



CONNECTING LIVES



# GROWING SMARTLY

Annual Report 2023-24

## PERMANENT RECOGNITION

Desmond Orr's story is one of remarkable courage, hope, selflessness and determination. It is a story that must never be forgotten because it helps us to understand his incredible contribution to our organisation and wider community. Des was born in 1947 with Cerebral Palsy and he would go on to establish the organisation that was the foundation of today's YellowBridge QLD. We are thrilled that his dedicated contribution to raising awareness of disability rights has been captured in bronze for evermore. The beautiful bronze plaques along Russell Street commemorate community service and the best of human endeavour. Congratulations to our long-serving staff Barry, Mark, Sharon, Donita, Kim, Erin and Deanne whose names also feature.



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1976

### VISION

28-year-old Des Orr was young, passionate and forward thinking. He had a vision, and importantly a solution.

1980

### GUMPTION

HHelp was born. Help Handicapped People Enter Life Project was a solution-focused group based on self-help for people with a disability. Funding was tight but community support was mounting.

1981

### BREAKTHROUGH

Des and his small but dedicated team convinced Australia Post to feature the HHelp logo on the limited edition front cover for International Year of the Disabled. Channel 10 then celebrated their 21st birthday with a telethon that raised \$60K for HHelp.

1986

### GROWING UP

Moved into the gardeners' cottage at 46 Hill Street thanks to Toowoomba Regional Council. Our first real office space.

1991

Start with two staff, volunteers and eight houses.

1994

### MOMENTUM

Began the Home Assist Secure service.

1995

Government investors took notice. We became a legitimate service provider rather than a social group and employed a manager and staff.

2005

Became the first Queensland disability support organisation to be certified against Queensland's new disability standards.

2009

Offered long term community housing.

2010

Changed our name to ASSERT Services to reflect our expanded services across Accommodation, Support Services, Education, Respite and Training.

# OUR JOURNEY

2013

### FUSION

Merged with Toowoomba Community Housing Service to deliver housing and home services including Home Assist Secure, maintenance and modifications. Stronger. Better. Together.

2015

### REVOLUTION

Began a top-to-bottom re-think of who we are, what we do and how we do it, led by incoming chief executive Penny Hamilton. Launched our bright new selves, YellowBridge QLD, with a new vision, mission, values and energy. Became a public company limited by guarantee.

2016

Launched our first social enterprise, Collectables with Minister Coralee O'Rourke. Achieved recertification of quality standards at the highest international level. Named Community Group of the Year at the Business Excellence Awards.

2017

Strengthened our partnership program and merged with The Haven, which provides supported accommodation for young people.

2018

Nominated Community Group of the Year in Qld Community Awards. Expanded regional footprint in to 13 towns throughout the Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley. Purchased 879 Ruthven Street and commenced renovations on first whole-of-organisation office premises.

2019

### CONSOLIDATION

Adopted a revised Corporate Strategic Plan to reflect business growth and maturity.

2020

Moved into new administration centre, YB Central. Maintained services and business continuity during COVID-19. Completed first purpose-built housing project for people with a disability. Initiated campaign to end youth homelessness.

2021

Delivered record levels of client support despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Launched the Youth Matters housing program. Farewelled Penny Hamilton and welcomed new CEO Adrian Bonica.

2022  
2023

### INVESTMENT

Invested record levels in professional development, asset renewal and business improvements. Achieved highest grades in quality system audits, implemented seven new workforce systems and doubled Home Care service capability.

2024

Achieved record service delivery results and investment in staff leadership and development. Launched deep-dive into company DNA as part of new strategic plan and achieved best rating in employee engagement.



# CHAIR'S COMMENT

Clare with fellow Directors  
Dominic Ryan and Tom Haydock,  
and CEO Adrian Bonica.

# Clare Schonfeld

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I am honoured to introduce my first annual report for YellowBridge QLD as the newly appointed Board Chair. It is a privilege to be Chair of an organisation of this type, surrounded by compassionate people who work together for a common mission. It has been a joyful ride since I joined the Board two years ago and I have thoroughly enjoyed immersing myself in the organisation's story and getting to know the extended YellowBridge Family.

Good stories deserve to be known and shared, and YellowBridge is definitely a good story. Built on the passion and courage of Des Orr nearly 45 years ago, the organisation has grown from strength to strength into a professional and significant for-purpose operation experiencing year-on-year growth and success.

For the first time in its history, YellowBridge's operating budget surpassed \$19 million and recorded its highest service delivery results. While these results are exciting, the reason

why they exist is even better – we are helping more people with important community services than ever before.

Growth in any organisation can be a double-edged sword. Unbridled growth without purpose or procedure is rarely sustainable and something we are determined to avoid. Good planning and smart investment are key. The Board and executive have worked closely to develop the new strategic plan based on thorough business analysis, stakeholder engagement and future-gazing. Our potential, as one of the region's most impactful community organisations, is exciting, and our future is solid and strategic.

What attracted me to YellowBridge in the first place was its admirable values and unapologetic high standards. It is no mean feat to manage and maintain a culture of integrity across 300 staff and contractors. The core values are never far from our mind when we make decisions or connect with others. It truly is a privilege to work with people who want to do good, and be good.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the leaders, team members, and contractors of YellowBridge and congratulate them on a record-breaking year. I have heard and seen many examples of people doing their best. I would also like to acknowledge and thank YellowBridge's primary funders, partners, volunteers and supporters. Your financial and in-kind support is essential to YellowBridge's ongoing success.

Thank you to my fellow Board members for carving out precious time in your professional and personal lives and contributing to your community in this way. I thank my predecessor Dominika Ryan for her leadership in the Chair role and offer sincere thanks to Tim McGowan who will retire from the Board after 10 years of service. We welcomed Dominic Ryan to the fold and look forward to the appointment of three new Directors following a national recruitment process.

**HERE'S TO THE FUTURE, AND GROWING SMARTLY.**



# CEO'S REPORT

Adrian presents Helen Bawden OAM with the Judy Antonio Memorial Award at the 2023 Business DisABILITY Awards.

