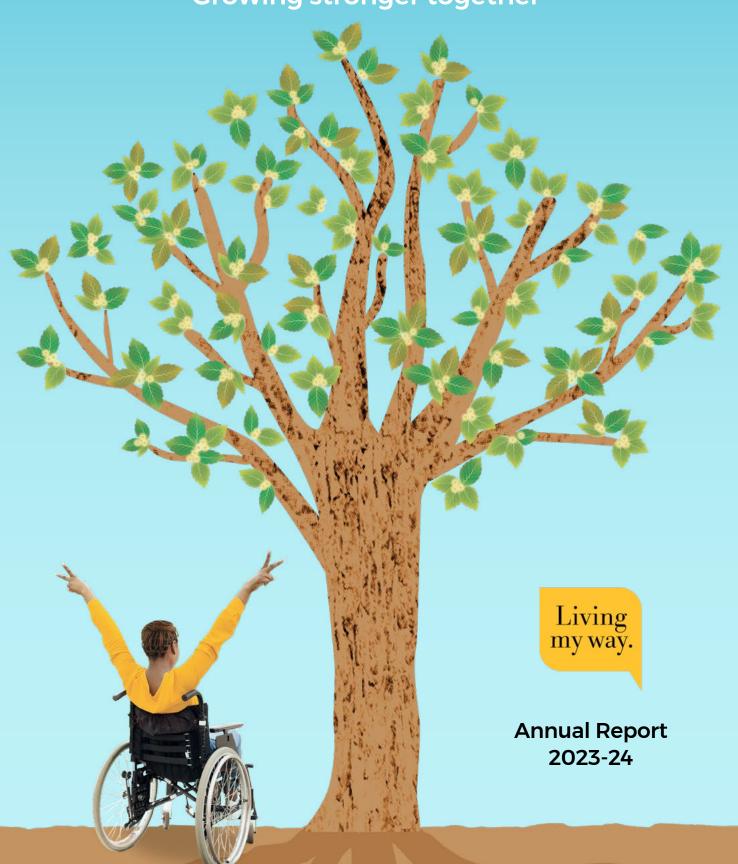
Strengthening our Roots

Growing stronger together



Welcome to our beautiful, storyful Annual Report

Last year, we celebrated our 30th Anniversary, and our Annual Report was filled with vibrant flowers. They symbolised the blossoming of three decades of hope, hard work, and flourishing together — and the joy of new beginnings.

This year, we're standing tall, just like the tree on our cover. Those deep, determined roots represent the foundation of our values —

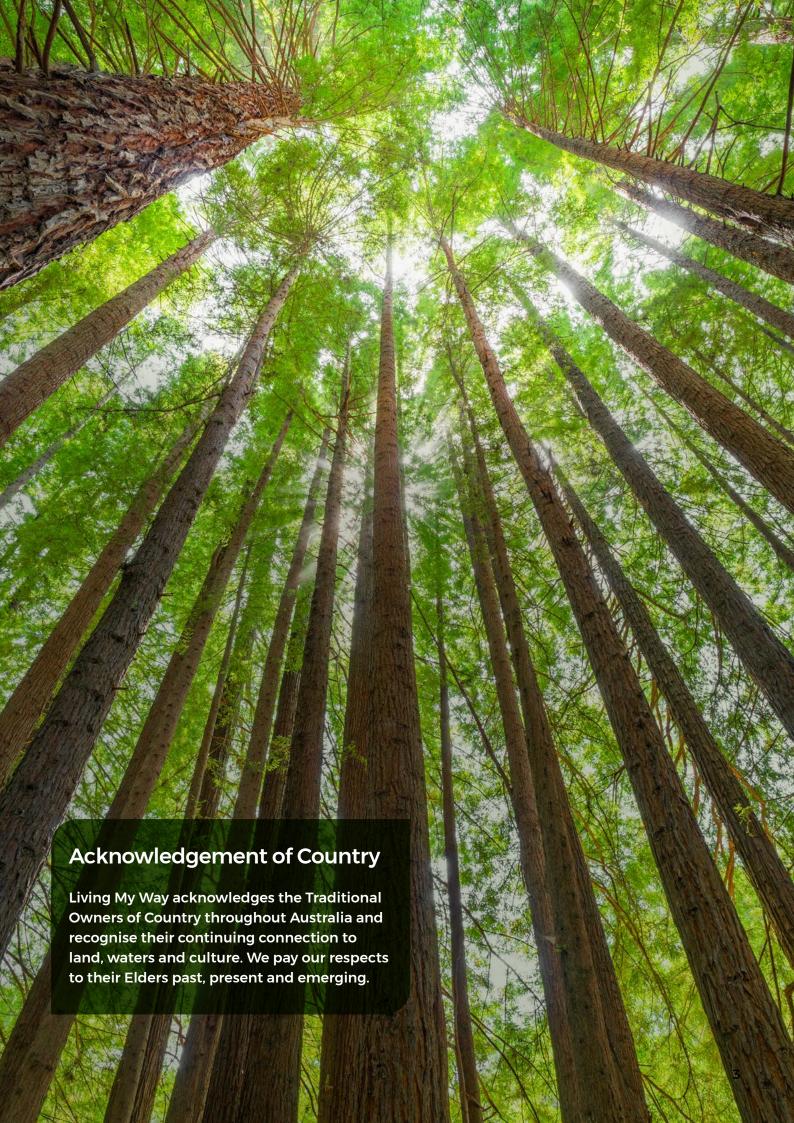
reliability, care, and collaboration — that have kept us grounded through all seasons.

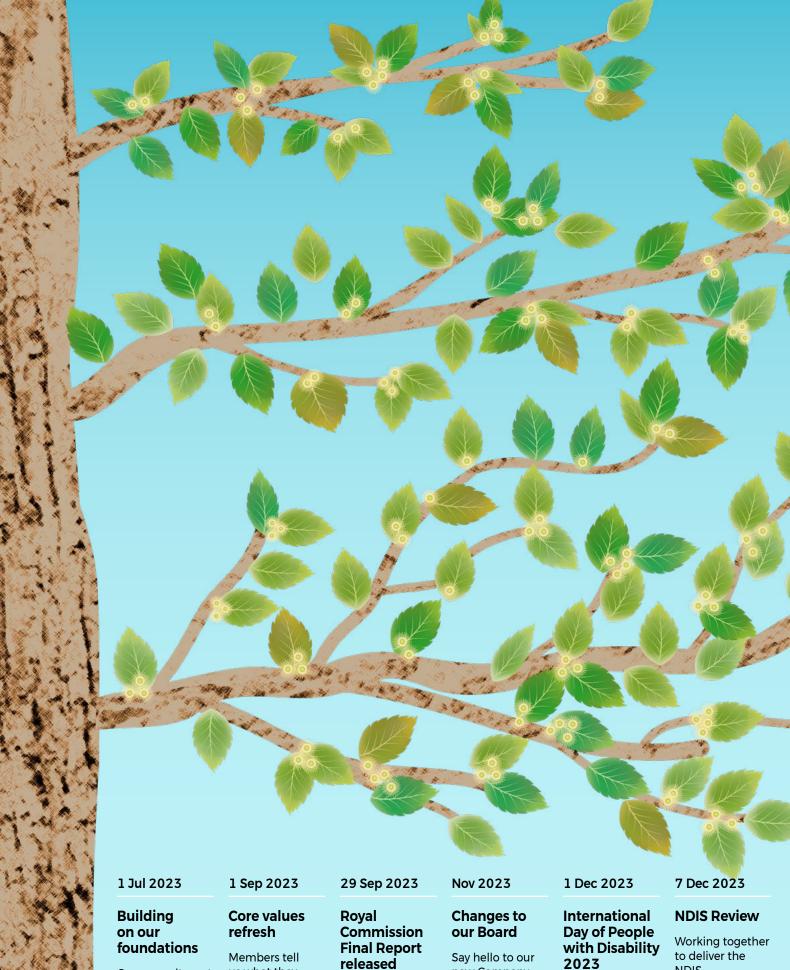
The strong tree trunk shows our commitment to our principles, while the spreading branches provide shelter, illustrating our ongoing mission to support, grow, and continually reach out to do more.

