

Annual Report 2023

**Collaborating  
for the Future**



## Our Vision

**A just society where all  
Australians can live their  
best life.**

## Acknowledgment

The Benevolent Society acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders past and present.

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# Your Life. Your Way.

## **Our promise to our clients is to empower and equip them to live their life, their way.**

We do this by working alongside clients, carers and the community to meet people's needs and realise their hopes in safe, trusted environments.

It reflects our approach to advocacy and working within our community, driving positive social change and mobilising social movements by bringing people together.

### **Our values**

Our values guide us to stand strong, never give up, speak out on the issues that matter, and make a difference every day for people of all ages and backgrounds. They are:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Effectiveness
- Optimism

### **Who we help**

- Children
- Families
- Older Australians
- People with Disabilities
- Carers
- Communities
- Young People

### **What we do**

- Provide specialist support and therapies for People with Disabilities
- Support Young People
- Support older Australians
- Support for Carers
- Support for Children, Parents and Families
- Advocacy

### **Human Rights and Modern Slavery**

We believe in dignity for all people at all times, and we support people and communities who are vulnerable to human rights abuses. We are embedding a human rights culture across the organisation. The Benevolent Society is a reporting entity under the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth).



# Chair Message

## My final year as Chair of The Benevolent Society has been a year of reflection, delivery, and transition.



Reflecting on my 11 years at The Benevolent Society, I remember one of my first visits in 2013 to our Early Childhood centres in Queensland. I observed the local team deliver, with compassion and empathy, significant early intervention support to clients and families, ensuring supported children live their best lives. Building on their community knowledge and proven practice, our team offered multiple services to strengthen a family's wellbeing. The Benevolent Society has been delivering integrated early intervention services alongside early childhood education and care for over 15 years. It is a first of its kind in Australia.

The Benevolent Society's Early Years Impact Measurement Framework delivers a holistic approach for measuring the effectiveness of these integrated services, delivering positive outcomes for early childhood development, health, and child safety.

Over the years, I have enjoyed travelling across New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia to meet our teams. I have always been struck by their professionalism, commitment, and dedication to deliver positive social outcomes for their communities. In Tamworth, for example, we deliver Aged Care, Disability and Child, Youth and Family programs. As a rural community, it is sometimes challenging to provide all services our clients are seeking. Notwithstanding this challenge, our teams go the extra mile to collaborate and partner with the local community to ensure the best wrap-around support is provided to our clients. Collaboration and partnership are core values of The Benevolent Society's commitment to creating a just society.

The Board and Senior Management Team recently visited our Campbelltown team who have developed a range of programs to help women build resilience and support their families. Specifically, the Campbelltown team has supported families with specialist counselling, intensive case management through the Staying Home Leaving Violence program, and group education and support programs.

Over 29 years, the Campbelltown team has supported more than 1,000 women each year who have experienced domestic violence, and is recognised nationally as a highly effective integrated service model. The commitment of our Campbelltown team to their clients is inspiring.

My many visits to our offices and hubs have been the highlight. The work our talented 1,200+ staff and 400+ volunteers do is impressive and delivers measurable social impact.

During my five-year tenure as Chair, the Board has focused on several key priorities: rebuilding our proactive advocacy approach, enriching our long history of influencing, and leading social change. This has been demonstrated by our clear and aligned position on the Uluru Statement from the Heart; an intentional public policy position on the guardianship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; and a deliberate focus on the care economy to meet the anticipated future demand for services over the next 40 years.

We have set a tone that fosters an inclusive, learning, and safe culture. This is highlighted by actively listening to the diverse voices and cultures we engage, support and stand alongside; a commitment to undertaking our own truth-telling exercise where we learn from mistakes made during our 200-plus-year history; and embedding an organisation-wide safeguarding culture, overseen by Board ownership and accountability.

We have ensured our long-term sustainability by reporting positive cashflows in recent years, after a substantial transition period following the acquisition of the Special Disability Service in 2018. We've invested \$10m of Endowment funds to ensure the successful implementation of our Better Together Strategic Plan and growth strategy. We've also made sure the Endowment Fund is set up for the long term with three core elements: a Future Generation Fund (investing over the long term); Glebe Property (a long-term investment); and Liquid Reserve (investing in short-term financial assets in readiness for both anticipated and unanticipated events).

I would like to thank the Board for their support and commitment, and welcome the incoming Chair, Ken Smith. I would like to acknowledge our CEO, Lin Hatfield Dodds for her inspiring leadership over the past two and a half years. Lin and I have worked in partnership to develop a shared vision for reimagining The Benevolent Society as a lighthouse organisation that creates a just society where all Australians can live their best lives.

As my chapter in the history of our organisation closes, I look back with a huge sense of pride. I have found the past 11 years extremely rewarding and enriching. It has been my privilege to serve The Benevolent Society. Thank you for the opportunity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Beresford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Tim Beresford, Chair**

# CEO Message

**The Benevolent Society provides tangible value to people and communities across Australia. We meet people at their points of need, and collaborate with key partners to drive forward positive social change.**



We took significant strides towards delivering on the objectives of our Better Together Strategic Plan 2022-24 and Transformation Agenda this year, both of which will help future-proof The Benevolent Society's support of people, families and communities through service delivery and systems leadership. Our four strategic pillars – to deliver person-centred services, influence social change, achieve growth for impact, and build a thriving organisation – are now fully embedded into our organisational focus.