# Adrian Bonica

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## DEEP DIVING

For anyone fascinated with extreme exploration or record-breaking endeavours, you are likely to have heard about Victor Vescovo. The retired American naval commander holds the world record of the deepest dive ever made in the ocean. On April 28, 2019, Vescovo descended nearly 11 km to the deepest place in the ocean – the Challenger Deep in the Pacific Ocean’s Mariana Trench. In 2022, Vescovo became the first person to achieve the “trifecta” of exploration – venturing to both the world’s highest (Mount Everest) and lowest points (the Challenger Deep), and alongside Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, into space. Vescovo credits determination, commitment, and self-discipline as the key human qualities for his extraordinary accomplishments.

What makes humans push boundaries, venture into the unknown, act boldly and take risks?

We’ve been thinking about deep-diving a lot recently, especially after we launched our own record deep-dive into the root-and-branch of our organisation. Admittedly it is not the Mariana Trench, but what we discovered was no less wild and wonderful, for us at least. We are not ocean-diving, space-flying adventurers, but it still took our determination, commitment and self-discipline to see it through and make it worthwhile.

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## WE LAUNCHED OUR OWN RECORD DEEP-DIVE INTO THE ROOT-AND-BRANCH OF OUR ORGANISATION.

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Our big-thinking, deep-diving adventure involved a company-wide engagement process to develop a new bottom-up Strategic Plan underpinned by revamped business plans that map our direction, targets and measures for the next five years. We also commenced a 6-month national recruitment process for new Board directors and began the groundwork to restructure the Board’s governance function.

Next year we will celebrate 45 years of operation. A lot has changed in that time and our industry and compliance obligations are ever-changing and increasingly complex and sophisticated. If we want to maintain our renowned high standards and grow smartly so we can be sustainable for another 45 years, then we need to think and act like Vescovo. We need to have an insatiable curiosity for the world we operate in. We need to have exacting standards for how we plan and execute our operations. And, we need to personify determination, commitment and self-discipline. We might not break world records, but we will be the very best for our staff, clients and community.

## **OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS**

Just when we thought we had our best year ever, we do it again. Across the board, there has been exceptional effort and outcomes. Home Services and Disability Support recorded record service delivery results meaning more people received the care and services they need. We achieved recertification across all standards (ISO, Aged Care Quality Standards, NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Standards) and continued our previous high performance in all quality system audits in every business area. We grew our revenue by more than 40 percent to manage a budget of \$19 million. We completed a record of 861 system improvements, introduced a Leadership Development Program and invested wholeheartedly in skilling our staff with a 70 percent increase in professional development opportunities. It is never just about us though. We raised nearly \$40,000 for charitable causes and participated in 13 community events, including our own Yellow Bucket Appeal which distributed 386 buckets of gourmet Christmas food.

These achievements never happen by chance. They are the result of our exceptional team with big hearts and bright minds. Our success is a team effort and I thank our Board, staff, funders, corporate partners and community supporters for their contributions. To our clients – thank you, for trusting us to put you at the heart of everything we do.

## **AT YOUR SERVICE**

Demand for our programs remained high and our teams rose to the challenge.

Home Services experienced continued growth and surpassed its previous record in service delivery. Nearly 32,400 services across the four program areas were delivered throughout 76 towns. Home Care had the largest growth, increasing its services by 30 percent. Overall, the program subscribed 1169 new clients and the team of 39 staff and 122 contractors provided services to a client group of 3853. We also welcomed Taralee Pitura to the team as General Manager.

The Disability Support team provided a new record of \$6.9 million in support services, including 99,246 hours of disability support. The Collectables op shop reopened in a new and larger space at 589 Ruthven Street with significantly improved exposure, parking and facilities, resulting in a 50 percent increase in revenue. Lyndel Bunter joined the team to share the General Manager role with Gail Yates.

The Housing team admirably starred down another year of a national housing crisis. Limited housing stock, rising property rents and unprecedented competition in the rental market have made a tough situation worse. They supported 497 people in community housing across our 164 properties. Despite grim market conditions, we welcomed an uplift in funding to support this critical area of need.

The Haven in our Youth Services portfolio remained a beacon of hope. We supported 29 young people in accommodation and could not hide our pride when six graduated from Year 12 and three achieved their licence through the youth driving program. Special thanks to CatholicCare who stepped up to be our partner in delivery of our Youth Matters Housing program, which provided housing for 16 young people who were at risk of homelessness.

## **INVEST AND CONNECT**

To grow smartly we need business systems and processes that support and enable our growth. Our team invested considerable time and effort in optimising recent systems and oversaw the implementation of a new employee management system. Our quality system performance was the best on record, we invested \$110,000 in asset upgrades and saved nearly \$90,000 in business efficiencies.

We are very mindful of the support we receive from many generous local businesses and individuals. We welcomed five new partnerships and renewed 15 existing relationships. Special thanks to Toowoomba Toyota (Exclusive Vehicle Partner), McConachie Stedman (Yellow Bucket Appeal Major Partner), CatholicCare (Youth Matters Housing service partner) and the 43 local businesses and many individuals who supported the Yellow Bucket Appeal.

Staff safety and wellbeing remained a firm priority. We supported staff to attend 174 skilling events, completed 426 safety reports, introduced the Flare employee benefits platform, implemented a leadership development program, and maintained a fully-subscribed EAP. The results of three staff engagement surveys revealed that 90 percent of staff are satisfied with their work and 100 percent are proud to be a YellowBridge employee. We are proud of that.

## **SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Everyone involved in our organisation, no matter the length of time or nature of their contribution, leaves an impression. In the end, it is people who matter the most.

Dominika Ryan retired from her position of Board Chair but remains a Board Director and we thank her for her ongoing contribution. We welcome Director Clare Schonfeld to the Chair position and new Board appointee Dominic Ryan. I would like to acknowledge and thank all of our serving and retiring Directors for their valued service and supporting us to grow in the right direction.

We officially farewelled YellowBridge founding member, Barry Whisson, and welcomed new member Cr Melissa Taylor who has been an enthusiastic observer and supporter of our work over many years.

To our staff, thank you. Thank you for embodying Vescova's qualities of determination, commitment and self-discipline. May the adventure continue.



# THE HEART OF IT

Jo and Pam at the 2023 Annual Celebration.

## VISION

**CONNECTING  
LIVES AND  
FINDING**

*bright*

**POSSIBILITIES**

## MISSION

**WORKING  
TOGETHER  
TO HELP LIVES**

*shine*

## VALUES



### **WE PLACE PEOPLE FIRST**

Our clients are at the heart of everything we do. They are our purpose and our reason. We dream of bright futures for them. We are determined to do whatever we can to help them lead proud and rewarding lives. This mission invigorates us.