As you read these pages, we hope the many stories from our community of Members, families, supporters and staff will delight you and bring this metaphor to life.



After all, Living My Way isn't just one tree. Together we're a forest.





Our commitment to elevate new and more Member voices kicks off.

us what they think to help us develop our new values.

released

More spotlight on disability and new action moving forward. new Company Chair Huw, and farewell to Sanjeev who retired after six years of service.

Roundtable on Disability: a new space created for louder voices, with Members and other advocates.

NDIS



14 Dec 2023

New Milena Morrow Award

Created to honour Milena and acknowledge extraordinary commitment from others. 10 Jan 2024

Approved for High Intensity Supports

We expand our support to Members 20 Jan 2024

Service Planning Team transformed

New talent and ideas in our Member contact team. 20 Feb 2024

New and provocative ideas

Guest blogger Danny gets us thinking. 4 Apr 2024

Farewell

Board Member Richard steps down. 24 Apr 2024

Business Awards Finalist

We are recognised for outstanding community service.

5 June 2024

NDIS midterm Audit

We are excited to achieve such positive results.



Chair's message

Living My Way has always stood for togetherness. Our Members remain at the heart of everything we do, and it's their strength and resilience that inspire us to keep improving.

I'm reminded every day of the significant difference we made both in delivering reliable, quality care and in advocating for lasting change. We've strengthened our focus on providing reliable, high-quality support, and building a stronger connection with the people we work with. As we plan for our future, our strategy is all about staying true to our values, making sure we continue to grow and improve together.

Redefining our purpose, vision, and values

One of the most significant changes we made this year has been the redefinition of our Purpose, Vision, and Values. It was a collaborative exercise with our Members, team members and the Board and built a strong, active connection between Living My Way and the community of Members we serve. These powerful statements remind us of the most important things that unite us to care for each other, work together and be there for one another and for those who need us the most.

Looking forward: strategy for the future

Our next three-year strategy focuses on the sustainability of our services and expanding our reach to help more people with disability. With regulatory change looming and NDIS funding constraints, we must remain vigilant and be ready to adapt. Leveraging technology to streamline operations, mitigating risk with good processes, and maintaining financial stability are continuing priorities.

The good news is that Living My Way is well-positioned to take on the challenges ahead. Our Members can be assured that they have a Board and Management team committed to continuous improvement while maintaining the services they already enjoy. We will be guided every step of the way by our Members and our shared sense of purpose.

Our Board: strength through change

The last 12 months have been a time of change for our Board.

I want to thank Peter Strohkorb for leading us as Chair through 2021-23. Peter steered the Board with great care, passion and integrity; through a challenging period that included the sudden passing of our previous Chair, Milena Morrow, a COVID-19 lockdown and the onboarding of our CEO, within the

space of a few months in 2021. Peter also led the recruitment of several new Directors and contributed to the advancement of our governance practices. We're fortunate to still have Peter on the Board, benefiting from his great passion, humour, organisational knowledge and governance experience.

I would also like to thank those who exited the Living My Way Board in the past year: Sanjeev Gupta, Richard Moore, and Frank Burke. Each of these Board members has contributed significantly to their own areas of expertise, and we are extremely grateful for their contribution. These changes present an opportunity to bring in fresh perspectives and skills. We are in the process of recruiting new Board Directors. As always, we encourage people with disability to apply for Board positions and particularly anyone who is committed to get in touch.

Thank you to our team members

I would like to praise the incredible work our team members have done this year. When I visit the Living My Way offices, I get a strong sense of commitment to our Members and a positive culture. Seeing your dedication first hand and hearing your own stories is always impressive and inspiring. Your hard work and commitment make a real difference to the lives of our Members and we are grateful for your efforts. Thank you everyone.

Last but definitely not least, thank you to our Members

I hope you enjoy reading this year's Annual Report and feel the genuine passion we all share for the work and future of Living My Way. You'll meet many Members, their families and carers in these pages again this year as we focus on learning and connecting through your stories. Thank you for inviting us to support you in your life, and for sharing your stories too.





CEO's message

The theme for this year's annual report is 'Strengthening our Roots'. I don't mind admitting that I'm a terrible gardener, but I do know that a flourishing tree is a sign of good roots. And so it makes me very proud to read through the stories that our Members, and our team, have provided for this year's annual report.

They are stories that tell me that the many people connected to Living My Way (LMW) are indeed flourishing, and importantly that the work to develop the foundations of our organisation is having a positive impact in the lives of our

The long awaited reports from the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) and the NDIS Review landed in the first half of the vear and there are two clear messages emerging. That people with disability need an improved NDIS that clearly puts them at the centre of their supports, and that service providers need to elevate the standards of their services to accommodate this. In FY2024 I MW made a great start in embracing these guiding themes.

Our team travelled the length and breadth of NSW to personally visit our Employ Your Own Support Worker Members. We gained some excellent feedback on how this extraordinary model continues to meet their requirements, but importantly where it can be improved. For the first time in the history of LMW, all of our Members were provided with a unique opportunity to tell us what we should be thinking about in the next three year strategy, and to shape the type of values they think are important in supporting our ambitions.

And in December 2023, as part of International Day of People with Disability, a group of Members and people connected with LMW were provided with a platform to host a roundtable conversation. LMW hosted the day, but the voices and experiences were entirely those of people with lived disability. We will continue to make sure that the voices of our Members help to shape and lead the future of LMW.

Behind the scenes, we made many changes and adaptations to ensure that quality and safeguarding efforts continued to shape organisational improvement.

All of these great efforts were rewarded and recognised at the end of the financial year with the completion of our NDIS mid term audit in June. Not only was LMW recommended for re-registration, the audit report also identified elements of best practice in a number of practice standard areas, an achievement we are all very proud of.

WE ARE PROUD OF

Our new Support Worker Newsletter

Improved financial systems to increase efficiency Our new Learning and Development Framework

Updated Member information available to their Support Workers

The current set of reviews in the disability sector are sure to bring many changes in the years to come. We know the very best way we can meet these changes is to continue to nurture genuine, open connection with our Members. When I read each story in this year's annual report I know we are definitely heading in the right direction.

Thank you as always to our dedicated Board of Directors for their guidance and support throughout the year, and congratulations to the entire LMW team for their part in the remarkable stories and achievements of our Members.

Enhanced our employee benefits so we can attract and retain the right people

Mark Turley Chief Executive Officer



Our Members

GERRY

A farmer's tale

Gerry is a farmer. He spent many years working his 4,000-acre farm in Condobilin with his wife and three sons. In 1975, he was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy (MD), but that didn't stop Gerry. He adapted his farming equipment to continue working on the land he loved for many more years.

As his MD progressed, Gerry and his wife Rose made the tough decision to sell their farm and move to Grafton and be closer to medical facilities. Gerry has been managing his own Support Workers since 2006 and is a font of knowledge for others contemplating the same.

Rose's Story

It has been a long slow progression with Gerry's disease.

Early on before we discovered self-management, we had strangers coming into our home and it felt like a privacy invasion. Gerry was training hundreds of different people and we got sick of it.

Then we joined LMW and took the management over ourselves and everything changed. I get support handling the paperwork and payroll which helps a lot.

We've always found a way to make things work; it's how I've coped with life's challenges. We take great care of our Support Workers, handling hiring and firing ourselves. We're truly grateful for the people who help us. They understand my needs, and often I don't even have to ask - they just know. It's been a very successful arrangement.

