

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022 / 2023



Gellibrand  
Support Services



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Gellibrand Support Services acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, and we pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders past and present. We acknowledge the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including the experiences of the Stolen Generation. We recognise the resilience, strength and pride of the Aboriginal community.

We embrace diversity in all its forms, and respect everyone's strengths and contributions irrespective of ability, gender, ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and political views.

Gellibrand Support Services also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the many people and agencies whose generosity, knowledge, skill, expertise and lived experience have contributed significantly to our work. We are particularly grateful to the people living with disability who choose us as their service provider, and their families – all of whom never cease to inspire and teach us, from the depths of their own rich and amazing life experience.

This publication contains photos of people who are deceased.

# OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM



## ADMINISTRATION MANAGERS

- Business Manager—Justin Sacco
- Chief Executive Officer—Matthew Hoyle
- Claiming Manager—Ben Ma
- IT Manager—Deepak Verma
- Complaints Officer—Margaret Given
- Customer Wellbeing Manager—Margaret Given
- Finance Manager—Susan Tran
- OH&S Manager—Edwin Bobadilla
- Resource Manager—Paul Kumar
- Support Coordination Manager—Johann Nacianceno

## SERVICE SITE MANAGERS

- 6 Clifton—Romel Cartas
- 10 Clifton—Roula Chalouhi
- 17 Hanmer— Jodie Taylor
- 19 Hanmer—Ruby Gallina
- Albert—Margaret Given
- Alfred—Ben Ma
- Alice Fraser Centre—Margaret Given
- Brooksby—Edwin Bobadilla
- Domenico—Anuj Malik
- Eppalock—Miley Verma
- Geddes—Edwin Bobadilla
- Honey—Amit Antil
- ISP—Anuj Malik
- Jenny Burbidge Centre—Margaret Given
- Linnet—Teigan Mateos & Bianca Lewis
- Long Forest—Ben Ma
- MAP— Roula Chalouhi
- Medfield—Jacob Manjooran
- Nyon—Roula Chalouhi
- Respite—Justin Sacco
- Stanhope—Ben Ma
- Stonecrop—Subin Cherian
- Tower—Ruby Gallina
- Willow—Romel Cartas
- Holiday Manager—Vivian Carreira

## HOUSE SUPERVISORS

- 6 Clifton & Willow—Louise Nicolas
- Medfield—Abdulwehab Osman
- 10 Clifton & 17 Hanmer—Evelyn Liu
- Longforest & Stanhope—Abel Li



# SERVICES

## SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION: SIL & SDA

Gellibrand provides Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) services for people who live with disabilities. SIL is the service Gellibrand provides to support people to live as independently as possible within their home. SDA is the physical building that the NDIA approves. Gellibrand's SIL options are customised to the person's needs, giving individuals the stability and support to pursue their goals.

## SUPPORT COORDINATION

Support Coordination is provided to support individuals to navigate the NDIS so they can get the most out of any funding. Gellibrand's team of experienced Support Coordinators are trained and knowledgeable about the NDIS. They can assist individuals to:

- find and engage with service providers;
- coordinate between multiple services;
- ensure goals are being met;
- resolve issues with service delivery; and
- assist individuals to understand the NDIS so they can act independently.

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PACKAGES: ISP

Our Individual Support Packages (ISP) are tailored around an individual's needs and goals so they can live the life they want. This flexible one-on-one support is built on a collaborative foundation to find the right combination of people and supports. ISP can help in areas such as capacity building, social and community participation, assistance with daily activities, family respite, and more.

## BALLARAT SOCIAL GROUP

The social group is tailored around clients' interests and can offer support with social skills and community participation. Supports are built on a collaborative foundation to find the right combination of people, while designing a calendar that reflects clients' interests and the activities they want to participate in.

## MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES IN PARTNERSHIP: MAP

MAP is a flexible support service that provides an opportunity for people to engage in activities that interest them. MAP seeks to put more choice and control in the hands of participants by facilitating their ideas and interests in a flexible, relaxed, fun, and social environment. MAP offers a growing variety of programs that includes photography, arts and crafts, cooking, literacy, gardening, bowling, and more.

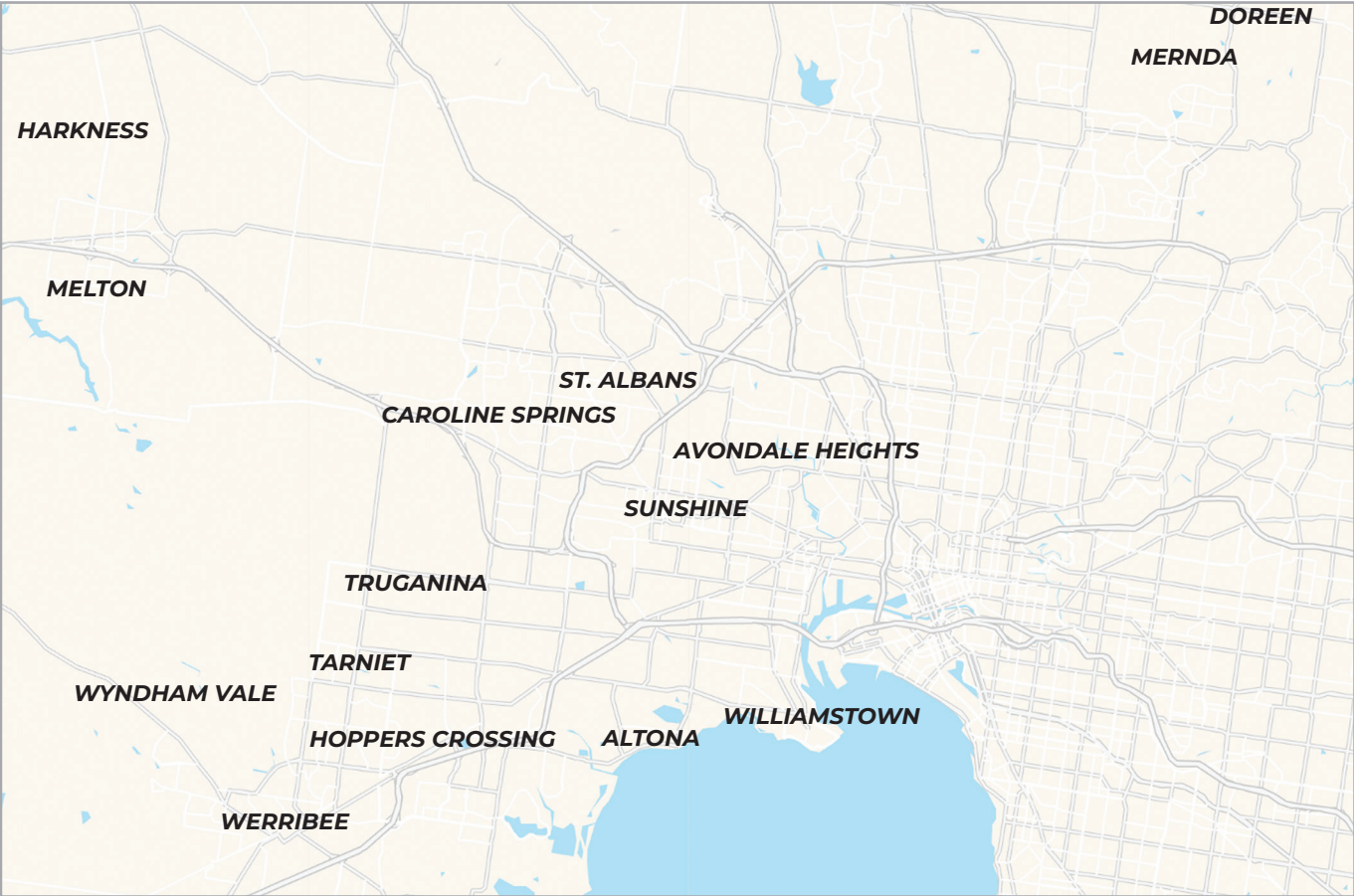
## SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION: RESPITE