I continued to meet our service teams and the people we deliver supports to in their local communities on a regular basis. Hearing first-hand about the challenges and opportunities that people and communities face and how we are supporting them gave me real insight into what's working well, and what needs to be improved on the ground. Practice wisdom and insight from our frontlines will always play a big part in informing our organisation's strategic considerations and direction.

Responding to the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#) is a matter of national priority. The Benevolent Society committed to be a YES organisation, in support of a First Nations Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Constitution. Guided by our First Nations staff, we engaged with our teams, worked with them to ensure that they had clear information to understand the Voice proposal and could make their own informed decision, and supported those who wanted to be YES champions in their communities.

This year we launched our second Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which gives life to our vision to develop as a strong ally as we learn to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in a respectful and meaningful way. We deliver our RAP commitments through the three pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities. We are learning to be a good ally. I express my appreciation to members of our Reconciliation Working Group, and all First Nations staff who have provided their input throughout.

We were active participants this year in a range of key government summits, forums and task groups. We participated in both the National Jobs and Skills Summit and the National Early Years Summit, developing policy positions and evidence bases that we prosecuted on the floor.

Our Policy and Advocacy Team worked with our operational teams to harness our practice wisdom to inform submissions on the National Care and Support Economy Strategy, the Commonwealth's Early Years Strategy, the Productivity Commission's inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care, and the South Australian Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care, amongst others. These represent some of the opportunities we've embraced to share our knowledge and practice wisdom to influence social change. Growing our collaboration muscle with government and the community sector means we are better able to contribute to improving the policies and environments that shape the lives of people in our most marginalised communities.

Our Board brings expert and empathetic strategic leadership to The Benevolent Society. Our Board is purpose driven, principled and visionary. Our management team could not ask for a better group of Directors to set the vision and direction for the organisation. I am delighted to say that the already productive Board – Management relationship has matured further over the course of this year.

I extend my deep appreciation to our departing Chair, Tim Beresford. Tim's dedication to driving our organisation's mission forward, his focus on excellence, and his belief in our staff have been evident in every conversation I've had with him

since I became CEO. Tim's leadership as Chair has been characterised by insight, integrity and wisdom. We will miss his leadership a great deal. On behalf of The Benevolent Society, thank you, Tim for all you have invested into this wonderful organisation and for the outcomes you have driven.

To our executive leadership team, huge thanks for your focus, your all-round excellence, and your drive. The environment that we work in is characterised by complexity, ambiguity, volatility and uncertainty which makes leading a large human services organisation exhilarating and exhausting in different measures at different times. Your leadership enables us to deliver on our strategy and vision.

Finally, to the people who make the magic happen in the community: our frontline staff, team leaders, managers and directors. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our vision of a just society where everyone can live their best lives, and to the people who access our services and supports. Whether you work on our service frontlines, on public policy and advocacy, or in one of our essential enabling areas, your energy and expertise enables us to deliver better outcomes for vulnerable people and communities.

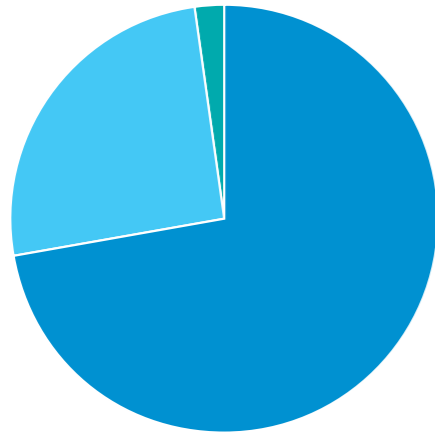
I am proud to lead an organisation filled with purpose driven people. It's been a year full of growth and learning and I look forward to what 2024 brings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lin Hatfield Dodds'.

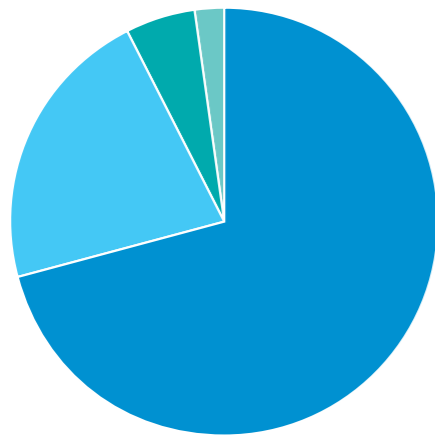
**Lin Hatfield Dodds, CEO**



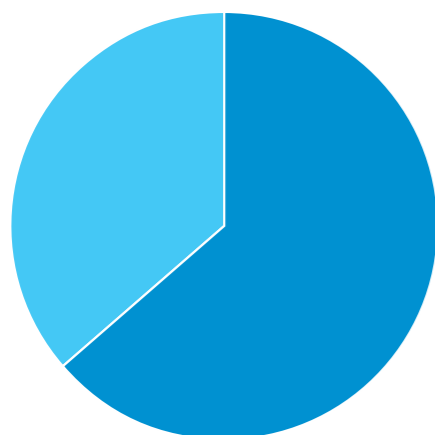
# Our Impact



Ageing Clients		
●	Clients	1,619
●	CALD Clients	568
●	First Nations Clients	49
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,236</b>