Gerry, EYO Member

Now Gerry chooses his Support Workers but I'm involved too, and we do the interviews together. Because it always involves people in our home, this is a decision we both make and whoever we choose always needs to align with our values.

We build rapport with our Support Workers and get to know them. I don't hover and let them do their job. If there's an issue we discuss and work it out together.

We have a good system that runs well, and I trust them 100% which is wonderful.

Rose, Gerry's wife



Rose, Gerry's wife



Gerry with Support Worker Kerrie

Kerrie's Story

I've been helping Gerry for the last three years with his daily physical support. It's simple things like scratching his nose, or making sure his beloved radio is left on his tray at the end of my shift, so he can enjoy talkback for the rest of the afternoon.

Gerry loves nicknames, so in the beginning, it was learning what belonged to what (equipment, body parts, and everything). I worked in aged care for 23 years before becoming a Support Worker. I love the difference. You have time to build relationships, and it's so much more rewarding. Gerry always makes me smile, and the simple things are important for his care.

I help Gerry live life the way he wants. We cut out stories from the newspaper that keep him in touch with his love of the land and his life before. He always wants to keep his special memories and I'm happy to help him.

Kerrie, Support Worker

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Kerrie, Support Worker



Gerry with his brother Bill



This works for me

I've been with LMW since about 2007, though it was called Allowance Incorporated back then. A Support Worker told me about this great organisation and I decided to give it a try: little did I know I'd still be here all these years later.

I was on the Board for 10 years and I enjoyed it. We were just a small organisation then, not many Members, and less than 10 staff. We were very close. Over the years, I've seen a lot of changes with more Members and lots of new technologies, and systems..

I am used to hiring my own Support Workers. At the beginning it was a little bit scary because I hadn't had that experience. But lucky back then, it wasn't that hard to hire people. I'd put an ad in the local newspaper and usually get quite a few people to come for an interview. I could attract experienced people, sometimes nursing students. Now it's harder to find Support Workers that way. Since the NDIS came, people have other platforms to look for jobs easily. That's why I'm using an agency as it's easier because they have platforms to look for Support Workers.

I prefer to manage my own staff because then

you can talk directly together. You can discuss how they feel and if they're happy with the job. It's more direct and easier and you don't have to talk through a third person. It's important that everyone who works with me are honest, trustworthy, and tries their best. It's very personal duties they do for you.

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Angela, EYO Member



Angela, EYO Member, and Wendy, LMW Team Member

I'm lucky to still have one Support Worker who's been with me for seven years. We understand each other. Sometimes she'll do a little bit more to help, and sometimes when she's busy, I understand.

Angela, EYO Member

SCOTT

I feel happy

In 2022 Scott moved house and has been living independently for the last 3 years. With the help of his Support Workers, and members of the community, he's built a new life that he loves.

I feel happy. I do everything on my own now. I'm very happy with myself and with all the people who help me out. My Support Workers help me out with shopping, cleaning up the house, and doing washing.

I have been exploring places I've never been to before. I like going to shops like the coffee shop every morning to get my coffee. I do like going to the gym a lot. I actually like doing it! I love doing recycling for the environment. The environment is no good because people throw rubbish everywhere. I like to donate the money that I get from the machine.

I love going for walks in the afternoon too, and helping on the barbecue at the homeless shelter. I do have some goals, yes. One of them is saving for my holiday. Another goal is maybe one day I might do some volunteer or work at Woolworths.

Scott, Member

When Scott first started coming in, he was very shy, but now it's all him. He knows what he wants and how to get it.

Local cafe owner

I'm very happy with myself and with all the people that help me out. I'm not so weak anymore, I'm strong like Superman.

Scott, Member

Scott is really good at listening and taking on feedback. He really puts all of his effort into making sure he is doing the exercises really well, and he is very dedicated.

Emma, Personal Trainer





Our Members

PHILIP

Never ending story...

When Philip Hills was initially diagnosed with terminal brain cancer at the age of 49 it was devastating for him and his young family, but he quickly decided there was an important thing he needed to do with the time he had left. His wife Melinda tells the story...

When Philip first came home from hospital after having the main part of his tumour removed, we were coming to terms with our new reality.

I don't think he had thought about writing before brain cancer but he'd been given a book written by Dr Chris O'Brien who shared the same diagnosis and this piqued his interest in writing. Philip was always a great storyteller. He was very quick and witty and when a friend encouraged him to write his stories down in a book he didn't waste any time.

He got back into working, prior to chemo and radiation, and he would spend the last hour of his day writing. I'd be cooking dinner, and he would come into the kitchen and read me what he had just written. It was amazing, really beautiful. He was recounting stories that I had heard before but the act of putting them down in writing, allowed him to really process, often for the first time, a lot of what had taken place in his life. Many nights he would have a good cry and me along with him. Other times we would have a good laugh.

He decided to get the cover done early despite me reminding him that he hadn't finished his book yet! But Philip was a creative person and needed to visualise the end product. We did a gorgeous photo shoot with a friend who was an amateur photographer and another good friend designed the cover. A colour printout of the cover wrapped around another book remained on our coffee table throughout the writing process. Like a lot of things in the two years that we had with Philip post diagnosis, it was a good thing we did this. A year later, his declining function would not have allowed it.



Philip's writing process ebbed and flowed. There were times after chemotherapy when he needed more rest, and there was a time when he stopped writing completely for a few months, but it was never in doubt that he would finish his book. Eventually it became too difficult to physically write, and this is when he dictated the last few chapters and I became his scribe. I also did the first full edit before publication. This was a super beautiful time together.

As Philip's illness progressed the supports from the NDIS helped us both have important quality time together. When someone is nearing the end of life, it can be tricky to find the right supports but we are thankful for the guidance provided by our Support Coordinator Aaron and from our palliative care team.



When I was editing the book, often at night, I would come to bed and tell him how amazing he was and how amazing his book was. It wasn't until I read and edited the manuscript as a whole, that I could see the true picture of Philip emerging. He was incredibly open and honest. It was clear he was driven in parts of his life by his many hurts. He was able to question whether



The book was an incredible healing process for Philip and for both of us for that matter. It is also an incredibly precious gift for us all, particularly for his girls.

all that striving, ambition and the need for recognition was necessary. He realised that he was complete from the outset and that in actual fact he had all the answers right from the get go. The book was an incredible healing process for Philip and for both of us for that matter. It is also an incredibly precious gift for us all particularly for his girls.

As Philip's illness progressed the, supports from the NDIS helped us both have important quality time together. When someone is nearing the end of life, it can be tricky to find the right supports but we are thankful for the guidance provided by our Support Coordinator Aaron and from our palliative care team.

We were still making decisions on the book in the last few weeks of his life, but about two months before he passed, Philip happily handed over control to see the book published. "Over to you Mel," he said. "I'm done." He was content and it was beautiful.

Philip Hills passed away 22 July 2023. His book 'The Man Who Tried to Prove Too Much' was published in August 2023 and is available from Booktopia or Dymocks.





GROWTH VITALITY STRENGTH

International Day of People with Disability

In December 2023, we celebrated International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPwD) by hosting a cosy Round Table Talk.

On a rooftop garden, we gathered with four storytellers - Emily, Danny, Garth, and Dan - who shared their unique experiences about life with diverse disabilities.

Guided by Emily, our Member, and lead storyteller, the conversation flowed in a space free from agenda, with everyone getting a chance to share their ideas and feel respected. It was a fun and enlightening conversation around a variety of topics including advocacy, accessibility, education, employment, media representation, community perception, self-care, and inclusion.

Watch the full-length conversation on YouTube and video highlights on our social media.

There are roadblocks to do different jobs and tasks...
I want to call the shots on how I access the world.

Garth

Emily

It takes so much time, energy, and resources just to exist in a world that is not built for us.

If you make things accessible they can be accessible for everyone and not just people with disabilities.

We are all people just trying to live our lives the best way we can.