Previously referred to as Respite, our Short-Term Accommodation options allow for those times when a participant requires temporary supports that are different to their usual arrangements. This may include short stays in a single unit or group-based accommodation, or the purchase of additional in-home support from our trained team members. Whether planned ahead of time or responding to an urgent need, we can facilitate a fast and flexible intake process to help support participants' needs.



# OUR LOCATIONS

At the time of publishing this Annual Report, Gellibrand has 25 active service sites and a few that will open in the near future. The majority of our service sites are in Melbourne's west, but we have sites operating in Ballarat, Haddon, Doreen, and Portarlington.





# HOLIDAY HOUSES IN PORTARLINGTON AND HADDON

MARGARET GIVEN & PAUL MITCHELL

Everybody needs a holiday and Gellibrand clients are no different. After many years of planning and development, both our holiday houses – ‘Burbeach House’ in Portarlinton and our Haddon property near Ballarat – are now receiving happy visitors.

The Portarlinton house has been open for use for two years and in 2023 Haddon also became available when we finished working with an architect on a makeover. The works included ensuring the bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, and laundry were all made wheelchair accessible.

In September, we were excited when Haddon had its first client visit, a week-long holiday for Travis. Travis had lived in the country before moving to Altona for family reasons and becoming a Gellibrand client. He expressed a desire to have a holiday somewhere quiet away from the city’s hustle and bustle and Haddon was the perfect place.

Situated in bushland near Ballarat, the beautiful Haddon landscape changes with the seasons. In winter, the ferns are deep green and surrounded by pink and purple wildflowers. When Travis visited in spring, the property was alive with golden wattle. A holiday in Haddon for Travis included visits to nearby Trentham Falls, Maze House at Newlyn North, and Ballarat’s Sovereign Hill.



By October, three other clients had experienced the opportunity of a relaxing, rural holiday at Haddon. It was so rewarding for Gellibrand to see clients and the local community enjoying all the hard work that had gone into preparing the Haddon property for use.

Renovations are now complete at Burbeach House in Portarlinton so clients can again enjoy all the surf coast has to offer, including beaches, coastal walks, mazes, fishing, mini-golf, and excellent restaurants and cafes. The Burbeach House makeover means the pergola is now more user-friendly, there is a games room for all to enjoy, and there’s increased accessibility for people who use walkers.

Haddon will soon be on Airbnb, but Burbeach House is already bookable on that platform. That means when Gellibrand families or staff book a holiday there, Gellibrand can give funds to clients who may not otherwise have been able to afford a holiday there or Haddon.



## GEDDES CRESCENT

MARGARET GIVEN & PAUL MITCHELL

It was exciting this year to open our new two unit residence at Geddes Crescent, Werribee. This was a first for Gellibrand because, in partnership with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH and Homes Victoria), we were able to purpose-design and build a new house from the ground up.

Ugur and Maryam were living in our Hosking House, a residence that we and DFFH agreed was no longer fit for purpose. And, because Ugur and Maryam have particular needs due to the disabilities with which they live, these had to be considered in any new property they would live in.

As part of the partnership with DFFH, Gellibrand was able to work with the department on all aspects of the Geddes Crescent design, including a ‘Jack and Jill’ bathroom (accessible from the two bedrooms), smart home access, provision for wall-mounted hoists if needed, and a floorplan that allows for necessary privacy and shared spaces. It means Ugur and Maryam’s needs for independent living are catered for, but they can also engage socially whenever it’s possible and appropriate for them.

While specifically adapted for our clients’ needs, Geddes Crescent was designed and built first as a functional, high-quality house that also suits people who live with a disability. It is big on amenity, with lots of natural light, high ceilings, a plant-filled atrium, appropriately sized bench spaces and cupboards, and split-system heating and cooling in the bedrooms.

We look forward to working with DFFH on more projects like Geddes Crescent that will improve quality of life for Gellibrand clients. And we also hope the partnership approach we took with DFFH on the Geddes Crescent project can become a model for establishing new housing across the disability sector.



# ALBERT STREET

MARGARET GIVEN & PAUL MITCHELL

In recent years, Gellibrand has received requests to expand services into the Ballarat region. Always keen to respond, we listened to the community's needs during the Ballarat Community Festival, an event we sponsored in early 2023.

Gellibrand decided our first approach in Ballarat should be to form a social group for people living with a disability. Daniel Teba, one of our most experienced Support Workers and a tireless promotor of Gellibrand's services, did a magnificent job laying the groundwork for – and then establishing and coordinating – the Ballarat social group.