Carer Gateway		
●	Carers	7,429
●	CALD Carers	2,257
●	Young Carers	542
●	First Nations Carers	223
	<b>Total Carers Supported</b>	<b>10,451</b>



National Support Centre		
●	Inbound Calls	45,288
●	Outbound Calls	25,825
	<b>Total</b>	<b>71,113</b>

## Child, Youth and Family

**25,893** Unique Clients

(Total Unique Clients who Received a Service)

**24,242** Family Members

(Family Members Excluding Clients)

**2,890** CALD Clients

(Total Unique Clients Identifying as CALD)

**2,903** First Nations Clients

(Total Unique Clients Identifying as First Nations Peoples)

**12,409** ECA Case Plans Completed

**194** Young People

In the Fostering Young Lives Program with Carers

**48,658** Total People

(Clients and Family Members Supported by TBS)

## Disability Clients

**1,491** Active Clients

**187** CALD Clients

**115** First Nations Clients

## Disability Gateway

**36,329**

Disability Gateway Total Calls

**2,350**

Thalidomide Total Calls

**250+**

Partnerships and Stakeholders incl. Government, NFP Charities and Service Providers

## TBS Staff

**1,285**

Total Staff (905 are our Frontline Staff)

**55**

Self-Identified First Nations Staff

**107**

Total Volunteers

**28**

Total Graduates Enrolled

# Our Strategic Direction

**Building on our long experience and established strengths in supporting people, families and communities, our vision is to grow and develop The Benevolent Society in a way that enables us to anticipate and overcome the challenges of the future.**



The need to be an effective partner in building social change is as great as ever in Australian communities where the gap between the most and the least well off continues to widen. Those with the greatest needs are at the greatest risk of being left behind. Working constructively with sector peers to advance social change and striving to be an influential voice in the for-purpose sector are vital.

At the same time, work in the human services for-purpose sector is changing. Federal and State Government policy and program settings for social services continue to evolve. Our commitment is to be a trusted partner to governments at all levels, working to make positive, proactive change in the policies and programs that affect the lives of our clients and their communities.

We strive to harness the opportunity to work with corporate, government and philanthropic partners to build shared vision and action to alleviate disadvantage and exclusion in the Australian community.

At The Benevolent Society, this context informs our decision to build our future strategy on four pillars. The adoption of the four pillars as the foundation for our activities puts a strategic frame around the work we have done for many years.

## Our pillars

### 1 Deliver person-centered services

Deliver excellent services for clients, enabling them to live life their way.

### 2 Influence social change

Work internally, and externally with for-purpose sector peers, corporate and philanthropic partners, policy makers, and communities themselves to develop and implement initiatives that build social change.

### 3 Achieve growth for impact

Grow our business to deliver our vision.

### 4 Build a thriving organisation

Build a great organisation that is an employer of choice, is easy to do business with, is innovative and digitally enabled, cares about sustainability, and is a sector leader.





# Delivering Person-Centred Services

**The Benevolent Society continues to deliver quality programs and services to older Australians, carers, people living with disability, children and families, supporting them to live their life, their way.**



**Jordan**, Disability Client

## Case study – [Meet Jordan](#)

Jordan has displayed remarkable tenacity since infancy after being expected to live for only six months. The now 28-year-old, who has multiple diagnoses including cerebral palsy, is missing part of his brain that controls the five senses. He also has Kabuki Syndrome, a condition that results in a lack of facial expression.

Life was challenging for Jordan and his devoted mum, Lisa. They struggled to find a consistent support team until they reached out to The Benevolent Society. When Senior Behaviour Support Practitioner, Ashley met them, Jordan was exhibiting behaviours of concern.

Since Jordan is unable to speak, Ashley had to learn to understand what he was trying to say through his actions. “For Jordy, because he’s non-verbal, a lot of everything he does behaviourally is a form of communication,” Ashley says. “So it’s trying to figure out what he’s trying to say, then looking at how we can get a safer way for him to say that.”

The biggest part of Ashley’s job was helping his support team to see and understand the world through Jordan’s eyes. “There’s nothing wrong with him – we don’t have to change him,” Ashley says. “The people around him need to understand his language and they need to be able to communicate with him that way. “He’s not a disabled person. He’s a person with disability. That doesn’t define him.”

With The Benevolent Society’s support, Jordan has begun to smile, something he never did before. “Jordan for the first time is actually starting to giggle and laugh,” Lisa says. “Like it’s a really, really big thing. Things people take for granted.”

## Disability

Our people-first services and practitioners continued to make a positive impact in people’s lives, providing a range of disability support services including occupational therapy, speech pathology, NDIS support coordination, Allied Health Assistance, physiotherapy, psychology, nutrition support and music therapy.

### Disability Gateway

Our Disability Gateway Team comprises 30 members who support those with a disability and their families, friends and carers with any enquiry.

### Working with the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline

We formed a valuable collaboration with the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (The Helpline), which embarked as a program in December 2022. The Helpline assists people to access short-term advocacy support and aims to reduce the pressure on National Disability Advocacy Programs.

The Disability Gateway program works in a triage capacity for clients hoping to access advocacy-related support, and manages all referrals made to The Helpline. The collaboration between these two entities has grown since The Helpline’s inception, effectively working towards best practice and outcomes for clients.