Dan

I have issues around being invisible or put into a box where I don't belong.

When I'm with people with disabilities, that is where I feel seen, heard, and safe.

Danny









Danny

Garth

Dan



Emily's Reflection (as Story Lead)

I was honoured to be part of Living My Way's celebrations for International Day of People With Disability 2023. Thinking about the different ways I could contribute, I agreed to facilitate a panel for Living My Way. The panel included a small group of advocates I respected from across our diverse disabled community. Each of us came with a unique perspective that I felt would contribute to a rich and engaging discussion – one that I couldn't wait to be a part of and share with others.

We covered everything from mental health and self-care to physical access, education, employment, leisure, media representations, assistive technology, housing, community inclusion and social change. I was acutely aware of how often people with disability are asked to share deeply personal stories, and that it needed to be done respectfully. So it was important to me to make the space for this conversation as safe and supportive as I could.

And I feel that effort really paid off in the insightful and sometimes unexpected chats that we had with each other. Even though it was the first time some had met, it all flowed very naturally - we could've talked for hours!

No panel conversation is ever going to include every possible perspective, but I hope there was something in there for everybody. What this event really brought home for me is that advocacy doesn't need to be huge and flashy, it can be a simple conversation around a table. I think we need more

It's about claiming media for ourselves and redefining it.

Emily Dash, Panel Lead, Member, Advocate, and Artist

opportunities like that, and I'd love to do it all again someday. It could be to check in and see what those same panellists are doing one year later.

Or... we could try to uncover some new voices, those who might not have had the same opportunities to share.

Because we all have an important story to tell.

Emily, Panel Lead, Member, Advocate and Artist





How Living My Way is responding to the Disability Royal Commission recommendations

In September 2023, the Final Report of the Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability was tabled in Parliament. We reviewed the recommendations with many of them influenced by the shared experiences of people with a disability and identified the following key areas to further develop a more inclusive and supportive environment for our Members.

Human rights to be at the heart of all our services.

- Strengthening and following policies and procedures that respect our Members' rights.
- Providing resources and training to our employees to understand and respect our Members' diverse needs.
- * Developing a Charter of Member Rights.

Avoid conflict of interest in Support Coordination.

- Continuing to make sure our services are fair and communicating clearly to our Members.
- Regularly reviewing our processes to keep Members' best interests in mind.

Improve disability support services.

- Focusing on continuing to improve the quality and consistency of your services and supports.
- * Implementing an employee learning and development framework and expanding our training program.

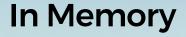
Get better at handling complaints.

- * Improving processes for the management of feedback and complaints ensuring transparency and timely follow-up.
- Exploring how we can improve accessibility for Members to provide feedback.

Ensuring Member voices are heard.

- Increasing our efforts to engage with Members and listen to what they say.
- Strengthening our engagement with external advocates for better outcomes for our Members.





Lives are precious. We remember and honour the lives of our Members and dear friends who have passed.

Though they are no longer with us, their

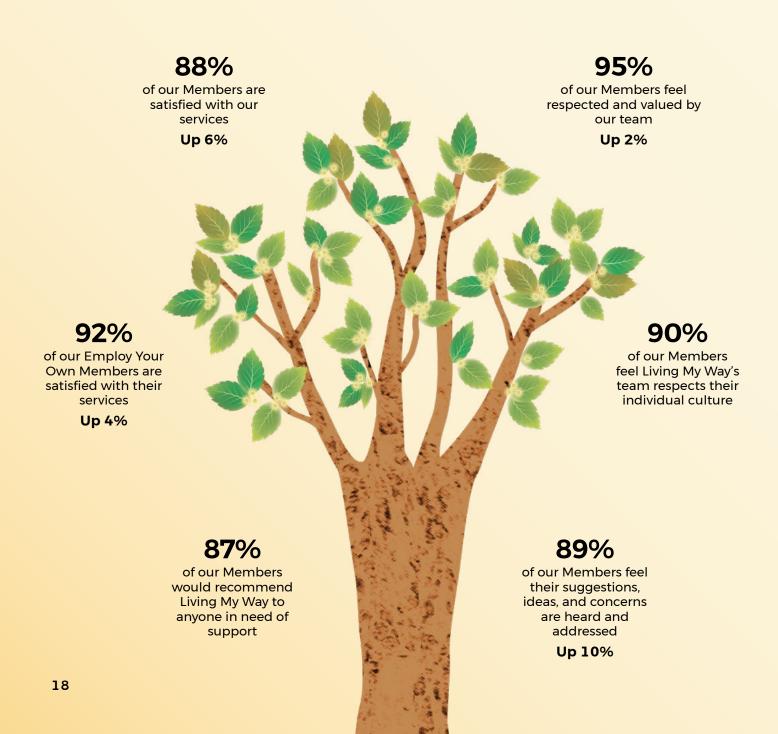
- * Carolyn Alessi
- * Jason Saad
- * Louise Blom
- * Nadine Jebraiel
- * Peter Schutzinger
- * Philip Hills



Member Survey 2024 – a snapshot of discoveries

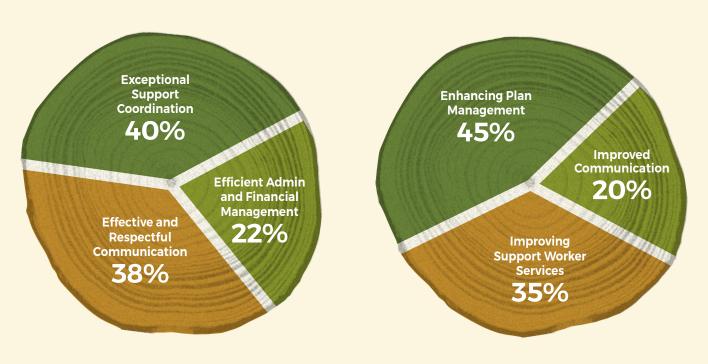
In May 2024, we carried out our annual Member Survey because we know we can always do better. The feedback and insights from our Members this year are truly valuable, and we're taking our Member's input to heart. Since last year's survey, we have worked hard to address key areas of improvement identified by our Members. We are pleased to see some positive changes in this year's survey results. However, we recognise there is still more work to be done.

We are committed to using our Member feedback to make informed decisions and improve experiences. Our goal is simple: address Member concerns and make positive changes to keep up and improve their experience with us.



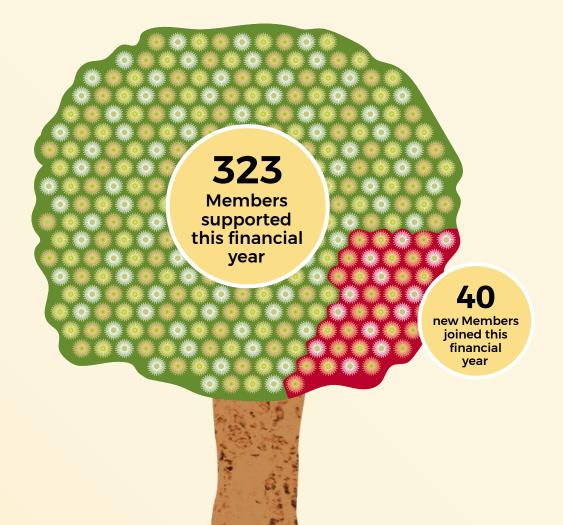
Top three strengths

Top three areas of improvement



Membership Highlights

Total Number of Members as at 30 June 2024 is 463



Our Community Advocacy

HANNAH & ROSE

Breaking down the walls... and finding your wheels



Hannah

I'll Let Myself
In is the first
book by our
tell-it-how-itis champion
for women
and disability,
Member,
Hannah
Diviney. It was
released to rave
reviews.

Hannah is fiery and determined. She's

always been an avid reader and when she realised that no matter how many books she read, there was nothing that authentically represented her experience of disability: she filled the gap by writing one herself.