People living with a disability were quick to join the group, which was an immediate success through its wide variety of activities. Participants enjoyed walks around Lake Wendouree and a barbecue together at Kirks Reserve. There were pizza-making lessons (and eating!) and classes in how to make pickles and pies. Participants also visited the movies and made a trip together to take in the history and open spaces at Brown Hill.

The social group allowed us to engage with and understand the local community. The group built relationships between people living with a disability and their families, while also giving Gellibrand strong insights into potential clients' individual needs.

As the group continued to grow – and we saw the likelihood of many of our programs and services commencing in the Ballarat region – we took the step of purchasing a property in Albert Street, Sebastopol. Having our own property has allowed us to develop a calendar of events for clients. A Cooking and Creative Arts program now runs on Thursdays, while Gellibrand's ISP team facilitates a Saturday Leisure program and Friday Social Group. The property's gym equipment has also proven popular with individuals at any time of the week.

With plenty of space for activities and services, we hope our Albert Street base will become synonymous with high-quality assistance and support for people living with a disability in the Ballarat region.



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ELENA ASHLEY

It is always a privilege to be able to stop and reflect on the last 12 months – in the context of a post-COVID world, the Disability Royal Commission's progress and the release of the Australian Disability Strategy, Gellibrand embarked on our Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Our world has changed since the last one: the NDIS is now established, flexible work practices are demanded, including remote work and casual or gig-work aided by AI and other technology platforms, and cybersecurity is an active concern.

After extensive consultation with clients, families, team members, suppliers, and funders, Gellibrand's new Strategic Plan showcases our shared objectives:

- Client-centred and values-led
- Partnership oriented
- Sustainable for the long term
- Agile Operating Model
- Employer of Choice

I hope these resonate with you too.

We have extended Gellibrand's reach into the Ballarat region with the Haddon and Sebastopol properties, offering local NDIS services. Other highlights were the Xmas Party at the showgrounds, Disability Expo at Ballarat, and the Biggest Morning Tea at the Mary Burbidge Hub. The participation of managers (including a memorable 7am breakfast workshop) in developing the new Strategic Plan was very welcome, helping to ensure it will be a useful and grounded guide for Gellibrand's activities over the next few years (It's available on our website. Please take time to read it!)

The Committee was able to visit one house in the outer west, as well as have a day trip to Ballarat – thanks to Margaret's planning, and the logistical support of Daniel and others to make it possible. I'd also like to mention how enjoyable it has been to meet managers and team members at Withers Street when I'm there.

Thank you to my fellow Committee of Management members for your active contribution, including newcomers Tanya, Anne, and Sam, already making your presence felt. I would like to give a special mention to Fiona for stepping up as Acting Chair when I was impacted by COVID, as well as George who accepted the role of Acting Treasurer this year, ably supported by Matthew and the remodelled finance team.

Special mention to Margaret (25 years at Gellibrand!) and to Johann for taking the reins while Matthew finally went on extended holiday – unsurprisingly, the Gellibrand team continued to do their outstanding work.

Lastly, thanks Matthew (35 years at Gellibrand!) – you continue to keep Gellibrand clients the focus of our attention.

I wonder what the next 12 months will bring? Whatever happens, I hope you all stay well and have a happy New Year!



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

**MATTHEW HOYLE**

This year was the first in the last three that felt like things got back to normal at Gellibrand. While COVID19 was still very much alive in the community, it didn't have a big impact on our operations, and clients were able to get out and about and enjoy themselves during some wonderful outings.

That said, however, 2023 was a year when the results of the COVID19 pandemic began to bite in Australia financially. There's no doubt economic pressures have hit Gellibrand clients and team members this year and I want to acknowledge some people are doing it extra tough. We are, of course, doing all we can to make sure Gellibrand keeps costs down so that clients can keep enjoying the supports they need and deserve.

We finalised our Strategic Plan (2023 – 2026) this year, which will guide Gellibrand's operations for the next three years. I want to offer a special thanks to the Committee of Management (CoM) for all their hard work on helping develop the Plan, and we all look forward to working with the CoM's expertise as we go about putting the Plan into action.

Talking about putting things into action, our Operational Plan – which comes out of the Strategic Plan – has some key items that we're getting stuck into, including making sure Gellibrand:

- stays client-centred and values led
- focuses on partnerships
- is sustainable for the long term
- uses the Agile Operating Model; and
- is an employer of choice

We're taking plenty of steps to get these things done, including increasing the evidence base for our services; seeking partners that align with our vision; working to develop our governance systems; training staff in the Agile Model; and improving our professional development opportunities, amongst other things.

Gellibrand's philosophy is that we only grow to meet identified needs. We kept getting requests for our services from the Ballarat region so, in 2023, we tested the waters by forming a social group there for people living with a disability. I want to thank Daniel Teba, who did a magnificent job setting it up.



The social group grew so we took the step of purchasing a property in Albert Street, Sebastopol. I am particularly excited about this new community space. It has plenty of room for activities and services, so we're aiming for Albert Street to be an important factor in how Gellibrand supports people living with a disability in the Ballarat region.

We're pleased about the progress we've made on our two holiday houses; in Haddon, near Ballarat, and at Portarlington. Haddon is now accepting clients after a renovation to achieve wheelchair accessibility. It's been great to finally see clients enjoying a break in nature there. And Portarlington will be ready soon, too – it was great to make it walker accessible, particularly in the bathrooms. We now look forward to making the front accessible with a ramp.

We added and filled a new role at Gellibrand in May this year – Communications Lead. Paul Mitchell has slotted into the team well, developing and starting delivery of our Communications Strategy. Expect to see more news coming out of Gellibrand as Paul works to take our story of high-quality client support to a wider audience.

The new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) has taken up a lot of management's time and energy in 2023 as we've worked to achieve benefits that flowed from the last EBA. As the new EBA is negotiated, we're trying to make the best of a situation that unfortunately can't offer Gellibrand team members the flexibility that previous EBAs have.

That brings me, of course, to our incredible team members. Again, thank you for your dedicated commitment to Gellibrand clients. I know you always go the extra mile or two to make sure clients get the supports they need and deserve, all with an attitude of kindness that gives Gellibrand the great name we enjoy in the community.