### **WE ARE HONOURABLE**

We have a strong moral compass that guides us. We act with integrity and honesty. Our instinct is to stand up for justice and fairness. We do the right thing even when no one is looking. If we say we will do something, we do it.



### **WE FIND THE JOY**

We search for the best in all situations and all people. When faced with challenges, we find a positive way through. We make the time to listen, understand and help each other. Little acts of kindness is what we like to do. We have cheerful attitudes and big hearts.



### **WE AIM HIGH**

We are proud of what we do for others. We believe it is important and makes a difference. This is what drives us to be diligent, reliable and accountable so we can achieve excellent outcomes that matter. When times demand, we are bold and have the courage to think differently.



### **WE ARE BETTER, TOGETHER**

Our diversity is our strength. We work together to achieve our common goal. We appreciate, respect and uplift each other. We say thank you. No one is left on the sideline. Every one is part of the solution. We are one team.

PROVIDED SERVICES TO **4,456** PEOPLE

DELIVERED **32,374** HOME SERVICES FOR SENIORS

PROVIDED COMMUNITY HOUSING FOR **497** PEOPLE

ASSISTED **29** YOUNG PEOPLE WITH HOUSING AND SUPPORT

PROVIDED **99,246** HOURS OF DISABILITY SUPPORT

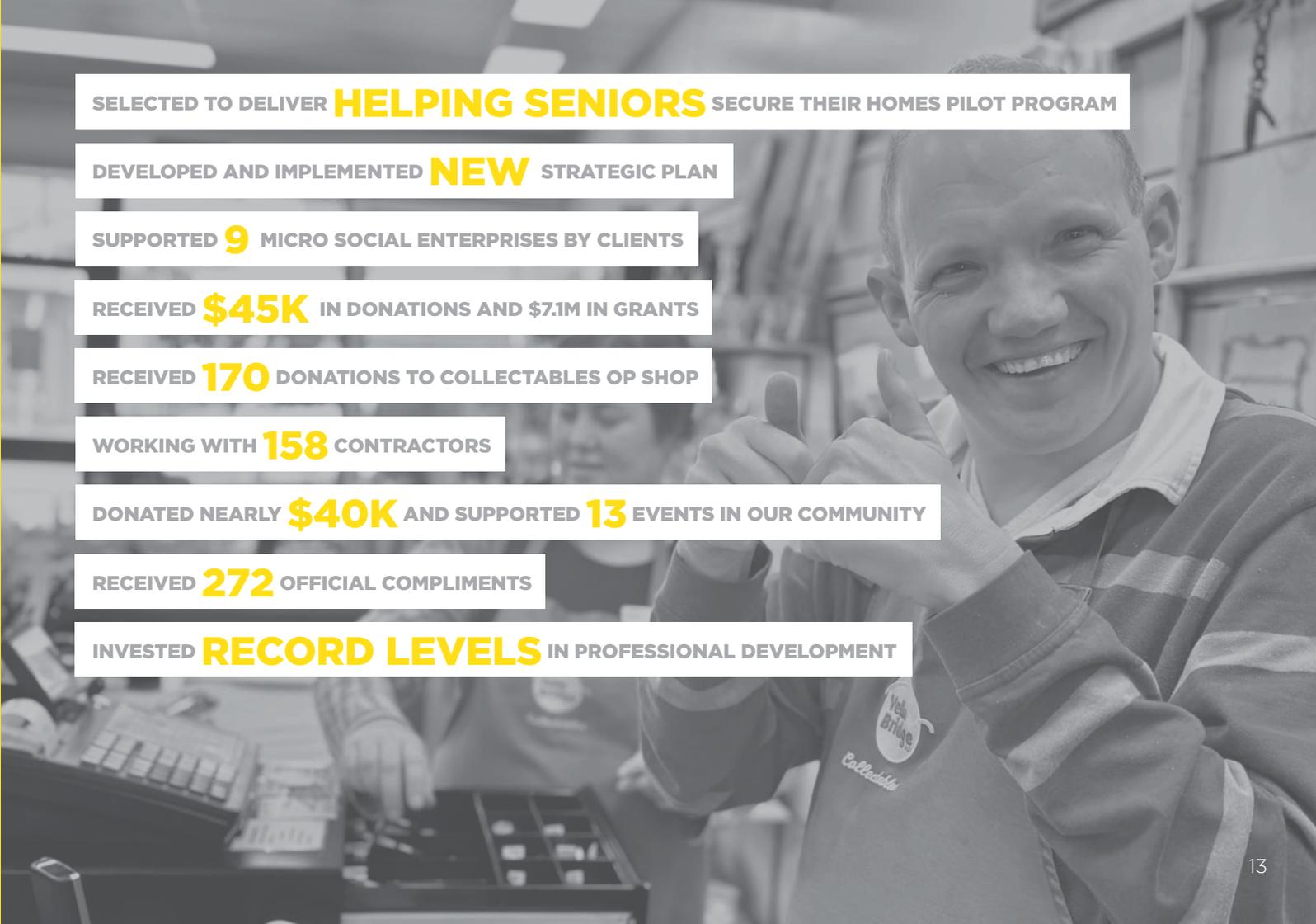
MANAGED A RECORD **\$19 MILLION** BUDGET

IMPLEMENTED **861** CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN **100** YELLOW POSIES AS PART OF OUR POSEY OF KINDNESS CAMPAIGN

DELIVERED **386** BUCKETS OF JOY FOR 9TH YELLOW BUCKET CHRISTMAS APPEAL

# HIGHLIGHTS



SELECTED TO DELIVER **HELPING SENIORS** SECURE THEIR HOMES PILOT PROGRAM

DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED **NEW** STRATEGIC PLAN

SUPPORTED **9** MICRO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES BY CLIENTS

RECEIVED **\$45K** IN DONATIONS AND \$7.1M IN GRANTS

RECEIVED **170** DONATIONS TO COLLECTABLES OP SHOP

WORKING WITH **158** CONTRACTORS

DONATED NEARLY **\$40K** AND SUPPORTED **13** EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

RECEIVED **272** OFFICIAL COMPLIMENTS

INVESTED **RECORD LEVELS** IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



# BETTER BUSINESS

Mary, Jenny and Taralee enjoy the opening celebrations of Collectable's new shop.