### Thalidomide Support Services

In FY22/23, the Thalidomide Support Services (TSS) effectively advocated for clients by raising concerns with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) regarding challenges that

some Australian thalidomide survivors face in attempting to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The TSS spent many months liaising with clients and engaging with delegates from the NDIA to discuss the barriers experienced in accessing the NDIS, including:

- Appropriate and effective articulation of survivors’ experiences of pain-related issues as a result of their thalidomide injuries;
- Cases in which survivors had been deemed to not meet access requirements;
- Providing feedback to the NDIA about experiences thalidomide survivors’ have had dealing with the NDIS.

The collaboration with survivors, and the commitment of the TSS to establishing effective and mutually beneficial partnerships, has meant the TSS was able to escalate survivor’s concerns and assist in establishing a new NDIS access pathway for thalidomide survivors.

This new access pathway has improved the experience of some survivors in relation to accessing the NDIS and has encouraged some survivors to revisit the possibility of NDIS support to assist in managing their thalidomide related needs.

The TSS team is committed to working with its clients to ensure ongoing improvements to the services provided, including advocating for system changes to benefit client experience.

# Delivering Person-Centred Services

**“As a family, we just feel so confident that The Benevolent Society team have everything covered. They always contact me. They always ask what Betty needs and what she requires.”**



**Betty**, Aged Care Services Client

## Case study – [Meet Betty](#)

Betty, one of our Aged Care clients, celebrated an impressive milestone in 2022 – her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Thanks to The Benevolent Society, she is able to stay connected and independent.

Her care support team is there to fill out forms for her, help her run her house and take care of her daily errands.

Betty believes she could not enjoy the independence she has currently without our support and encouragement.

“They’ve kept me going,” she says.

While the older person receiving the services is the focus and priority, in many instances these services become a source of comfort and support for their extended family, too. Vicki, Betty’s niece, can vouch for this.

“As a family, we just feel so confident that The Benevolent Society team have everything covered. They always contact me. They always ask what Betty needs and what she requires,” she explains.

Knowing that Betty has a team on hand to help her continue living independently, they are all able to simply focus on connecting and spending quality time together.

“We feel that we can go away any time because we know she’s so well taken care of, and they are so easy to contact and they’re a really wonderful team,” Vicki says.

## Carers

### Carer Gateway

The Benevolent Society is the Carer Gateway Service Provider across metropolitan Sydney.

In the past year, our team helped with 37,283 enquiries relating to this free national support service for carers, which includes counselling, peer support groups, online skills courses, coaching, carer directed support packages and emergency respite.

### Highlights this year included:

- A [High Tea event](#) at NSW Parliament House to mark National Carers Week, with 80 of our registered carers in attendance. It was an opportunity to dive into Carer Gateway and explain the benefits of engaging with more services to help carers feel more empowered. The guest speaker was acclaimed author Cheryl Koenig OAM, who shared her inspirational caring journey;
- We launched the [Carer Conversations podcast](#), which provides tips and resources to help carers look after their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. Hosted by counsellor and Carer Gateway coach, Patty Kikos, 12 episodes aired this year, covering a range of topics including grief, autism and young carers;
- April marked three years since the Australian Government launched Carer Gateway. To celebrate, we hosted a [Carer Carnivale Day](#) at Pyrmont Bay Park with more than 1,200 carers enjoying free entertainment, information stalls, art therapy and wellbeing exercises;

- Approximately 115 artworks created by 100 of our clients during online and in-person art-based cognitive therapy sessions run through our Peer Support program went on display at a [Carers Art Exhibition](#).

## Aged Care

We are committed to helping older people stay independent and in their home for longer.

Our team helps clients navigate all the services and government funding available, so that individuals can make informed choices about what is best for them and their family.

### Clinical Governance Framework

Established and implemented across our Aged Care services this year, the Clinical Governance Framework/Procedure enhances our person-centred support for clients by providing a high quality of continuous care.

The framework – which is a first for our organisation – ensures we have early detection of a client’s deterioration and how we can efficiently support through discussions with relevant parties, including clients, families, health professionals, home support partners and care staff.

The Clinical Governance Framework provides clear guidance to all staff to respond to clients’ care needs in the most efficient way.

Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) has also been implemented across our aged care services. The SIRS is an initiative to help prevent and reduce the risk and occurrence of incidents of abuse and neglect of older Australians receiving Commonwealth-subsidised aged care and services.

# Delivering Person-Centred Services

Each day presents new challenges for Dimi and her teams. But with resilience, courage, and tenacity, they rise to each one.



Dimi, Child and Family Services Manager

## Case study – [Meet Dimi](#)

Dimitra – or Dimi, as everyone knows her – first joined The Benevolent Society in 2010 as a university student. As part of her Bachelor of Social Work, she completed a placement in our Fostering Young Lives program.

Since then, she has worked in various roles, including Child, Youth and Family Practitioner, Senior Practitioner, and Team Leader, in both the early intervention and out-of-home care programs.

“I always knew I wanted to do something meaningful,” Dimi says. “My personal experiences meant I had a lot of compassion and understanding for struggling families.” Dimi’s career has gone from strength to strength ever since.

Today, she’s the Manager of our Child, Youth and Family Services (South Western Sydney) and Functional Family Therapy – Child Welfare (South East/Central Sydney). She is devoted to helping families make transformational changes so that they can thrive.