And thank you to all our clients (and families) for trusting us with your lives; it's our privilege to keep giving you the very best support we can offer. Stay safe, everyone, over Christmas and the New Year and I look forward to another great year in 2024.





# ACTING TREASURER'S REPORT

GEORGE SMARAGDAS

I am delighted to share with you the audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2023. Throughout the financial year, Gellibrand placed a substantial emphasis on bolstering our workforce to better serve our clients. Additionally, we made strategic investments in the acquisition and maintenance of properties and facilities, ensuring a secure and pleasant environment for our clients and staff.

The operations for the fiscal year 2022-23 resulted in a surplus of \$1.11 million, equivalent to 4.6% of total revenue. In comparison, the previous year recorded a surplus of \$1.38 million, constituting 6.5% of revenue. Notably, the revenue for 2022-23 included the contribution of donated assets valued at \$0.86 million, all of which have been fully allocated for the benefit of our clients.

In the preceding fiscal year 2021-22, Gellibrand also received additional revenue of \$0.70 million from the NDIA, specifically allocated to offset Gellibrand's COVID-19-related expenditures.

Gellibrand's financial accounts were independently audited by Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd, who certified them to be true and fair and in accordance with the Australian accounting standards applicable for not-for-profit entities. Gellibrand maintains a steadfast review process for its financial accounts, involving regular reviews by both the Finance Committee and the Committee of Management.

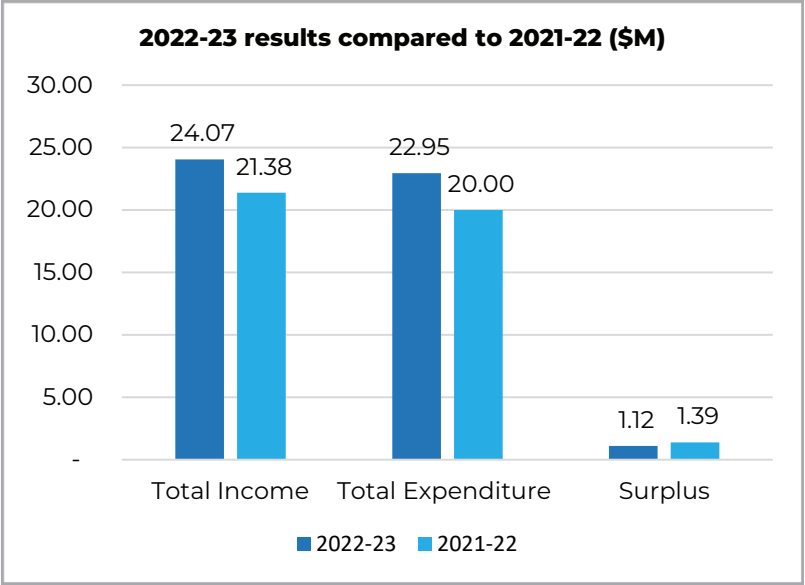
## REVENUE

The total revenue for the year was \$24 million and the comparative figure for the previous year was \$21.3 million, a growth of 13%. The primary source of revenue during the year was NDIS packages for clients.



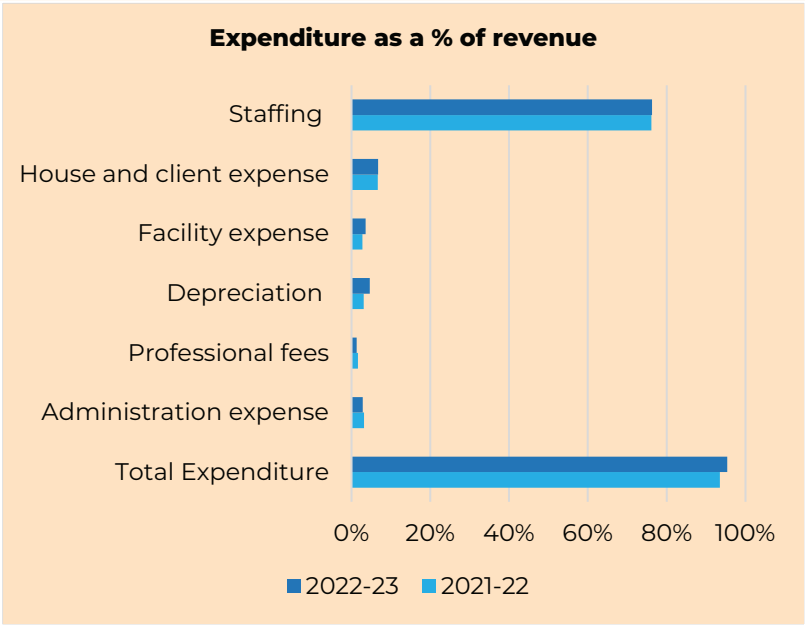
## EXPENDITURE

The total expenditure of Gellibrand for the year was \$23 million, representing an increase of 15% from the previous year. The graph below shows total revenue, total expenditure, and surplus for 2022-23 comparative to the previous year.



## EXPENDITURE ALLOCATION

Gellibrand's main emphasis in expenditure was on client and staff-related costs, while effectively managing administrative expenses within the approved limits. This was improved from the previous year expenditure allocation and is represented in the graph below.



## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Throughout the year, Gellibrand allocated \$1.1 million towards the acquisition and renovation of properties, and \$1.3 million towards modernisation of its vehicle fleet, enhancement of its IT infrastructure and equipment, as well as the replacement of furniture and fixtures in its residences and offices.



## WORKING CAPITAL

As of June 30, 2023, Gellibrand's cash and bank balances stood at \$5.7 million, compared to \$5.4 million in the previous year. Notably, Gellibrand managed to acquire assets without resorting to borrowed funds. The net working capital, which represents the funds available for day-to-day operations (calculated as current assets minus current liabilities), was \$2.3 million, indicating a robust financial position. In the previous year, this figure was \$3 million.

Gellibrand's liquidity ratio (current ratio), which reflects its ability to meet obligations such as wages and supplier payments, remains robust. With a current ratio of 1.57, Gellibrand comfortably surpasses the benchmark of 1, though it has experienced a slight decrease from the previous year's ratio of 1.88, which is mainly due to not using borrowed funds for purchase of assets.