# SMARTER, STRONGER, BETTER IS OUR BUSINESS APPROACH.

It has been a year of big thinking about how our business can grow smartly into the future. We all benefit from personal introspection and the same applies to business no matter your size, shape or style. When you have a strong growth mindset, reflection and revision are worthwhile rest spots on your journey.

As well as big thinking, there has been a lot of productive doing. We completed a large volume of work in optimising new systems including a financial management system, award interpretation program, disability support client management system and HR employee lifecycle system. There has been significant change and streamlining of processes both within these new programs and with other operational processes.

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**REFLECTION AND REVISION ARE  
WORTHWHILE REST SPOTS ON  
YOUR JOURNEY.**

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Our firm commitment to quality was rewarded when the audit of our quality management systems across the whole organisation surpassed previous performance. We completed a new record of 861 system improvements (up from 715 last year) as part of our continuous improvement approach and implemented \$89,000 in business efficiencies. Our Clinical Care Committee, which leverages external clinical experts, has been an invaluable part of our quality framework. The independent audit across the new Aged Care Quality standards was an amazing success with zero findings and accreditation recommended across all standards.

Amongst this, we conducted five business reviews, coordinated three staff engagement surveys, processed 426 safety reports, managed the renewal of six major funding contracts valued at more than \$7 million, and administered donations and grants totalling the same. We invested

\$110,000 in asset upgrades and distributed \$10 million in wages for the first time.

Another strong focus area has been contractor engagement and client feedback. We implemented a planned engagement approach for all contractors to enhance service delivery consistency, and completed surveys in Home Services, Disability Support and Housing with an average result of 94 percent satisfaction. We renewed 15 partnerships, welcomed five new partners and participated in 26 partner engagement opportunities.

Our thanks to Toowoomba Toyota for their ongoing support as Exclusive Vehicle Sponsor for the eighth consecutive year, which includes the provision of three sponsored vehicles including a HiAce commuter van fitted with wheelchair ramp for our disability support services. Thanks also to McConachie Stedman for eight years as major sponsor of the Yellow Bucket Appeal.



# BRIGHT BUSINESS

Jo makes cards for her micro social enterprise with support from Anah.

# PEOPLE, PARTNERSHIPS AND POSITIVITY ARE AT THE HEART OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO.

Our core work relates to our four key services but our contribution to our clients and community goes far beyond that.

## COLLECTABLES

A boutique op shop that works as a social enterprise. It provides work and training opportunities for people with a disability – with Foundation Partner **Toowoomba Toyota**.

## THE WORKSHOP

Provides people with a disability the opportunity to learn manual arts skills and build friendships. Some of their creations are then displayed or sold in Collectables – with community partner **Downs Group Training**.

## POSEY OF KINDNESS

Two yellow posies are distributed to people in need in the local community each week as a random act of kindness – with community partner **Botanica Rose Farm**.

## YELLOW BUCKET APPEAL

Hampers filled with gourmet foods and gifts for people who need extra support to make their Christmas special – with community partner **McConachie Stedman Accountants**.

## NO BOUNDARIES MAIL RUN

A group of YellowBridge clients collect and deliver the mail for a number of local businesses – with participating businesses.

## MICRO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

YellowBridge provides seed funding to support a number of micro social enterprises that are operated by clients.

## LETTERBOX DELIVERY

Clients assist with mail sorting and delivery – with community partner **Darling Downs Pamphlet Distributors**.

## YOUTH DRIVING PROGRAM

Helps the residents at The Haven to complete their 100 hours of supervised driving for their driver's licence – with partners **Golden Harvest Service Station**, **Car Hero Plus**, and volunteer mentor drivers.



# PEOPLE POWER

**150** 33 full time  
107 part time  
**STAFF** 10 casual

**69%**  
**FEMALE**

**31%**  
**MALE**

**5.1**  
**AVERAGE YEARS' SERVICE**

**26%**  
**STAFF TURNOVER**

**21%**  
**STAFF FROM CULTURALLY  
DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS**

**90%**  
**STAFF SATISFIED OR HIGHER  
WITH THEIR JOB**

**158**  
**CONTRACTORS**

Team YellowBridge comprises our dedicated Board, staff, contractors and volunteers. Together, they are the powerhouse of our organisation, and the reason we can continue to deliver record levels of client service and community impact. It is a formidable team.

Across three staff engagement surveys, 90 percent of staff reported they were satisfied or higher with their job and 100 percent agreed they were proud to be an employee; a remarkable result that explains why the average years' service has now reached 5.1 years. We are also proud of our diverse workforce and the way our staff embrace and celebrate our culture diversity. Approximately 21 percent of our staff identify with a non-English speaking background or other diversity. Our diversity helps us to connect and relate better with our equally diverse and vibrant community.

The quality of our service and support will always be more important than quantity. This philosophy drives our record investment in skills and wellbeing, up 70 percent on last year. Staff attended 174 skilling events and we introduced the Leadership

Development Program to skill our leaders for success in their current roles and provide career succession opportunities. The new employee management system, Subscribe HR, helps staff complete and track their annual reviews and training plans. The Employee Assistance Program, which provides staff with access to professional counselling services, remained fully subscribed.

Our contractor network grew by 5 percent, mostly in the home care delivery area. We celebrated 20 year service milestones for venerable partners Hennessy Plumbing and Brendan Coonan Plumbing & Gas, while Michael Rae Plumbing and Albie's Lawn N' Maintenance were recognised for 10 years.

What Team YellowBridge has most in common is a big heart. We donated \$8,063 through workplace giving, supported 13 community events, made 26 advocacy acts and helped fill and distribute 386 buckets with gourmet Christmas food for the 9th Yellow Bucket Appeal. It did not go unnoticed, attracting 272 official compliments, an increase of 84 percent.



# CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

## DIVERSE & PROUD

Food is a wonderful way to share and explore new and different cultures. That's why we love our annual Harmony Day staff feast. And we're proud of our diverse and interesting staff who celebrate and embrace our kaleidoscope of culture.

Approximately 21 percent of our staff identify with a non-English speaking background. Many more identify with other diverse groups or identities.