Published by Allen & Unwin, I'll Let Myself In is a coming of age story that reveals how Hannah created her own way "to be the representation

Brilliant, bright, defiant, moving, contagious. Hannah's flame leaps from the page straight into your soul. May it spread like a brushfire. This book is the proof point that disability does not mean deficit.

Grace Tame

she'd always wanted to see... in a world that wasn't designed for her."

Yay for you, Hannah! Thanks for sharing such a powerful story. It reminds us all of what we can achieve when we refuse to accept the narratives others give us but instead, set out to create our own.

About Hannah: Hannah began her career at Mamamia at the age of fifteen and since then has become the co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of Missing Perspectives. She's the woman who called out Lizzo for using an ableist slur. She also plays the female lead in the SBS TV Series Latecomers.

Picking your battles - family advocacy

Advocating for accessibility is a continuous journey for us, especially since it's challenging for Gerry to go anywhere. While we actively participate in local Advisory groups, there's still much work ahead.

Our persistent efforts led to a victory when our local post office eventually installed a ramp. Gerry also provided valuable insights to our local Council during the building phase of a new public carpark, ensuring it was accessible for everyone.

We yearn for better community facilities and more thoughtful planning from developers when building new homes. For example, our friends always have to visit us because there's no access for Gerry to visit them. Being an ex-pilot, Gerry dreams of spending more time at our local Aero Club, but despite our letters and advocacy, little has changed. Even the new wing at our local hospital has its share of accessibility challenges.

With our lived experience we've learned that we can't fight every battle, so we choose the ones that matter most.

Rose, Wife of EYO Member Gerry



Gerry and Rose with family

DANNY

Advocacy... making change doesn't stop



Our Members, Board, Allies, and Community are joining together to advocate.

Danny is an advocate, educator, Support Worker, and friend of Living My Way who has enriched our community. Their contribution through guest blogs, and story sharing during our International Day of People with Disability Round Table Talk has been insightful.

With over 30 years of dedication to volunteering and working within the LGBTIQA+ and PWD communities, Danny's contributions are truly remarkable.

Here are some highlights from Danny's blogs and contributions this year:

How we shine and sparkle, helps us create an expansive future

"We owe it to ourselves and others... to dream, pray, imagine, and if we can, dance and sing a better future into existence"

Why do you think someone would ask you 'How do you identify?

"We are not our abilities, our gender, our sex, our race, our background, and/or our sexuality... we are not even our identity - we are so, so very much more."

Walking the tightrope of love and flow with your chosen family

"For many people within the intersection of LCBITQA+* and PWD* life is a continuous navigation between where we're at, our changing needs and capacities, what context we're in and what supports and resources we have."

Our Team: Support Workers

LUKE & DAVID

A night to remember

Support Worker, Luke, is in his late twenties. He began in the care industry volunteering even before he finished school. He went on to become an enrolled nurse, and has been applying many of these skills as a Support Worker ever since.

When I first met Shane* I was one of his first Support Workers. Shane's just a teenager and I was keen to build a positive connection from the start. I could tell he enjoyed hanging out and doing typical teenage stuff. Not long after we met, Shane had a school formal coming up I and was asked to go along. We started gearing up.

On the night we were both decked out in suits and snapped a bunch of photos. Everyone was buzzing: lots of big smiles.

Shane didn't need a second invitation: he hardly left the dance floor and had the best time.

Something that I think we'll both remember for a really, long time.

Luke, Support Worker



Luke being presented with the Heroes Award

We stayed until the very end and driving home later, I felt a surge of happiness and relief. It was such a positive experience.

Luke, Support Worker

*Not real name

Dave's secret sauce

Every Support Worker brings their own unique qualities to their work. It's their 'secret sauce' but why keep something so valuable a secret? This year we've been asking Support Workers to share how they use their discoveries and experience to make a positive difference to our Members.

David worked in education for many years before moving into Support Work in 2021. He uses his previous educational know-how and coaching skills to enrich his work with Members now. Here he shares the ingredients for his own secret sauce.

- ** Stay adaptable: Different settings call for different skills. I've been helping a Member who wanted to become more active. There are always lots of different ways to do things and a good response encourages you to think 'What else can I do to help turn things around for them?'
- ** Build trust: Confidence creates freedom to explore different options and make recommendations in conjunction with carers. It encourages you to keep thinking: 'How can we do something better?'
- * Good attitude always: I like to have a joke to break the ice and I try to lighten the mood. Even small surprises can make a huge difference. I have



David being presented with the Heroes Award

- a Member who loves animals, and sometimes I might drop in with my dog Obi to mix it up. Obi loves it too.
- Finding the right way to help: You don't ever want to be overwhelming. It's all about making sure people live the best life they can, and assisting them without intervening too much.
- Working together: We need to remember that we're just here to help: no-one expects a miracle. It's often about making a positive impact in a small way.

David, Support Worker

Our Team: Support Workers

FENELLA

A shift in life...

The pandemic shifted Fenella to behind the wheel of a bus which was quite a change, but what followed was a new found purpose.

I worked for years in the corporate world but I was already wanting to look at something else. It had started to feel like it lacked purpose with too much being just about the money. It was time to actually work and live my way, where it's more about people.

So you could say the pandemic got me going. I had already started looking at not for profit organisations and it was someone working at Living My Way who first suggested that I would be great as a Support Worker because I'm good with people. "And I was like really?" They said, 'Why don't you come along and have a chat?' That's kind of how it started.

Four and half years ago I met Jackie. She is a beautiful, beautiful soul, and we have so much fun together. We play card games together and whoever wins gets a high five.

The sense of fulfillment and purpose I've found in support work surpasses anything from the corporate world. And while I may sometimes miss the camaraderie of a larger team, I know I'm exactly where I'm meant to be.

Fenella, Support Worker

Jackie is passionate about her garden and she gets lots of pleasure from it. We go to Bunnings and Flower Power every week and she knows everyone, so it's also a social occasion.

There is a lovely trust between us and time always flies when we are together. It doesn't feel like work. What you put into support work is what you get back. Being a good listener, having empathy, and being open and flexible, are important qualities.

Fenella still works as a bus driver, starting on the road in the early hours before her shift as a Support Worker begins. She recently completed training as a Rural Fire Service volunteer too.



Fenella and Member Jackie teaming up to work on her garden



Fenella representing International Women's Day

Our Head Office Team

SAM & KAILIE

Sam's leap forward

Sam's story shows something that we are really proud of at LMW which is fostering young talent who are passionate about this work.

From the beginning, my journey was meant to be a two-year traineeship. Little did I know that just six months in, everything would change.

During my traineeship, I had the chance to work with different teams, and while they were all great, Finance always felt like home. I've always loved working with numbers.

When I was offered a permanent gig as Finance Officer I was over the moon.

I love the added responsibility that comes with being permanent and I like helping and chatting

with Members.

in finance.

We all get along and help each other. I'm excited about learning payroll next because I've always wanted to do it. It's good they trust me, so I can step up when people are away.

Sam is loving her new role and

recently shared, "I'm so thankful that LMW took a chance on me.

I just want to give back." Sam

has discovered her passion and

is now pursuing further studies

Brooke, People and Culture

I can't wait to see what the future holds.

Sam, Finance Officer



Helen, Sam and Teresa



Finding my place

Kaili is our second trainee and so we asked her what it was like working at LMW.

I thought I might be treated like a kid because I'm younger but I quickly felt part of the People and Culture team, and everyone was so nice. I've even helped Marketing on the prize wheel at an Expo event, which was a fun day. It's been a blast with all the learning, and feeling part of the team.

I can't wait to see what's next!

Kaili, LMW Trainee



Kaili

AARON

Seeing what is possible

Support Coordinator Aaron is the winner of this year's **Milena Morrow Award**.