## EQUITY

Gellibrand's Equity (assets minus liabilities) as of 30 June 2023 was \$13.4 million compared to \$12.3 million the previous year. A healthy equity position allows the Committee of Management (CoM) to allocate funds to enhance facilities and resources and grow Gellibrand services to be of value to the community.

Please refer to the attached audited financial statements for a detailed review of the results.

I want to thank the CoM, the Finance & Risk Sub-Committee, Gellibrand management and staff for their excellent efforts to keep Gellibrand in a sustainable financial position.

I want to also thank the Gellibrand families for their continued support and commitment to our operations, and our funders NDIA and DFFH for the prompt allocation and disbursement of funding to Gellibrand during 2022-23.



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026

## What are our bold plans?

1		<b>Client Centred and Values-Led</b> Gellibrand will focus on strengthening its unique client focus and boosting its values profile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enhance our services with greater evidence-based approaches that <b>build leading edge client services and promote Gellibrand's values.</b></li><li>Develop a <b>Holistic Wellness Strategy</b> to increase capability focusing on specific client groups to assist each client's lifecycle journey.</li><li>Develop <b>supporting processes to learn</b> from client experiences &amp; promote <b>stories-led outcomes</b> to better support unique personal journeys.</li></ul>
2		<b>Partnership-Oriented</b> Gellibrand will continue to develop and refine external partnerships to deliver new and enhanced client services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify <b>external</b> partners with skills, values, risk management profiles and an approach to governance that support the Gellibrand profile.</li><li>Continue to identify and <b>progress partnerships</b> that meet the organisational purpose.</li><li>Build upon and expand <b>existing partnerships.</b></li></ul>
3		<b>Sustainable for the Long Term</b> Gellibrand will increasingly focus on building sustainable outcomes in all key areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to explore measurable improvements in performance, governance &amp; risk frameworks.</li><li>Identify and implement further sustainable <b>environmental, social and governance</b> opportunities.</li><li>Develop new revenue models that secure <b>income diversity.</b></li></ul>
4		<b>Agile Operating Model</b> Gellibrand will continue to build a flexible and adaptive organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build repeatable processes to optimise asset-<b>impact</b> and <b>time-efficiency.</b></li><li>Build upon existing standards &amp; enhanced information management to improve communication, integrity, effectiveness &amp; consistency.</li><li>Organise supporting services, structures and technology to maximise efficiencies and to prioritise <b>quality &amp; safety</b></li></ul>
5		<b>Employer of Choice</b> Gellibrand's employment profile will continue to attract and retain quality Team Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cultivate management capability, personal <b>effectiveness</b>, role/team <b>clarity</b> and team <b>collaboration</b></li><li>Enhance <b>professional development</b> processes &amp; tools for <b>mentoring</b> and <b>coaching</b></li><li>Develop marketing and recruitment outreach to enhance Gellibrand's external brand.</li></ul>

## What objectives do we focus on to deliver our bold plans? We will:



## THE GELLIBRAND WAY





# COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

## ELENA ASHLEY

Elena is President of the Committee of Management (CoM) and a proud 'westie' who grew up in – and has lived in – Melbourne's western suburbs most of her life. So, when it came to volunteering and giving back to her community, Gellibrand was an obvious choice.

Elena has held senior leadership roles in the community sector for the last 10 years and is currently at WIRE, Victorian's only generalist information service for women and gender diverse people, working to build a society where all people can thrive. Gellibrand's values align with Elena's, especially those of respect, care, and integrity, and being able to support the Gellibrand team's efforts in its important work keeps her motivated to contribute to the organisation.

With a career spanning almost 40 years in industry, education, and community sectors, Elena has seen how well-designed, positive systems in organisations can assist each team member to meet customer and community needs. That is her approach at Gellibrand: each person is valued for themselves and what they bring.



## CHRIS MEEHAN

Chris has lived in Melbourne's west his whole life and has worked with Gellibrand for more than 20 years. He joined the CoM in 2021 and, for Chris, his ongoing work in the disability sector has been a grounding, humbling, and satisfying experience.

Now retired, Chris has a BSc (Mathematics) and a BA (Economics), and spent more than 30 years in the tyre industry. He held a senior bridging role at Goodyear (global), working between the internally competing Manufacturing and Marketing divisions. Chris was responsible for supply chain management, importation, and inventory control, and his experience extends to government liaison, issues management, and internal and external corporate communication.

When Australian tyre manufacturing became unsustainable in the early '00s, Chris began a new and more personally rewarding career at Gellibrand. With its primary focus of people before profit, working at Gellibrand has greatly developed Chris's social awareness and general life skills.



## FIONA MCHUGH

Fiona is Gellibrand's Vice-President, V/Line's Director Train Services – Operations, and a busy mum who has worked for more than 20 years in the health, disability, manufacturing, and public transport sectors. With a family member receiving Gellibrand's services, Fiona has been on Gellibrand's Committee of Management (CoM) for three years, offering her high-level governance and risk management experience.

Fiona joined Gellibrand's CoM because she felt she could make a positive difference through her skill set and because she respects and aligns with the Gellibrand Way. She aims to represent clients and their families' interests as she works to contribute to Gellibrand's ongoing improvements in systems and governance.



## GEORGE SMARAGDAS

George is the CoM's Acting Treasurer. He lives in Melbourne's west and works as Business Development Manager with a national private sector fire service provider.

He joined Gellibrand's CoM in 2021 and has a long association with the organisation. George was a former Support Worker at Hanmer Street in Williamstown when the organisation was known as Urimbirra, and has been proud to watch over the years as Gellibrand has grown and developed.

George finds direct inspiration for his work at Gellibrand from its mission statement. He wants to stay involved with an organisation that supports individuals who live with a disability by assisting them to improve their quality of life and achieve the outcomes they want as valued members of the community.



## DES MCGOWAN

Des is Chair of the Governance Sub-Committee and his sister-in-law has been a Gellibrand client for almost a decade. His wife Anne also served on Gellibrand's board for seven years so Des has a long and intimate association with the organisation.