Each day presents new challenges for Dimi and her teams. But with resilience, courage, and tenacity, they rise to each one. “Many of the families referred to us have come to the attention of Child Protection Services,” Dimi says.

“They may be experiencing family violence, drug and alcohol abuse, chronic mental health issues, and complex trauma that’s often intergenerational. We want to prevent the children in those families entering the out-of-home care system and stop the cycle from continuing.”

Dimi and her teams cover a wide, culturally diverse area in Sydney. Many of the families they support speak English as a second language, and some have migrated from war-torn countries.

With tailored, culturally sensitive support, Dimi and her practitioners help these families find a positive way forward.

## Child, youth and family services

The Benevolent Society enables families, parents and young people from all walks of life to thrive. We also support those affected by adoption, and domestic and family violence.

### Westpac’s Safer Children, Safer Communities program (SCSC)

We continued our work as a community partner in delivering Westpac’s SCSC program, collaborating with local teams across three states in Caboolture (Queensland), Parkes/Condobolin (New South Wales) and Port Augusta (South Australia), where we are looking to expand our footprint.

The aim is to enhance awareness of child protection, wellbeing and safety within communities experiencing disadvantage and supporting place-based responses to improve child protection outcomes.

We are co-designing innovative solutions that address local child protection and wellbeing needs. These sustainable, place-based initiatives will build the capability of communities to support the safety and wellbeing of every child.

Our goal is to harness local knowledge, foster partnerships and provide a framework to support positive change for people and communities.

A highlight this year was our work with the Wiradjuri Condobolin Cooperation (WCC) – a local ACCO (Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation) in the Central West NSW region that is working in collaboration with our Rural Youth Mental Health Service program and within our SCSC program.

### The SCSC program is across three states:

Queensland Caboolture

New South Wales Parkes/Condobolin

South Australia Port Augusta



# Influencing Social Change

**The Benevolent Society's practice wisdom informs its work to change systems, policies and environments for the benefit of its clients, communities and service delivery.**



This year we continued to be a trusted partner to sector stakeholders and governments at all levels, collaborating to make positive, proactive change.

## **Collaboration for the Future**

We are an active participant in The Possibility Partnership, a sector-led multi-partner collaboration with community sector organisations, government, philanthropy and business working together on a systems innovation and leadership approach to achieve deep and lasting change in the purpose and practice of our human services systems.

Partners in this exciting initiative include Mission Australia, Life Without Barriers, The Smith Family, Uniting NSW.ACT, 54 Reasons and others. The collaboration intends to change the purpose and practice of Australia's human services system, so everyone – especially people and communities experiencing complex and entrenched disadvantage – can live the lives they value.

Grounded in the values, experience and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practice to embed principles of self-determination and leadership, this partnership integrates the knowledge of those with lived experience into every aspect of its strategy, leadership, co-design and learning.

The Possibility Partnership is just one example of many collaborations and partnerships that The Benevolent Society is a part of, as we seek to change the systems, policies and programs which impact the lives of our clients and communities.

## **Reconciliation**

Our organisation's vision for Reconciliation is to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a respectful and meaningful way that highlights the wisdom, strength and resilience of the world's oldest living culture.

This year we were proud to launch our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for 2023 – 2025. We aim to achieve our RAP commitments through the three pillars of relationships, respect, and opportunities.

Our collaborative approach to Reconciliation includes:

- Implementing our Reconciliation Partnership Strategy to build genuine and trusted partnerships with community and First Nations People's organisations and leaders that are measurable, collaborative and effective;
- Establishing a First Nations Staff Reference Group to ensure our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff have a voice into the leadership and governance of the organisation. The reference group provide strategic advice, direction and leadership to the CEO and the Executive on matters related to cultural capability, strategic initiatives, services, programs and all other activities that are invested in by The Benevolent Society to achieve outcomes with, and for, First Nations Peoples.

## **Social Change Initiatives**

This year we transitioned from discrete campaigns, towards defining a series of social change priorities, and enhancing our internal and external partnerships and collaborations to deliver on these strategic priorities.

As such, at the end of 2022 the EveryAGE Counts campaign became incorporated as an independent entity, so is no longer spearheaded by The Benevolent Society. We do, however, continue our support for the campaign through our participation on the Board of Directors for EveryAGE Counts Ltd.

In 2023, we initiated steps to share all major assets of the Every Child campaign with our campaign partners on an open-source basis, as The Benevolent Society will progressively step back from the role of convening this campaign.

# Influencing Social Change

## The Benevolent Society's key social change priorities this year have included:

### Care and Support Economy

This is one of the fastest growing parts of the Australian economy. Its vital importance means that governments are increasingly considering reforms in this area, as the projected demand for care and support services across aged care, disability support, and early childhood education will have implications for the workforce, service delivery and the lives of people using services.

We have taken significant actions, including:

- Attending the National Jobs and Skills Summit (September 2022);
- Submission to the Commonwealth Treasury's Employment White Paper (November 2022);
- Attendance at an NGO Round Table hosted by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (March 2023);
- A submission on the draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy (June 2023).