He is a very special person who approaches his work with determination and outstanding kindness to our Members.

Aaron spent the first 12 years of his career in the Royal Australian Navy. He moved on to study medical science working as a paramedic and then in mental health.

A few years ago Aaron found his calling in Support Coordination, where he skillfully navigates the everchanging landscape of NDIS.

He's like a dog with a bone determined to help Members achieve the most from their NDIS plans. A letter he wrote on behalf of a Member to a local MP made its way to the Office of the Minister of NDIS. Within a couple of days, all was resolved with a positive outcome.

Aaron believes that all Member needs are unique, and he loves the challenge of finding solutions to help them achieve their goals. One of his superpowers is how he balances lighthearted banter with detailed discussion, honed from his industry knowledge and experience.

Recently Aaron found a relatively new Member, critically unwell on his kitchen floor. He was then hospitalised and spent time in the ICU. The Member doesn't have family to support him, so Aaron supported his discharge and post-hospital care, arranging in-home support, and working together with health professionals. The Member is now back enjoying life and living independently.

While this recognition is meaningful to me, I see myself as part of a broader effort, representing the exceptional work of the Support Coordination team. Aaron



Aaron being presented by Mark, CEO

Aaron told us that while not everything can achieve a positive outcome, guiding Members through the tough times and showing them what is possible is the sweet spot, and always celebrating the small victories.

Thank you Aaron, you're a champion!

What is the Milena Morrow Award?

An award that honors the late Milena Morrow, a founding Member, Chair, and advocate whose passion and dedication left a special impact. This annual award recognises a team member who embodies Milena's spirit and exemplifies our values in everything they do.



Our Head Office Team

BHAWANA & TEGAN

Small things matter

In my work with the Service Planning team. I connect with Members, their families, and Support Workers every day. Some days are challenging, while others bring great rewards, This story encompasses both.

Leo* is one of our young Members who needs a high level of support. He has Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 3) and severe global developmental delay. Leo has the largest team of Support Workers and is dependent on them for daily life. This means I keep in regular contact with his support team and the family, particularly his Mum, Lisa*.

One day, on a call, she told me how two Support Workers, Erin and Caleb, felt almost like part of the family, and made life for Leo so much easier. It was heartfelt.

She praised Erin and Caleb on their individual qualities, telling me how Erin often steps in with help that goes above and beyond. And how she admired the way Caleb integrated so easily into Leo's support team, always responsive and willing to help.

Lisa asked if she could nominate them both for our Recognition Awards. After the awards were announced. I couldn't wait to tell her they'd won. She'd recently been in hospital with a life-threatening illness but she had the comfort of knowing that Leo was happily supported without her there.

This experience reminds me of what a difference our Support Workers can make and how rewarding our job can be. It will definitely stay with me for a long time.

Bhawana, Service Planning

*Not real names



Caleb, Erin and Bhawana

Building bridges

Tegan joined our Support Coordination team earlier this year and shares her experiences as a newbie.

In our team, everyone collaborates. If someone needs help, the next thing you know, everyone's standing up over their desk, and suggesting have you done this, and what about that? It's great for me with so many experienced people to learn from.

What excites me about the future is working with new Members, because you have the chance to build rapport, break through barriers and prove yourself.

Tegan, Support Coordinator



Tegan and Mia

Our Executive Leadership Team

Our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is a nice mix of professionals, each bringing their unique expertise to the table, which includes experiences in the disability, aged care and child care sectors.

United behind our vision and purpose, the team help to chart a clear and actionable strategy that

supports the entire LMW team in their best work and for the benefit of our Members.

Our ELT are also aligned by their personal values in a mindset of honesty, fairness, kindness and hope, which helped to shape a caring culture, and at LMW, we're doing just that - every day.



Mark Turley Chief Executive Officer

"I count it as an absolute privilege to get up every day and do the work
I do at Living My Way. I came to Living My Way to learn from the people
who knew far more about the sector than myself."



John Fawcett
Executive Manager
Operations

"It's essential that our Members have a say in shaping what our services look like. This focus has reinforced the realignment and gives us renewed optimism that we're on the right track."



Frankie Poon
Executive Manager
Finance, IT and
Assets

"At the end of the day, our Members want reliable quality service. Our strong financial health gives us the opportunity to reinvest in our services. This will enable long-term sustainability of support for our Members."



Janine Lundie Executive Manager Quality, Risk and Training

"No matter our role, the connection between Members and us has to be built on trust. We all have a part to play and when we do, it's better for everyone."



Brooke Anthony
Executive Manager
People and Culture

"We all pitch in to get things done.
I would say, hand on heart, that the people we employ are truly Memberfocused and understand how their role can help Members meet their aspirations."



Joanna Spencer Executive Manager Marketing, Brand & Communications

"Storytelling is how we invite our Member voices to shine and share something meaningful... We want to inspire, engage and educate our community through real stories."



Out and about

This year we have been making sure we get out and about in the community at a variety of events. Here are just a few examples.



Thanks for the nomination!

"Receiving the nomination notice for outstanding community service was a complete surprise! We had no idea who nominated us, but we are deeply grateful and honored by this recognition. Our focus remains on providing the best possible support for our Members; it was never about the Award. Nonetheless, the Award presentation night was enjoyable." Joanna

Ready-Set-Connect

Maintaining a strong network with fellow service providers helps us share insights and provide mutual support. In the pursuit of knowledge sharing, there's no substitute for direct communication. That's why we took to the roads, travelling across Sydney to engage with our local communities.

Hitting the Gym

"We love partnering with CM Wellness who are dedicated to improving well-being through movement counseling, workshops, and wellness support. Their mission is to make wellness accessible to everyone, and many of our Members enjoy their services." Vivienne



Member Harry enjoying the gym

Conferences and Events

- * DSC Annual NDIS Conference
- Disability Care Quality, Safety & Reform Conference
- Contemporary Governance and Leadership Summit
- * Disability Care Workforce Leaders Forum
- * NDIS Law Conference
- * Disability Services Digital & Tech Forum
- Sydney Disability Expo
- South West Disability Expo
- * Sutherland Shire Abilities Unleashed



Attending the DSC Annual NDIS Conference (left to right): Mark, CEO; Member Emily; John, Executive Manager Operations



Sydney Disability Expo 2023



South West Disability Expo 2024

Sweet Caroline

"We were celebrating International Day of People with Disability at St George Hospital when Dance for Parkinson's Australia announced that they would soon be starting an interactive dance class. Sweet Caroline started playing and...well who doesn't love that song? Sam, Bhawana and I couldn't help but join in. We had a great time!" Lucy



Bhawana



66 Inclusion looks different to everybody because we're all different. Inclusion means that everybody can contribute and participate in society... without having to change who they are. Inclusion means that we don't look at a person based on the risk factors which exist. We look at a person based on the value they provide and the right they have to be their authentic self autonomously. Summer Farrelly, disability advocate. From the Final Report, Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability



Just what the doctor ordered

Since 2021, our partnership with icare has been a collaboration to help their clients live more independently. Living My Way is the right fit for icare clients who want to enjoy a life of choice by Self-Managing their own care.

Today, we're proud to support 21 icare clients each with their unique story of independence just like Steve....

The freedom of selfmanagement

Steve Peterson is a 38-year-old doctor, and local city councillor living in Orange with his wife and two sons. In 2018, he had an accident while riding his bicycle to work at the Orange Emergency Department and became quadriplegic. He shares his story....

Over the last six years, I've had quite the journey when it comes to managing my own care and Support Workers. It hasn't always been easy, but I've found taking a more hands-on approach has given me the flexibility and control I need to live the life I want.

Initially, I struggled to maintain a consistent roster, and there were far too many days when my Support Workers wouldn't show up. When I switched providers, that made all the difference, and now I manage a wide range of shifts myself, which means I directly coordinate with my Support Workers.