Now retired, Des has a BA Honours from Melbourne University and was founder and director of Insync, a firm with global reach that conducts staff, customer, and board surveys in the airline, shipping, and not-for-profit sectors. His experience with the latter gave Des deep insights into the delivery expectations that not-for-profit entities face, knowledge he brings to Gellibrand.

Des believes Gellibrand responded successfully to the onset of the NDIS and that the organisation has a track record of excellence in service delivery. He sees his role as helping Gellibrand continue development of a robust strategic framework and setting the organisation up for more and stronger external partnerships.



## ANNE JOBSON

Anne joined the CoM in 2022 and, with a Diploma in Human Resources and Office Management, has held various roles in health regulation for 24 years, including her current post as Executive Assistant to a state manager.

Gellibrand provided high-quality care for Anne's late sister Kerrie for 35 years. When Kerrie died in 2022, Anne joined the CoM to give back to Gellibrand for giving so much to her sister. She is proud to be involved with what she describes as a beautiful organisation, which she has seen grow from having a backyard caravan as its office to the large and thriving operation it is today.

Despite running board meetings professionally for decades, Anne says she's still learning about being a Gellibrand board member. She is, however, especially interested in governance, and aims to bring this passion and expertise to the growing organisation for many years to come.





**SAM WALKER**

Sam is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) with a Masters of Applied Finance who lives with bilateral severe-to-profound hearing loss. He intimately identifies with Gellibrand's vision of a community founded on respect, exploration of opportunities, and the promotion of choice.

A graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Sam is an investment professional with more than a decade's experience. The disability sector, viewed through an investment lens, is an area for his expertise, along with the general healthcare sector.

Sam is a dedicated advocate for inclusive and impactful practices in the disability sector. He has a deep passion for the potential of astutely allocated financial resources to transform and uplift communities through positive initiatives to make a meaningful impact.

**TANYA KENNETT**

Tanya works as a People Safety, Health and Wellbeing leader in the transport industry. With qualifications that include Certified Associate Asset Management; Executive Ready – Women and Leadership; and an Advanced Diploma Occupational Health and Safety, Tanya has held numerous roles as a trainer and training manager in various industries.

Tanya enjoys supporting community groups and has volunteered at numerous organisations previously, including childcare centres and local sporting clubs. She uses her professional experience and skills at Gellibrand to help streamline the organisation's approach to governance and improve the management systems and processes that support Gellibrand's work.



**COMMUNICATIONS LEAD**

**PAUL MITCHELL**

I was pleased to be appointed in June 2023 as Gellibrand Support Services' first Communications Lead, with the brief of managing the organisation's external communications. Gellibrand had for many years done this through an all-hands-on-deck approach, but recent growth meant the time was right to specialise the role.

I have a journalism, communications, and creative writing background, but in my early career I worked for two years as a disability support worker in Geelong with a man who lived with cerebral palsy. I know first-hand the challenges – and joys – that are part of daily life for people who live with disabilities, their families, and their support workers.

Coming into Gellibrand, I noticed a few things straightaway. This is an organisation that reflects its brand. It's full of real people whose ultimate concern is the clients for whom they work. And it's a diverse workplace that doesn't feel the need to endlessly label itself as such. People here just get on with the job of being who they are and supporting people who live with a disability to get the outcomes they want.

My first task with Gellibrand was to research and write the organisation's inaugural Communications Plan (external). That document is complete and it's hoped it will steer Gellibrand's communications for the next three years. The plan dovetails with Gellibrand's Strategic Plan (2023-2026), key pillars from which inform the Communications Plan's four communications key messages, highlighted below;

To manage how we take these key messages to the community, I developed a set of Communications Plans to help guide Gellibrand's communication activities. These plans consider the importance of telling clients' stories appropriately (including on the Family Portal), how we engage on Facebook and LinkedIn, when we seek mainstream or sector media coverage, and how we tell Gellibrand's story on our website.

Gellibrand is all about improving quality of life for people living with a disability and helping them achieve the outcomes they want as valued community members. It's early days but, with a dedicated person in communications, we have been able to distribute more news than ever about Gellibrand's work supporting clients.

We're also seeing an upswing in engagement with Gellibrand on Facebook. When standardised for per capita levels of followers, engagement with our posts is often doubling engagement that larger not-for-profit organisations are experiencing. We are also researching opportunities to tell stories on LinkedIn that demonstrate Gellibrand's value as a partner for other organisations in the sector, re-writing website content, and working hard to help families engage with their loved ones on the Family Portal.

With a Communications Strategy and Communications Plans in place, Gellibrand is now better placed to more widely and powerfully tell its story of real people making a real difference for people living with a disability and their families.

1.

**Dedication to high-quality client service:**  
Gellibrand is a client-first organisation that provides the best quality service available, maintaining high customer satisfaction through robust quality assurance.

2.

**An evolving organisation:**  
Gellibrand seeks to meet families' needs in new geographic areas and to provide new and improved services to meet client and community expectations.

3.

**A great place to work:**  
Gellibrand offers a meaningful work environment where staff are supported to achieve career goals. It is a well governed and culturally safe organisation.

4.

**Commitment to advocacy and partnership:**  
Gellibrand advocates for improved disability sector services and funding, and seeks meaningful partnerships with other agencies, sector bodies, government, and academic institutions.



# STEPHEN CAUCHI

## AN OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER

PAUL MITCHELL



There was great news for Gellibrand client Stephen Cauchi this year when, after many years of trying, he got his first job – volunteer employment with the Vinnies Op Shop in Melton.

Stephen has been a Gellibrand client since 2010 and he is a man who has had many challenges in life. He was a smoker and had issues with managing his weight due to diabetes. But Stephen has worked through those challenges with grit and determination, always aiming to improve himself and what he can offer the world.

He has always been someone who values community connections. When his support team realised how much Stephen loved op shopping, they made enquiries about whether Stephen could work as a volunteer at a Vinnies outlet.

Stephen wasn't about to miss out on his opportunity, patiently working through the long process of passing administrative checks. At last the big day came and he arrived for his first shift full of enthusiasm for his tasks, which included packing goods and organising donations. And, because Stephen loves album cover art, it was no surprise that one of his jobs was to manage storage of vinyl records.

"I am a hard worker. Any task I begin I finish and put a lot of energy into," is the way Stephen describes his work ethic.