It is not important that we know everyone's specific choices, stories or personal circumstances, but that we create and uphold a workplace culture that is safe, friendly and respectful.

Our core values of integrity, compassion and connection are strongly linked to our ongoing commitment to being the best organisation that we can be. We believe that this approach will ultimately lead to better outcomes for the people we support in the community.

## YELLOWBRIDGE QLD DIVERSITY STATEMENT

We are proud to be a *diverse and inclusive* organisation that welcomes, respects and supports people in all their wondrous variations.

Across our staff, clients, partners and community, we are committed to being a friendly, safe and *uplifting place for all.*



# Celebrating *dedicated service* From 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024



**KIM BUROW**  
Program Manager Disability



**ALLAN ANDERSON**  
Support Worker Disability



**MIRIAM PERKINS**  
Support Worker Disability



**BETINA WEIR**  
Program Coordinator Youth Services



**MARLINA-RAE PERN**  
Support Worker Disability



**BRENDAN HOPPS**  
Yard Maintenance Officer



**JORDAN DARR**  
Youth Worker



**DANIELLE MCCARTHY**  
Senior Housing Officer



**5**  
YEARS

**SHANE ROBERTS**  
Yard Maintenance Team Member



**5**  
YEARS

**HANG HARRIS**  
Support Worker Disability



**5**  
YEARS

**PHILLIP VELLACOTT**  
Support Worker Disability



**5**  
YEARS

**SUSAN BEUTEL**  
Support Worker Disability



**5**  
YEARS

**JULIE WETHERSPOON**  
Finance Officer



**5**  
YEARS

**BALJINDER GILL**  
Housing Officer

## DID YOU KNOW?

**90%**

OF STAFF REPORTED THEY WERE SATISFIED OR HIGHER WITH THEIR JOB

**100%**

AGREED THEY WERE PROUD TO BE AN EMPLOYEE

**5.1 YEARS**

IS THE AVERAGE YEARS' SERVICE

# Celebrating *outstanding spirit*

Each year, we recognise staff who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the YB values. It is a prestigious award chosen by the Chief Executive Officer.

The 2023 Spirit Award winners (pictured L-R): Alex Shah, Michael Lagu, Danielle McCarthy and Julie Wetherspoon.



# Celebrating *partnerships*

Some of our 150+ contractors have been with us for many years and we appreciate their professionalism, dependability and loyalty.

## 20+ YEARS

Brisk Electrical

Downs Window Renewals

Downs Appliance Repairs

Security Door Factory

Hennessy Plumbing

Brendan Coonan Plumbing  
and Gas

## 10+ YEARS

Albie's Lawn N' Maintenance

Michael Rae Plumbing

Darna Bradshaw and Taralee Pitura with Jo and Mick from the Security Door Factory.





# HOME SERVICES

Crows Nest seniors enjoyed the free paint-along workshop as part of the 2023 Banter series.

**3,853**

**TOTAL CLIENTS**

**18.5%**

**INCREASE IN SERVICES**

**32,374**

**NUMBER OF SERVICES**

**11,511**

**HOURS OF HOME CARE**

**403**

**MODIFICATIONS**

**8,891**

**YARD SERVICES**

**15**

**SERVICE AREAS**

**122**

**CONTRACTORS AND PARTNERS**

**39**

**STAFF**

## Our **HOME SERVICES** program includes:

Home Assist  
Secure

Home  
Modifications

Yard  
Maintenance

Home Care  
Packages

Our Home Services surpassed its previous record in service delivery. Nearly 32,400 services across the four program areas were delivered throughout 15 areas (76 towns), an 18.5 percent increase from last year.

Home Care was the biggest growth area again delivering \$1.9 million of services and providing 11,511 hours of in-home care to people living independently in their own homes. We expect this sector to continue to grow strongly and are investing in staff and training now so we are ready to meet the future demand. Home Modifications expanded its services to deliver to clients outside YellowBridge and was kept busy with 403 modifications. The Lawn Maintenance team completed an impressive 8891 yard services.

In addition, the Department of Housing selected us to deliver a new \$4 million pilot program to provide home security measures to more than 750 households. The program, Helping Seniors Secure Their Home, aimed to improve safety and security for seniors living independently.

Our popular Banter program was a successful grant recipient in the Department of Housing Stay Connected Fund. This allowed us to host six free workshops for people aged over 55 years in Oakey, Pittsworth, Clifton, Millmerran, Crows Nest and Yarraman. Nearly 100 people took part in the creative workshops facilitated by local artist Kristy Richardson.

Contractor engagement has been a major focus given we have 122 contractors that help us deliver our services. All contractors have been engaged in the process to help improve service standards and consistency. We also reached out to our clients to measure satisfaction and are pleased to report an average result of 94 percent satisfaction.

Beyond our core work, we participated in the Seniors Expo, treated our clients during our Biggest Morning Tea event, and hosted a special client tour of the Toowoomba Christmas lights. We also welcomed a new General Manager, Taralee Pitura, who has management experience in the healthcare and community sector.



# HOUSING SERVICES

Braving the cold and discomfort during Homeless for a Night Sleep-out was (from left) Stephen Harris, Jakan Edser, Jenny Spain, Rose Pettitt and Adrian Bonica.

**164**

**PROPERTIES  
MANAGED**

**53**

**NEW TENANCY  
AGREEMENTS**

**497**

**PEOPLE  
ACCOMMODATED**

**13**

**TENANCIES  
TRANSITIONED  
TO PRIVATE  
RENTAL MARKET**

**7**

**STAFF**

## Our **HOUSING** program includes:

Community  
Rent Scheme

Long Term  
Community Housing

Community Managed  
Studio Units

Education and  
Employment Housing

Our frontline housing support team has admirably starred down another year of a national housing crisis. Limited housing stock, rising property rents and unprecedented competition in the rental market have sustained the pressure on our housing portfolio in the Community Rent Scheme program.

Fortunately, the CRS program received a welcome funding uplift from the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works and our hardworking team managed to maintain their property quotas by providing a high quality service to tenants, real estate agents and private landlords.

No state or town has been untouched by the housing crisis, but the social housing sector has been particularly hard hit. The Department has worked hard in the face of these challenges and is committed to increasing housing stock and services, however this will take time to roll out. In the meantime, our team is focused on working collaboratively with other organisations, community services and the Department

to support the most vulnerable in our community.