Steve and family



I've had a long-term relationship with icare who have been invaluable. They recommended that I connect with Living My Way and I'm really glad I did, as they have been incredibly helpful in ensuring I meet all the employment law obligations, and onboarding new carers. Their expertise has been a game-changer for me, as I don't have a lot of experience in that realm.

I've found building interpersonal relationships with my Support Workers is key, and I try to be a good employer by giving them advance notice of any changes and discussing concerns right away. They appreciate that I have their back, and they go the extra mile for me, so it's mutually beneficial.

For anyone thinking about taking a more active role in managing their own care, make sure you have the right skills, and mindset to be a responsible employer. Things like keeping on top of timesheets, approving hours, and ensuring your Support Workers are paid correctly are all important. It's crucial to build a strong network of Support Workers and maintain open communication, and I'm proud of the progress and the relationships I've built.

I see my unique position as a doctor with a disability as an opportunity to contribute positively to the lives of others and advocate in my local community. I serve on the Board of Spinal Cord Injuries Australia, and working to bring a disability-focused gym to our regional town, and I'm passionate about these projects.

I want to inspire others to take a more active role in their own care, and use their experiences to make a difference in their local community.

Steve Peterson, Doctor, Advocate, City Councillor, icare Client

Read more about Steve

I see my unique position as a doctor with a disability as an opportunity to contribute positively to the lives of others and advocate in my local community.

Steve, Doctor, Advocate, City Councillor, icare Client





10 steps ahead of the curve

Every year, commissions of inquiry and regulatory changes raise the bar for service providers in our industry. These changes aim to enhance the quality of services for people with disability, uphold their human rights, and protection of staff..

While some disability providers have struggled to implement these changes, our experience has been different. We were founded over 30 years ago by pioneers, people with disability themselves, who looked at what the industry was providing and strived to do better. It's always been in our DNA to be 10 steps ahead of the curve.

That's why when industry changes were announced such as new Positive Duty requirements, SCHADS awards updates, and even flexible working and pay secrecy legislation that required us to update all of our employment contracts, we were ready. It wasn't surprising because we'd already been thinking along similar lines.

It's about being strategic, not reactive.

"Our focus is providing quality, dignified care rather than just meeting compliance standards. We've made many changes, but none have been daunting because they reflect what we live and breathe every day."

Sarah, LMW Board Member

Training that's helped us to align with changing standards... and exceed them:







38 office staff participated in external training, totalling 25 courses ranging from 3 hours to 2 days.

Some of these included:







It's always been ok to disconnect

Living My Way ahead of the game, again?

When the Right to Disconnect Legislation was introduced earlier this year, it gave employees the right to refuse calls, emails and other contact outside of their work hours. It's an important new piece of legislation but the intention behind it is not new to our team at Living My Way.

Our flexible work options have long included the choice of how, when or if they communicate outside of work hours. We offer a broad span of working hours and while some might choose to check work emails on their smartphones or laptops after hours, we always encourage a positive, work-life balance.

Brooke, People and Culture

About us

Meet your team

LMW Support Workers	48)
Full time head office staff	25
Part-time head office staff	13
Temporary/contract head office staff	2

This shows that over half of our team are Support Workers, the friendly faces who so many of our Members trust and rely on to help experience independence.

New faces over the past year

Head Office	15
LMW Support Workers	25
Employ Your Own Support Workers	76
icare Support Workers	39)

Our icare Support Workers has grown 30% on last year as we extend our partnership and work with more participants.

We are one, but we are many

While English may be the language that we all share, we love that our team reflects a rich mosaic of backgrounds and experiences. And they can connect with you in these languages too:

# English		* Newari
* Cantonese	# Hindi	* Portuguese
* Mandarin	₩ Urdu	* Spanish
# Hokkien	* Tamil	∦ Italian
* Malay	* Nepali	* Arabic

Just to name a few.

I was touched when our first trainee said "I'm so thankful that LMW took a chance on me. I just want to give back." We want to plant seeds for our future leaders.

Brooke, People and Culture

We love our diversity, and embrace our different backgrounds with respect and curiosity growing every day.

Brooke, People and Culture



Our Organisation's Health

Financial highlights

"Having a healthy surplus allows us to invest more into our purpose which directly benefits our Members and team. It gives us the confidence to do more for our Members."

Sarah, LMW Board Member

Revenue grew by 15% despite many challenges in the sector

The investment portfolio made a reasonable return with 7.8% capital growth

For the third year, our sound financial position was confirmed by external benchmarking

Revenue	FY2024 \$	FY2023 \$	Change	FY2024 Distribution
Funds from NDIS	14,096,725	14,058,326	0.3%	76%
Funds from State Government	1,618,329	1,278,857	26.5%	9%
Other Member Receipts	2,832,088	783,158	261.6%	15%
	18,547,142	16,120,341	15.1%	100%

Moving with the times

The FY25-FY27 Strategy was developed with contributions from the Board of Directors, the Living My Way team and importantly, by our Members.

It is a strategy for sustainability, resilience and growth. The strategy focuses on enhancing Living My Way's core services, maintaining our supplementary services, and exploring new service opportunities through our key stakeholders.

It also made sense to revisit our Purpose, Vision, and Values to establish a new anchor that will guide us to success in the next 30 years.

Purpose

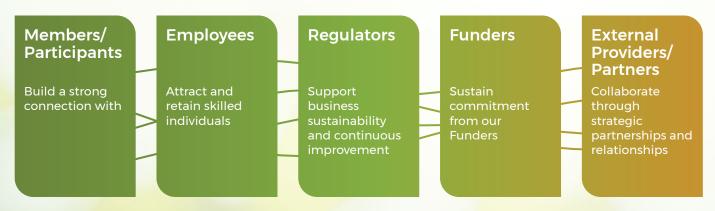
To enable people with disability to live their life, their way. Vision

People with disability empowered to have a voice and achieve their life goals.

Core Values



Our Key Stakeholders



Thirty years ago, Living My Way began as a small group of wheelchair users with disability who joined forces to share resources, protect their independence, and advocate for others. Those early Members saw themselves as the 'lucky few' and magnificently led a mission to bloom into the 'lucky many'.

Today, we are a significant organisation operating in a very different world. It's a world that offers huge opportunities and enormous complexities too and we are very grateful to be guided by our current Board.

This past year has seen the Living My Way Board emerge with a professional diversity encompassing expertise in advocacy, legal, finance, technology, strategy, governance and marketing

We are pleased to recognise some key position changes during this last financial year.

Chair of the Board, **Peter Strohkorb**, has moved to a Director position, and we are very grateful for his two-year tenure, and commitment to his role.

Existing Director, **Huw Thomas** was appointed as Chair.

Three of our other Directors, Sanjeev Gupta, Frank Burke, and Richard Moore have retired from the Board, and we thank them all for their significant contribution during their tenure.

Peter can be proud of the organisation that he has helped to steer during the last two years. On behalf of the LMW team, thank you Peter for your dedication and commitment in your role.

Mark Turley, CEO

Beyond financial metrics, our Board continues to prioritise LMW's impact on the safety and well-being of Members while maintaining organisational integrity. And to stay relevant, the Board tackles strategy with boldness, innovation and forward-thinking.

Huw Thomas, Chair

Huw Thomas

Chair: 2017-2024 Special Responsibilities: Director of the Investment Committee

After developing his career at a global consulting firm, Huw led the scaling of several servicebased businesses, including



founding his own consulting practice. He has advised leaders in over 100 organisations, in more than 15 industries and has been a board director for the past eight years.

"Our goal is to ensure Living My Way remains a leader in sustainably delivering membercentred services and outcomes."

Peter Whyntie

Vice Chair: 2019-2024 Special Responsibilities: Director of the Finance Risk & Audit Committee

Peter is a consultant specialising in risk management and compliance, with over 35 years



"Our Board of professionals brings a mix of lived experiences with the expertise to guide and govern the organisation into the future."