He started with one shift per week and the aim is that he will build up from that base. We offer a big and heartfelt Gellibrand congratulations to Stephen, and to his team, for continuing to support him in his goal of being a valued member of the community.

# CLIENT COMMITTEE REPORT

BIANCA LEWIS, JODIE TAYLOR & BRIDGIT PURCELL



The Client Committee meets every four weeks on a Monday from 5pm to 6.30pm. It consists of Melanie Lewindon, Sophie Rolfe, Xenophon Spiridis, Bernadette Carey, Helen Young, Stephen Cauchi, Connie Messina, and Sally Lloyd.

This year we were involved in building Gellibrand's new Strategic Plan (2023–2026). The Committee completed a survey to let the organisation know what we would like Gellibrand to look like and what services we would like Gellibrand to offer in future.

We attended the Ballarat Festival earlier this year. It was a great opportunity for us to introduce ourselves, meet people, and help out where needed on the day.

In March, we participated in Clean Up Australia Day on Williamstown's foreshore. We are also part of the Friends of Skeleton Creek, Altona Bay, and we participated in tree planting this year.

The Committee had a visit from two members of the Hobsons Bay Council. The Council was in the process of writing a book with guidelines for council members about how to do and make things better for the community.

We gave a lot of advice about how Hobsons Bay Council could improve life for people living with a disability. This, of course, included many tips for how to improve accessibility:

- Better general building accessibility, including access to – and seating at – the new Altona cinema.
- Improved accessibility to GPs, dentists, and other health professionals – it's not always easy to find those who understand and support clients with complex issues, including sensory issues.
- Transport – more disability car spaces are needed, and more ramps at train stations and bus stops.
- Public toilets – more accessible toilets (with rails) are needed, especially for those who use wheelchairs with hoists. Unisex toilets need to be more disability friendly and liberty keys are also needed for those who have companion cards.
- Parks and beaches – beaches need matting to make them accessible for those who use wheelchairs or walkers; parks need to be more accessible, including having extra park benches, shaded areas, and water stations.

We also spoke to the council members about improving Hobsons Bay area for people living with a disability by:

- improving advertising about social groups for people who don't have social media;
- making it easier to find volunteer opportunities;
- making cash payment available for people who don't have credit cards;
- creating spaces for LGBTQI people; and
- increased accessibility to study and learning facilities.

We held three successful Client Committee events this year. In March, we had a Beach Party-themed disco and in August we held a movie night at Reading Cinemas where we watched the *Barbie* movie. In October, we held a Halloween Disco.

Next year we look forward to having even more communication with Gellibrand clients about what we can do with them and to ensure their needs are heard.



# IF YOU CAN MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT THERE'S A BRIGHTER DAY

## CHAPTER II “PRESENT”

**TRI-DUY NGUYEN**

(LANGUAGE & CONTENT WARNING: READER BEWARE)

Greetings & salutations! Before we start this chapter, I want you to do something for me and keep this at the back of your mind. When you hear the word “present” what comes to mind? You’re probably thinking about gifts, Christmas, birthdays, electronics or perhaps something of value? We’ll compare notes at the end, and I’ll give you my take on the word present. Moreover, welcome to chapter II. Put this on a quote: “This is the realest shit I ever wrote, can you fucking believe it’s been 1 year?”

If you have read Chapter I, you would know it was about the events that led up to my 1st day of work for Gellibrand offices on July 1st of 2022. Well, as of today, it’s been 1 year and I’m glad to report that I’m still going strong, and I haven’t been fired yet. It’s the longest job I’ve ever held by far. It says a lot about the company, doesn’t it? That’s 52 weeks straight done. I even surprised myself.

The most common questions I get are: Do I like working in the office? How does it make me feel? To be brutally fucking honest, no, I don’t like it, I fucking love it! How does it make me feel? It’s kind of hard to describe how it makes me feel. I’ll put it to you this way; every time I go through Gellibrand’s office doors, it’s like someone fed my brain a Minty. It’s so fucking refreshing I tell ya. Every morning I wake up I ask myself how long until Thursday? Does that answer your question?

It’s really cool meeting the office folks. New people, seeing different faces and different voices. Although 65 of them are Johann’s cousins. It’s ok I’m Asian too. Jokes aside, they’re great people. At first, I was only going to do 1 month to try it out. I saw Johann coming in the office on 1 leg with his walker. It made me think if he can do it, so can I. I ain’t no bitch. If Johann can rock up to the office on 1 leg, I can roll up in my wheelchair. What’s your excuse? I’ll wait. Next thing you know, 1 month turns to 3, then to 6 and to 12 and counting.

Back at HG, a lot has changed in the space of 12 months. Roula has moved on and now we have Amit running the show at Honey. What do I think of the changes? Ask me in a year’s time. But man, talk about a baptism of fire to start with managing your first house. His first week he had to deal with my house mates being unwell. A couple days later one of them got Covid and HG went into semi lockdown. Hello darkness my old friend...

Currently, Amit’s doing a mighty fine job if you ask me. Well, he did hook me and Damien up on our birthdays last month with some extracurricular activities in the city. If you know, you know. Don’t judge me. I’m only fucking human.

Back at the office, what made me carry on and stick to the path are 2 things. My favourite quote and a text from my uncle. The quote “A certain darkness is needed to see the stars”. If you understand that quote, you will understand me. I first heard the quote when I was getting my first tattoo from a chick named Holly. For my first tattoo, I didn’t know what to get. I like words so I asked Holly to recommend some quotes. She showed me the quote on her wrist. I asked her “the fuck does that mean?”

She said, “You’re too young to understand (I was 18 at the time). Give it 20 years and you will understand.” As she was inking me up, we’re making small talk. Holly asked, “What’s a young Asian guy like you wanting quotes? Don’t you want a cool dragon or a flashy tiger?”

I just smiled at her and said, “I’m different.”

At this point, we’re really vibing so she asks me “What’s your favourite subjects at school?”

I’ll tell you like I told Holly. “Can you keep a secret? Promise you won’t laugh? Ok, good. During high school, my most favourite subject was poetry. Shakespeare was my favourite author. If you tell anyone, I’ll stab you”. I asked Holly what made her put that quote on her wrist. She just said she suffered 2 miscarriages. Sweet Jesus, I still didn’t fully understand the quote.