The relationships with our clients, like-minded organisations and the real estate community are more important than ever. They were essential to our capacity this year to accommodate 497 people in need of housing and maintain a housing portfolio of 164 properties.

Our strong relationship with our network of local real estate agents and property owners is crucial to our program's sustainability. Their ongoing support helps us to secure and obtain more headleases, which are highly prized in a housing crisis.

Good things do emerge from challenging situations, and our network of collaborating services is evidence of this. Rather than work in isolation, we have banded together and our team has strong working relationships with services such as St Vincent De Paul, Salvation Army, Anglicare, Life Without Barriers, YouTurn, Mission Australia, Footprints, Next Step Plus and Care Goondiwindi.

# *The Haven*

Supported accommodation for young people aged 16 to 18 years.

Established 1986



# YOUTH SERVICES



The Youth and Housing teams represented YellowBridge at the 2023 Homelessness Expo in Toowoomba.

**29**  
ACCOMMODATED

**9**  
RECEIVED  
MOBILE SUPPORT

**9,100**  
HOURS OF SUPPORT

**6**  
HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATES

**7**  
FOUND  
INDEPENDENT  
ACCOMMODATION

**100**  
PROFESSIONAL  
DRIVING LESSONS

**\$45,900**  
COMMUNITY  
DONATIONS/GRANTS

**7**  
STAFF

## Our **YOUTH** program includes:

The Haven (24/7 supported residential accommodation)

Mobile youth support

Youth Matters housing

Learner Driver Program

Our Youth team, together with their army of generous supporters, proved what is possible during impossible times. The housing crisis has impacted young people hard, and vulnerable young people even harder. Services such as our residential accommodation, The Haven (which remained at full capacity), are more important than ever. Fortunately, we received a 20 percent increase in government funding to provide more frontline staff.

It has become almost impossible for young people to access the private rental market. While The Haven successfully transitioned seven people into independent accommodation, most of these were in subsidised housing. The private rental market appears to no longer be a feasible pathway for many young people due to high rents and fierce competition. Thankfully, The Haven has access to other pathways and works within a highly collaborative sector where all youth services work together.

Youth Matters Housing continued for another year and accommodated 16 young people thanks to support from our service

partner CatholicCare. The program has developed an excellent relationship with real estate agency REMAX, who spoke highly of the young tenants.

The Learner Driver Program helped three young people achieve their provisional licence and 10 more obtain their learner's licence. Our wonderful volunteer mentor drivers supervised 81 hours of driving and the program provided 100 professional lessons with Nixon Driving Academy. Special thanks to Golden Harvest Roadhouse who supplied all fuel, and new partner Car Hero Plus, who contributed towards lessons.

We are tremendously grateful to the many people, businesses and government agencies who have provided invaluable financial and in-kind assistance. We received over \$45,000 in donations as well as many volunteer hours, donations of practical supplies such as firewood, grocery vouchers and household items, and sponsorship of our annual camping trip to Stradbroke Island. To top off the year, six young people graduated from high school.



# DISABILITY SERVICES

Clients enjoyed many excursions including a camping trip to Lake Leslie.

**77**  
CLIENTS  
SUPPORTED

**99,246**  
HOURS OF CLIENT  
SUPPORT

**24/7**  
SUPPORTED LIVING

**1**  
BOUTIQUE  
OP SHOP

**1**  
RESPITE FACILITY

**6**  
SUPPORTED LIVING  
HOUSES

**1,680**  
HOURS OF GROUP  
SUPPORTS

**95**  
STAFF

## Our **DISABILITY** program includes:

Individual support

Group support

Independent living with 24/7 support

Our disability support team provided a record \$6.83 million in services including more than 99,000 hours of direct support to 77 clients in their home, community or small group.

Clients took full advantage of the Group Program, which provided 1680 hours of support for clients to participate in 22 weekly activities ranging from fitness and craft, to games and music. Participants thoroughly enjoyed special excursions such as Jumpers and Jazz Festival, Sea World, Pittsworth Historical Village, Lake Leslie and Lilyvale Flower Farm.

It was wonderful to attend and sponsor the 10th anniversary of the Business disABILITY Awards. It was terrific to see what our community is doing to increase inclusion and understanding of people with a disability. There are so many good stories of people and businesses making a difference.

Congratulations to our staff and clients who received second place in the Carnival in the CBD competition. They lovingly created a beautiful window display at Collectables to help celebrate Toowoomba's Carnival of

Flowers. We then celebrated the relocation of Collectables to 589 Ruthven Street with a party. The new shop has exceeded expectations, receiving 170 new donations, providing 1584 hours of retail work and training, and supporting nine clients with Micro Social Enterprises. Meanwhile, our volunteers contributed 576 hours of their valuable time.

Our client Christmas party was a great success. Everyone embraced the sports theme and we loved seeing the variety of favourite sporting teams, uniforms and sports on show. Club Glenvale was the perfect venue for our all-sports party with views overlooking the hockey pitches.

Lyndel Bunter joined the team to share the General Manager role with Gail Yates. Another 16 support workers were employed to manage client support needs and we continued to invest significantly in professional development to ensure staff has the training and skills to provide excellent care. After 22 years, we farewelled one of our longest serving support workers, Sharon Nicholls, who had been an invaluable member of our team.



# WORTHY MENTIONS

# GIVING BACK

Our annual Australia's Biggest Morning Tea affair is always a favourite event in the YellowBridge calendar - good food, good people and a good cause.

Thank you to our Home Services team and clients for making it a special day and helping to raise more than \$500 for Cancer Council Queensland.

We receive tremendous support from our community so we always look for opportunities to join in and give back. This year we have participated in or supported more than 30 community events and causes.

We hit the streets again to celebrate World Kindness Day in November. For the second year, we teamed up with our friends from Toowoomba Police and distributed 2000 kindness tokens to morning pedestrians. Each recipient was encouraged to pay-it-forward to make sure the gift of kindness was spread to as many people as possible.

Then, our big-hearted staff strapped on their hiking boots once again to support the annual Hike for Homeless in Jubilee Park and Homeless for a Night Sleep-out. These amazing

events raise much-needed funds to support the Basement Soup Kitchen, which provides a hearty meal to people experiencing homelessness in Toowoomba.