Director: 2017-2024
Special Responsibilities:
Director of the Nominations &
Remuneration Committee

Peter's impressive career in marketing and management spans two decades..

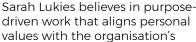


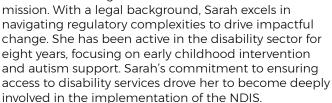
"What truly fuels my commitment to Living My Way is a deeply personal connection. I was inspired to support our mission after seeing the positive impact of self-managed in-home care during my mother's battle with Parkinson's disease. This heightened my sensitivity and awareness of the importance of having quality care for the people who need it."

Moved to Director Position in November 2023

Sarah Lukies

Director: 2022-2024 Special Responsibilities: Chair of the Finance Risk & Audit Committee





"A deep-rooted tree can survive a storm."



Founding Member and Director: 2013-2024

Ken Ferris, a founding Member of LMW, plays a pivotal role on our Board with his astute understanding of disability and as a valued advisor and sounding



board. Ken's professional background includes active advocacy within the disability community and board roles for various disability organisations. Ken manages his own businesses, specialising in disability car hires and mobility equipment. He is a formidable force in our organisation.

"I've never been accused of being polished. I say it like it is."

Suzanne Colbert AM

Director: 2022-2024 Special Responsibilities: Chair of the Nominations & Remuneration Committee

Suzanne, a disability advocate for 33 years, draws her commitment to inclusion from

personal experience with her late husband, John Little, a wheelchair user. As the founding CEO of the Australian Network on Disability, she champions collaboration to address the unique challenges faced by people with disability. Quality care is paramount to Suzanne, and her core philosophy revolves around autonomous choices for people with disability rather than convenient ones for service providers.

"We're all in this together."



Director: 2017-2024 Special Responsibilities: Chair of the Investment Committee

Frank was inspired to join our Board through a personal experience with a friend's child who has cerebral palsy. He



"We're here to empower people to take back control of their lives."

Resigned from the Board in June 2024

Sanjeev Gupta

Director: 2017-2024 Special Responsibilities: Director of the Investment Committee

Sanjeev enriches our team with his knowledge of complex digital transformations. His passion lies in harnessing the

power of innovative digital technologies to streamline processes, enhancing our services to Members and amplifying LMW's values. Throughout his career, he has consistently championed purpose-driven innovation, particularly emphasising the significance of system transformation and cybersecurity.

"Digital transformation helps us stay relevant."

Resigned from the Board in November 2023

Richard Moore

Director: 2022-2024 Special Responsibilities: Director of the Finance Risk & Audit Committee

Richard's decision to join our Board stems from a desire to leverage his skills and

experience with other nonprofits. He has extensive advocacy, stakeholder relations, and organisational sustainability expertise. Richard emphasises good strategic governance and is a firm believer in cultivating a positive and passionate culture to achieve both the organisational mission and the well-being of emplovees.

"It's the feeling I got from the organisation when we first met. How passionate they are."

Resigned from the Board in March 2024









Our Social Media Community

This year, our social media has overflowed with stories from our Members and community. Here are just some of our favourite highlights.

Follow us to stay connected and join the ongoing story we can make together.

We are all just trying to live our lives. I'm an artist who is trying to have a career.

Dan, Artist, Advocate, and friend of LMW

No disability, no nothing will ever stop you from achieving your goal.

Member, Corey











I do everything on my own now. I'm very happy with myself and all the people that help me out.

Scott, Member

Member Harry keeps active with our community partners CM Wellness.

Instagram: @lvngmywy

Facebook: @lvngmywy

We all have the right to attend events and be included in our community but there are ... barriers within normal city life that you have to be aware of.

Garth. Member

SW Fenella
(L) loves being
part of Member
Jackie's passions
- gardening,
painting and
playing cards are
just some of their
fave activities.

Life changed for Angleo when we got the right chair and the right support to live life his way.

Debra, Wife of Member Angelo I have issues around being invisible or put into a box where I don't belong. When I'm with people with disabilities I feel seen, heard, and safe.

Danny, Advocate, Academic, and friend of LMW

















Helen from People and Culture team happily put her apron on and got cooking some delicious goodies. She said "It was a way to say thank you and show how we care."

Luke, one of our Support Workers, became the ultimate wingman at a Member's high school formal. All the kids were together no differences when it came to grooving with the beat. I like to make a joke to break the ice and lighten the mood.

David, Support Worker The sense of fulfillment and purpose I've found in support work surpasses anything from the corporate world

Fenella, Support Worker



Acknowledgements

We always say "we are stronger together" and this list proves it. Thank you everyone for your magnificent support, generosity and belief over the past year.

We couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you to the organisations who are financially supporting our Members:

***** NDIS

* Department of Health and

* icare

Aged Care

We would also like to thank the organisations below, who we have listed in alphabetical order.

- * Australian Federation of Employers and Industries
- * Club Central Menai
- * Commonwealth Bank
- * Cronulla RSL
- * Disability Intermediaries Australia
- * DNV
- Good Foundation
- * Graeme Green Chartered Accountant
- * HSM IT

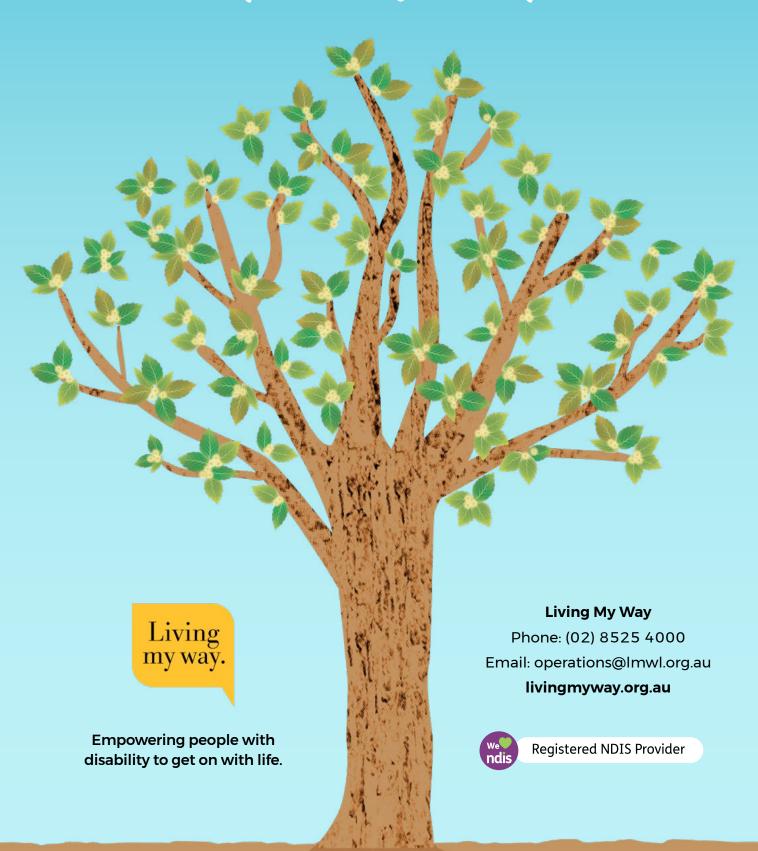
- * Impact Institute
- * Kilimanjaro Consulting
- * Kwik Kopy
- * Low Cost SEO Plans
- * National Disability Authority
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- * National Disability Services
- ***** One Community
- * Only Human Stories

- Physical Disability Council of Australia
- * Recovery Partners
- * Russell Kennedy Lawyers
- Spinal Cord Injuries Australia
- * Sutherland Shire Council
- * Trienary Pty Ltd
- * Ucidity
- * WSC Group

And finally, we thank all the service providers who have continuously supported us over the years.



Growing stronger together



Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success. Together we're stronger.