### Child, Youth and Family

Our organisation has extensive experience in delivering the full continuum of support services to children, young people, and families. We used this practice wisdom to inform:

- Our submission to The South Australian Autism Strategy Discussion Paper, which had a focus on children and young people (February 2023);
- Attendance at the National Early Years Summit (February 2023);
- The Commonwealth's Early Years Strategy (April 2023);
- The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care (May 2023);
- The South Australian Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care (May 2023);
- Our continued support and involvement in research funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage grant, 'Enhancing children's journeys through Out of Home Care: A multi-perspective study', led by The University of Queensland's Life Course Centre.



# Achieving Growth for Impact

**Building on our long experience and established strengths in supporting people, families and communities, our vision is to grow and develop in a way that enables us to create a long-term social impact.**

Our strategic vision of growth for impact includes increasing our client reach and integrating our services across the organisation. We want to grow our talent and keep our high-performance teams engaged. In June we increased our Aged Care service delivery footprint into the ACT and look to opportunities to expand in the nation's capital.

We are building a strong foundation of philanthropic programs to build innovative and wrap-around supports to our services where funding is not readily available for those most in need in our community.

This is important because we want to increase our ability to invest in our community, and to make lasting impact and positive change. Creating a lasting impact is not something we can do alone, and collaborating with partners, peers and ultimately the people and communities we serve is the reason we will grow.

## **New office openings**

Our growth in South Australia continued with the opening of a new office in Murray Bridge, enhancing our support for people in the state. In addition, our existing Port Pirie premises was expanded to provide more space for therapy and staff to work.

It extends our footprint in South Australia with other offices currently located in Elizabeth Vale, Melrose Park and Mount Gambier. Outreach services are also offered in Kadina and Roxby Downs.

The expansion into Murray Bridge was due to high unmet demand for disability therapeutic support services in the area. It aims to provide greater access to therapy support for NDIS participants in the region, who have historically had very long wait times, as well as Early Intervention Supports in pre-schools in the area as part of our Education Department grant funding.

It's also part of a commitment to expand The Resilient Families Program into the Murray Bridge area. Funded by the South Australian and Commonwealth Governments, the program is delivered by The Benevolent Society and works with families who have an at-risk child.







# Building a Thriving Organisation

**We strive to be an organisation that is an employer of choice, is easy to do business with, is innovative and digitally enabled, cares about sustainability and is a leader in our sector.**



## Our Goals

### 1 Invest in our people

We take pride in our people and continue to invest in development and leadership capability to meet the growing and changing demands for human services in Australia.

### 2 Build a diverse & inclusive organisation

Embed diversity and inclusion in the way we work, including by delivering on our reconciliation commitments to our people.

### 3 Innovate our systems and processes

Automate, integrate, modernise and digitise our business processes to improve employee experience and deliver person-centred services.

### 4 Be digitally & data enabled

Develop and implement data-driven decision making and support systems that are safe and secure, and will future proof the organisation.

### 5 Reduce our impact on the environment

Implement strategies to reduce our carbon footprint.

## Our Achievements

In the past year, we've implemented and continued a number of initiatives to ensure we remain a thriving organisation today and into the future.

### Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

We launched our new First Nations Employment Strategy, which provides a framework for us to deliver an engaging and equitable employee experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at The Benevolent Society.

This involves achieving outcomes that close the gap in First Nations Employment, increasing the number of First Nations staff in all areas of our organisation with increased representation in leadership and managerial roles.

It also means consulting with First Nations staff to design and implement initiatives in four key areas: recruitment, retention, career development and workplace culture.

### Enhancing the employment experience

This year, The Benevolent Society continued to benefit from having a highly engaged workforce, as evidenced by our annual employee engagement survey.

The survey showed that a hallmark of our organisational culture is effective collaboration between people within and across workgroups and functions.

In response to a tight employment market (with national unemployment hitting a 50-year low), we streamlined and shortened our recruitment and selection process, to ensure we didn't lose great people during the process.

Initiatives to enhance our ability to attract and retain talent will continue to be a focus for the foreseeable future.

### Graduates and Students

Our [Graduate Pathways Program](#) aims to recruit, develop and retain skilled and motivated new employees whilst building the capacity of the community services sector as a whole.

We successfully partnered with tertiary institutions, offering an engaging selection process, high quality induction and support, and ongoing learning opportunities – exposing new graduates to different ways of working, disciplines and programs within The Benevolent Society.

Thirty-six new graduates were onboarded this year as part of the program – a six-fold increase on previous years.

Our Student Placement Program places high-quality tertiary students usually in their final years of study across all parts of the organisation to gain on-the-job work experience.

This year we supported 69 students. Offering student placements enables us to share our knowledge and expertise, give back to the community; helps us attract the best talent and build our future-skilled workforce.

# Building a Thriving Organisation

**“This is Australia’s roots, it’s real, raw history – Australia’s soul IS the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture.”**



**Zoe**, Child and Family Development Worker

## Case study – Meet Zoe

Zoe, a proud Butchulla and Gubbi Gubbi Woman, works as a Child and Family Development Worker at our Gracemere and Mount Morgan Early Years Centre in Central Queensland.