Home Care Program Support Officer Therese Eadie (middle) with clients Pat McNamee and Heather Westwood.

# STRADDIE MEMORIES

Six young people who we support at The Haven had a fabulous time during the annual camping trip to Stradbroke Island.

Each year we take a group of young people for a three-night camping adventure. For many of them, it is their first camping trip or holiday experience.

They paddled kayaks on Brown Lake, tried their luck with a fishing line, swam at Amity Point, went for beach walks and a 4WD history tour of the island. Catching their first-ever fish was a real highlight.

These experiences are incredibly valuable for young people who are disconnected from family and community networks. It is a time for new experiences and personal growth, but a lot of fun and friendship too.

Our trip leaders were Youth Services Coordinator Betina Weir and CEO Adrian Bonica.

Special thank you to the Wilce Family, who are part of our disability support program, for their kind donation towards the camp and activity costs.

We also supported the island's local tour guide Dave and his daughter Kim from Straddie Kingfisher Tours.



Kayaking on Brown Lake was among the highlights of the annual Straddie camping trip.

# BUSY BEES

Thank you to the amazing people from Suncorp CPE Solution Delivery team for being part of another working bee at The Haven. They helped us plant fruit trees, prepare the veggie gardens and clean out the sheds.

Suncorp has been supporting our Youth Support Program for more than five years. They raise money through their workplace giving program and lend a hand at regular working bees.

Over the years, their big-hearted staff have helped us paint, move, plant, decorate and improve our 24-7 youth accommodation centre that supports young people experiencing homelessness.



Suncorp staff lend helping hands at The Haven working bee.



Coral, Lindy and Chris admire the new Toyota HiAce van with YellowBridge CEO Adrian Bonica and Toowoomba Toyota Dealer Principal Brett Motton.

# OH WHAT A FEELING!

Rewind to May 2016, and Toowoomba Toyota agreed to support YellowBridge QLD as its Exclusive Vehicle Sponsor.

Eight years later, we have celebrated our ongoing partnership with this amazing local business thanks to the enduring support and big heart of Dealer Principal Brett Motton.

The partnership provides us with three fully sponsored vehicles including a HiAce commuter van with specially fitted wheelchair ramp. The extra-long wheelbase van has a generous interior space and is used every day by our disability support team to transport clients to social outings and appointments. A Toyota hybrid Yaris Cross is used by our youth services team to support young people at our accommodation facility The Haven and through our mobile support program.

Our client support staff clock up more than 500,000 kilometres every year. Transport is a huge part of our service and is essential to helping many of our clients receive and access the support they need. It is reassuring to know that our staff are driving safe, comfortable and fuel-efficient vehicles. It's a bonus that they look good too!

We are incredibly grateful to Brett and Toowoomba Toyota for their ongoing support of our important community work. They are an excellent example of a successful local business giving back to their community through sponsorships like ours.



*Transport is essential to helping our clients receive and access the support they need.*



Julien loves the new van.



Jesse graduated from the Learner Driver Mentor Program.

# DRIVING DREAM

Jesse is now the proud holder of his driver's licence after completing our Learner Driver Mentor Program.

He is one of three graduates to achieve their provisional licence and 10 more earned their learner's licence through the program this year.

The driver program, which YB has run for eight years through the Youth Services program, helps disadvantaged young people complete the compulsory 100 hours of supervised driving and includes subsidised professional driving lessons.

The program is essential for the many young people in our community who do not have easy access to a vehicle or adult drivers to supervise them while learning.

A driver's licence is a significant enabler for independence and employment. Without it, our young people have yet another barrier towards independent living.

We are grateful for the support from local businesses and generous individuals who provide their time and financial support to keep the program running.

Our young drivers received 100 professional lessons in total. Our faithful team of volunteer mentor drivers supervised 81 hours of driving with free fuel supplied by Golden Harvest Roadhouse.

We also welcomed new partner, Car Hero Plus, who donates a portion of its car sales to provide professional driving lessons and joined the mentor driving team.

## Thank you

### TO OUR PARTNERS

Golden Harvest Roadhouse  
Car Hero Plus

### AND MENTOR DRIVERS

Paul Spendlove  
Ryan Walker  
Blake Munroe  
Bernie Cooper  
Hope Edwards  
Peter Conaghan  
John Pullen  
Carley Hart



*The program is essential for the many young people in our community.*



# EXTRA SPECIAL

Totally Workwear Toowoomba's staff and customers filled an amazing 106 buckets.



## *Yellow Bucket Appeal*

The 9th Yellow Bucket Appeal delivered on its promise and distributed 386 buckets filled with gourmet Christmas goodies. The Appeal was well-supported with \$5,600 in cash donations to purchase hamper items and 43 local businesses providing donations or running in-store promotions.

McConachie Stedman continued its tradition of Major Sponsor and celebrated its eighth consecutive year in this role – a huge contribution. Their staff and clients enthusiastically supported the Appeal, donating enough Christmas items to fill more than 50 buckets.

The wonderful people at Totally Workwear Toowoomba took out top prize for most buckets donated, filling an amazing 106 buckets with the donations from their staff and customers. We are grateful to the many people and local businesses who choose to support the Appeal – every donation counts!

Our community is blessed with many generous Christmas initiatives that support people doing it tough. The Yellow Bucket Appeal, with its emphasis on Christmas food that is gourmet and extra special, means that our recipients get to share in the festive spirit too.

Major Partner

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# Collectables

Our new Collectables shop at 589 Ruthven Street celebrated its official opening with an enthusiastic crowd of devoted customers, supporters, local businesses and community leaders.

YellowBridge CEO Adrian Bonica shared the origins of Collectables and paid tribute to the man who inspired the social enterprise.



“Clive Bashford was a traveller and collector who amassed an amazing collection of treasures, trinkets and curios from around the world.”

“At 76, Clive needed to leave his home of almost 30 years and move into residential care. He packed up all his possessions and donated them to YellowBridge to help others.”

“This generous act inspired us to create our boutique op shop, Collectables, and Clive’s donations became part of the first items sold in the shop.”

The social enterprise has gone from strength to strength since its humble beginnings in 2016 and is now a vibrant and thriving shop that has made its mark in Toowoomba’s op shop scene.

Staff and clients in the new shop have been overwhelmed by the community’s positive response and support.