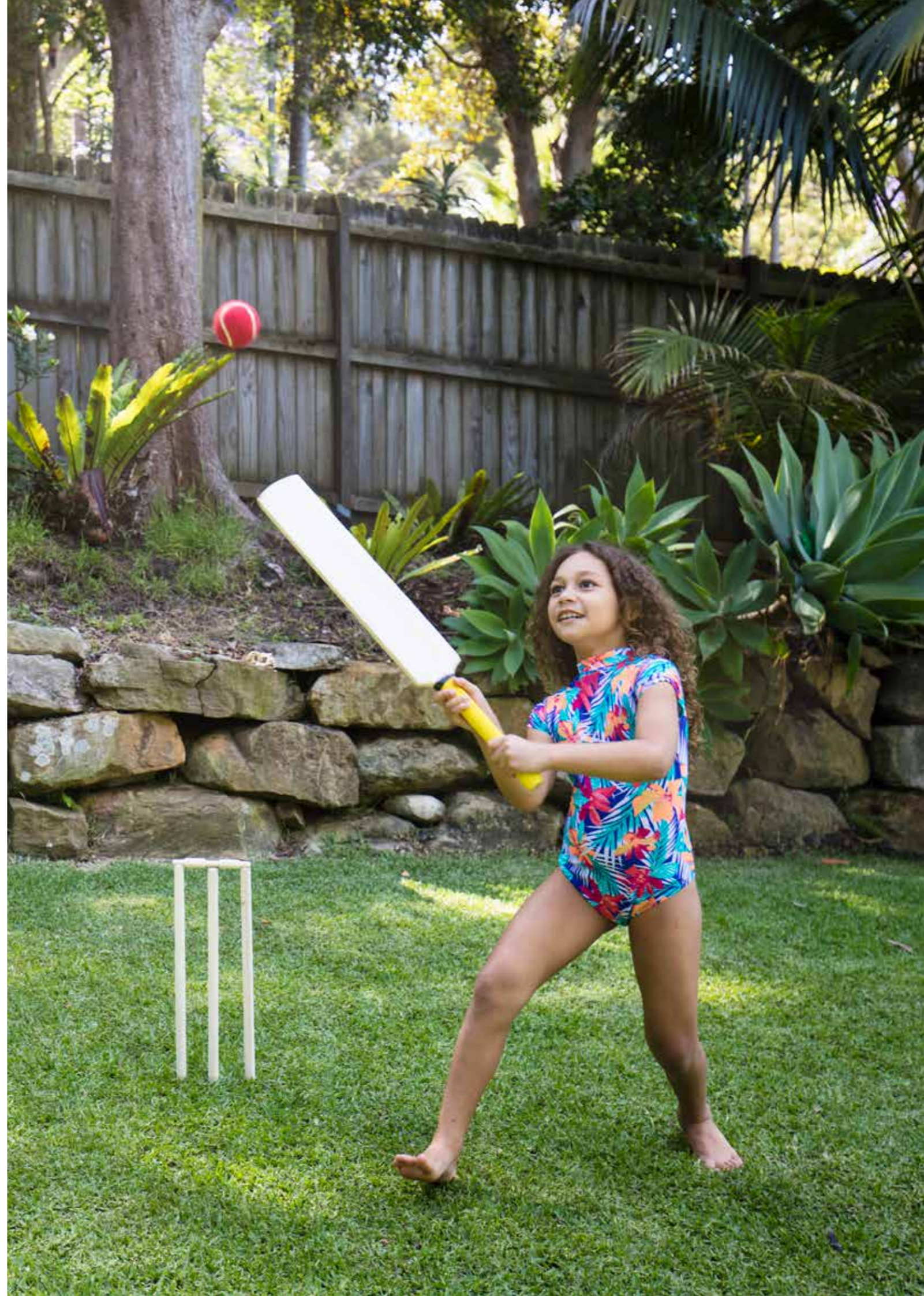
Appointed as a member of our inaugural First Nations Staff Reference Group, Zoe explains why she’s proud to work with us.

“The Benevolent Society has given me a platform for my voice to be heard. I’ve spent a lot of time in workplaces where I’m almost a tick of a box; I am the token black woman in the room. The Benevolent Society is not that. They have provided us with this platform to say I want to hear your voice. That’s why I am here. I know this is the organisation I want to be with because it’s all progress to better.”

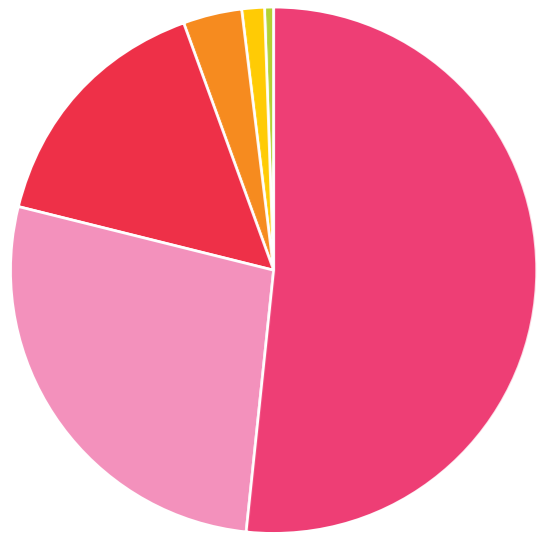
This year’s NAIDOC Week was an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Several of our teams spent this time sponsoring, hosting, or joining events in their local community.

“I’m always proud to be an Aboriginal Woman – but there isn’t a feeling quite like standing up with my First Nations brothers and sisters to celebrate the survival of our culture,” Zoe said.

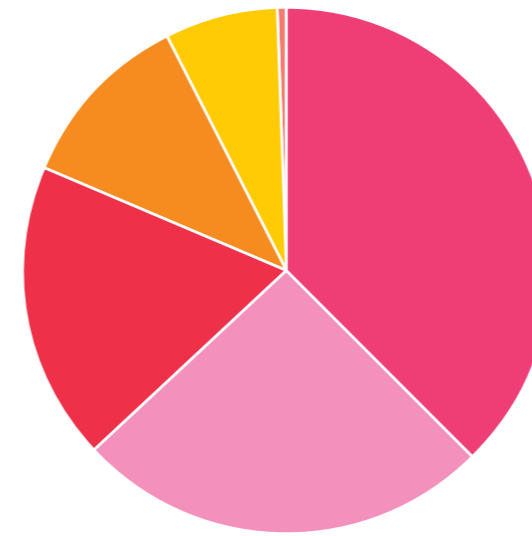
“NAIDOC Week to me is a platform for education and acknowledgment. It’s the week to say, ‘This is Australia’s roots, it’s real, raw history – Australia’s soul IS the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.’”



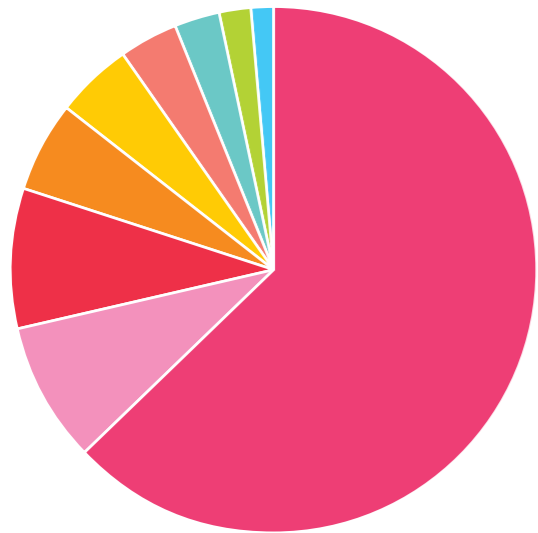
# Financial Summary



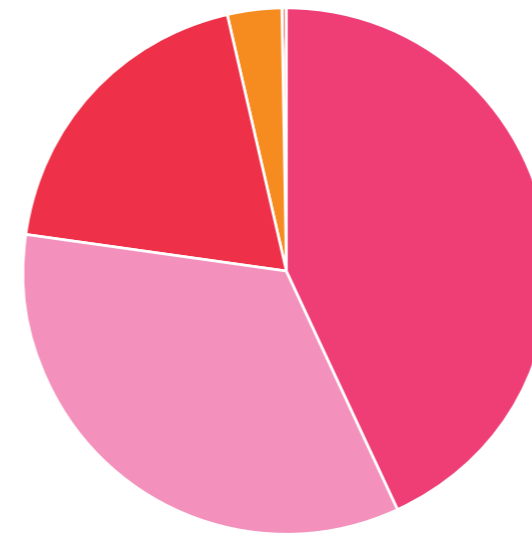
What we earned		\$'000
Child, Youth and Family	\$91,334	
Aged Care	\$47,800	
Disability Services	\$27,560	
Investments	\$6,458	
Other	\$2,441	
Fundraising	\$511	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$176,104</b>	



What we own		\$'000
Financial assets	\$68,964	
Property, plant and equipment	\$46,558	
Cash and cash equivalent	\$33,297	
Right of use assets	\$20,456	
Trade and other receivables	\$12,462	
Intangible assets	\$831	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$182,568</b>	



What we spent		\$'000
Salaries and wages	\$110,157	
Client and brokerage expenditure	\$14,925	
Administration expenses	\$14,868	
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	\$9,877	
Community partners	\$8,282	
Information technology	\$6,445	
Marketing, events and communications	\$4,542	
Property and equipment	\$3,680	
Travel and transport	\$2,121	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$174,897</b>	



What we owe		\$'000
Trade and other payables	\$34,116	
Lease liabilities	\$27,111	
Employee benefit obligations	\$15,057	
Provisions	\$2,627	
Refundable loans	\$85	
Borrowings	\$50	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$79,046</b>	



# About the Team

## Our Board

Tim Beresford Chair

Andrew Yates Director

Rod Young Director

Nancy Milne Director

Charles Prouse Director

Directorship ceased 5 December 2022

Christine Feldmanis Director

Directorship ceased 5 December 2022

Robyn Mildon Director

Robert Griew Director

Appointed 1 November 2022

Mahir Momand Director

Appointed 22 May 2023

## Our Leadership Team

Lin Hatfield Dodds CEO

Stefan Duvenhage Executive Director

Finance and Corporate Services

Sandra Clubb Executive Director

People and Organisation Development  
Directorship ceased February 2023

Justin Sturrock A/Executive Director

People and Culture  
Appointed May 2023

Kelly Bruce Executive Director

Future Directions

Linda Griffiths Executive Director

Child, Youth and Family

Michael Woodhouse Executive Director

Disability, Ageing and Carers

Jeremy Halcrow Executive Director

Strategy and Quality

Elaine Leong Group General Counsel

Group Company Secretary





benevolent SOCIETY