The new location has helped to attract more shoppers through the doors, which provides more opportunities for our clients with a disability to meet new people, interact with shoppers and improve their retail skills.

Foundation Partner

**Toowoomba Toyota**





## Posey of Kindness

Imagine receiving a yellow posy by a kind stranger? Small acts of kindness can have big impacts.

We have continued to spread kindness by gifting yellow posies to people in our community each week. So far, we have distributed more than 800 posies to strangers and those we know need a kind gesture.

It was inspired by the Random Acts of Kindness movement and reflects our corporate values of helping people and making a positive difference in our community.

The initiative is supported by our floral partner, Botanica Rose Farm, who carefully prepares and wraps the yellow posies with our signature kindness card.

Each week, one of our clients and their disability support workers collect the two yellow posies from Botanica Rose Farm who covers half of the flower costs.

They then distribute one posy to a person in known need and the other to a stranger in the community. So, if you find a yellow posy on your doorstep or handed to you in the street, it may just be a gift from us.

Exclusive Partner

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# GIVING BACK

YB staff volunteer  
at the Toowoomba  
Christmas Wonderland.

# WE RECEIVE TREMENDOUS SUPPORT FROM OUR COMMUNITY SO WE ALWAYS LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO JOIN IN AND GIVE BACK.

## THIS YEAR WE SUPPORTED:

Aged Care Employee Day	Mental Health Week	The Push-Up Challenge
Aged Care Provider Network	Movember	Toowoomba Business DisABILITY Awards
Biggest Morning Tea	National Homeless Prevention Week	Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers Window Display Competition
Bring Your Dog to Work Day	National Housing Conference	Toowoomba Christmas Wonderland
Clean Up Australia Day	Protea Place	Toowoomba Housing and Homeless Network
DEBST Employment Expo	Pyjama Foundation	Toowoomba Housing Hub (Co-Chair)
Epilepsy Day	QShelter regional representative	Toowoomba Regional Council Future Leaders Program
Harmony Day	Queensland Youth Housing Coalition	Toowoomba Service Integration Committee
Hike for Homeless	RUOK Day	World Kindness Day
Homeless for a Night Sleepout	Safe Work Month	Youth Homelessness Conference
Homelessness Expo	Seniors Expo	Youth Week Expo
Loads of Love Appeal	Skilling Queenslanders for Work (Trainee host)	



# GREAT PARTNERS

Adrian welcomes Paul from Car Hero Plus as a new partner.

# OUR WIDE PARTNER NETWORK IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US. WE ARE STRONGER AND BETTER BECAUSE OF THE TREMENDOUS SUPPORT FROM OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS.

## FUNDERS

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Australian Government



Queensland  
Government

## MAJOR PARTNERS

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McConachie  
Stedman



Toowoomba Toyota



## ONGOING PARTNERS

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botanica  
ROSE FARM

PRIORITY1  
TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

jpsmith  
Recruitment & Human Resources

wishbone  
PR | COMMUNICATIONS | MEDIA



## NEW PARTNERS

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- Car Hero Plus
- Footprints
- Life Without Barriers
- Protea Place
- Raine & Horne

## SUPPORTING PARTNERS

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- Akadia Training & Nursing Services
- Betta Home Living Toowoomba
- Downs Group Training
- E & A Nursing Services
- Go Salary
- Milestones Employment CPL
- Murdoch Lawyers
- Remax Success
- Right At Home
- Totally Workwear

## GENEROUS PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

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- A G Rigging and Steel
- Dianne Surtess
- Fairview Heights State School
- Golden Harvest Roadhouse
- Good Samaritan Op Shop
- Gus Hamilton
- Ironbark Timber Supplies
- Jenny Godwin
- Lady Bowen Trust
- Learner driver mentors
- Nicole Shipp
- Noela Thomas
- SB Plumbing
- St Joseph's College
- Toowoomba & Districts Masonic Council
- Wilce Family
- YellowBridge staff through workplace giving
- Plus, everyone who donated to the Yellow Bucket Appeal and Collectables

Every care has been taken to include everyone who has supported our initiatives through significant financial donations or in-kind support. If we have missed anyone, we sincerely apologise.



Chair

**CLARE SCHONFELD**

Senior Manager Operations  
Southern Qld Rural Health



Director

**DOMINIKA RYAN**

Sector Director  
VAGO



Director

**CAROLYN BROWN**

Director  
Time Made



Director

**TIM MCGOWAN**

Legal Counsel  
FKG Group



Director

**LISA BENNET**

Director, Toowoomba  
Deck Maintenance



Director

**TOM HAYDOCK**

Director  
Lavish Constructions



Director

**DOMINIC RYAN**

Residential Director  
Colliers International

# OUR BOARD



**ADRIAN BONICA**  
Chief Executive Officer



**JODIE COLLINS**  
Chief Operating Officer



**NICOLE BOYGE**  
Manager  
People and Culture



**MARY GARCIA**  
General Manager  
Business Services



**TARALEE PITURA**  
General Manager  
Home Services



**GAIL YATES AND  
LYNDEL BUNTER**  
General Managers  
Disability Services



**DONITA BELLETTE**  
General Manager  
Housing and Youth

# OUR LEADERS

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

	Year end 30 June 2024	Year end 30 June 2023
Revenue	19,633,374	14,032,104
Expenses	18,391,338	13,808,559
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>1,242,036</b>	<b>223,545</b>

## BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY

Assets	6,615,117	
Cash and Equivalents	2,738,361	1,174,508
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>9,353,478</b>	<b>7,418,770</b>
Liabilities	2,083,142	
Employee Benefits	977,068	852,670
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>3,060,210</b>	<b>2,367,538</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>	<b>6,293,268</b>	<b>5,051,232</b>

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For the full audited 2023/24 financial statements, please visit our website or contact Adrian Bonica at [AdrianB@yellowbridgeqld.com.au](mailto:AdrianB@yellowbridgeqld.com.au)

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879 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba  
PO Box 3126, Toowoomba QLD 4350

**P** 1300 882 764

**F** 07 4638 4462

**E** [connect@yellowbridgeqld.com.au](mailto:connect@yellowbridgeqld.com.au)

[WWW.YELLOWBRIDGEQLD.COM.AU](http://WWW.YELLOWBRIDGEQLD.COM.AU)