It wasn’t till New Year’s Eve 2017 when I fully understood the quote. That night, I didn’t look at the clock. I didn’t want to know. It hurts too much to reminisce back to compare my glory days to now. It really fucking hurts. I just went to the backyard and had a smoke, then I hear fireworks go off. I looked at my TV and see people hugging, kissing, dancing, smoking and drinking. It really overwhelmed me. I started bawling my eyes out. I’m swearing and cursing at God, why are you punishing me? Is this the price I’m paying for my past mistakes? That moment you realise you’re not where you think you should be in this life but make no mistake. I ain’t no bitch.

I cried, not because I was weak. I cried because I was strong for so long. As I looked at my phone a tear dropped on my screen. I rubbed it against my leg to dry it off. By some divine intervention, I somehow unlocked my old Facebook account and saw a post from Holly. A picture of her holding up a baby boy, lion king style. I read the caption above the picture which reads “A certain darkness is needed to see the stars and I’ve finally gotten my stars”.

WOAH. Then it dawned on me. I fully understood the quote. You have got to go through dark times before days get brighter because you can’t see stars in the bright light, right? That quote has carried me through to this day. Accept what is, let go of what was, have faith in what will.

Now onto the text I got from my uncle. He passed away a few months before I started working. He’s the wisest man I’ve ever known. He knows my situation so he would text me quite often asking what I’m up to. I would just tell him I’m chilling playing video games in my room. Years went by and there was time where he sent me a disturbing text which read “Duy, you can’t just stay in your room doing nothing with your life. Only 2 things are going to happen. Option 1: You’re going to commit suicide. Option 2: You’re going to go mentally insane”. Mind you, I was quite pissed and angry at him for saying that bullshit to me. I replied back with “Don’t you ever fucking talk that shit with me. You must not know me. I’ll go with option 3: I’ll do it my way. Drink out my own bottles”.

Then 4 days later he passed away (stage 4 throat cancer). He sent me this text “Duy, I’m not long for this world much longer, but before I go, I want you to know a few things. The goal is not to live forever but to create something that will. Words without action is merely a dream. Nephew, it’s time. The light turned green long ago. You got to leave your room and do something with your life. I don’t want to see you in your room like some caged bird but some birds aren’t meant to be caged. Their feathers are just too bright. So go on, nephew, spread your wings and show the world your true colours.”

How the fuck do you reply to that? It’s funny when you’re dead, people start listening. I sure did a couple months later. I started working in the office. Now you know the 2 reasons why I front up every Thursday.

I couldn’t have done it without a few people. Lastly, I want to big up some of the OG staff and managers that were pretty much there since day one. Abel, Kane, Thomas, Dino, Ben J, Subin, Josh B, Chloe, Racel, Milka, Angok,

Beauty, Kayla and Bethany. Now the managers: Emma, Margaret, Rebecca, Johann, Justin and the CEO Matthew. You guys do know a little Shakespeare don’t you? “Thee shalt worry not as for thy shall charge forth” Translation: “ya boi is doing just fine”

These are the ppl that saw me at my worst. When the weight of the world was on my shoulders, you guys were there. When it got heavy, I held it and you guys were there. Sometimes the world can seem so cold looking through the windows of my soul. I see the truth and now I know. Know that your hard work matters. It matters to me. I’m the product of said hard work. I know some of you are second guessing my state of mind. I either win or I learn from it. I never lose. I can’t afford to. These guys saw me at my worst so its damn right they get to see the best of me today. To the people I just mentioned, down to the handyman and up to the CEO Matthew. I just want to say “I thank ye please accept thy deepest sincere gratitude”. If everything goes to plan and I stay on track the final chapter in this series will be titled “The rose that grew from concrete”. Fun fact: You might not know about me is, I only write when I’m happy. What am I doing now? You’re reading it. Do the math.

So, have you gotten an answer for the word present for me yet? Just before I give you my answer, just know that I’m thankful for it every day. Right, the word present. When I hear the word present, this is what comes to mind. Yesterday was history, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift. That’s why it’s called “PRESENT” day...







## CLUSTER COORDINATOR REPORT

**JUSTIN SACCO**

Gellibrand's Cluster Coordination group was formed to assist the Chief Executive Officer in leading the organisation forward, operationally and strategically, through the many changes within the disability sector. Additionally, Cluster Coordinators play a pivotal role within the management team, supporting service managers through coaching and mentoring to excel in their role, while identifying opportunities for growth within the organisation to sustain high levels of staff morale.

Throughout the year, Cluster Coordinators have worked alongside the management team in implementing several new systems and processes to assist with continuation of service delivery and positive outcomes for clients and families. Our Family Portal is now up and running and we are excited to be able to share at just a click of a button what our clients are doing to achieve their goals. We are working towards streamlining administrative processes while remaining compliant with NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission guidelines. Streamlining our processes will free managers to be more available for their teams and clients.

The role of a Service Manager can be challenging, and our managers work tirelessly to ensure Gellibrand's clients receive quality supports. The Cluster Coordinators are grateful

for the managers and their efforts and hard work, which does not go unnoticed. This year, we have worked towards new coaching and mentoring systems for managers, and this has been helpful for both parties. It assists us to identify challenges within the organisation and provides a supportive environment for managers.

There have been new additions and changes to the management team this year. We would like to welcome Jacob Manjooran, Teigan Mateos, and Amit Antil to the team. Additions, however, mean some people have left us. Thank you, Ben Jordan, for your many years of service as a Gellibrand Service Manager. We wish you all the best with your future endeavors.

We have trialed a new and successful 'supervisor' role at Gellibrand this year. The role is designed to support service managers who have large numbers of clientele, offering clients and team members someone extra who is 'on the floor', looking for improvements required. A big thank you to Louise Nicolas for all the work you did trialing the supervisor role – and goodbye to Amanda Araujo; we wish you all the best with your new role as a behaviour support practitioner.

There have been many challenges for Gellibrand this year. A significant one for us, that remains our focus, is filling our current SIL vacancies. Unfortunately, it seems there is a shortfall of clients in the sector looking for SIL services. The services team have done a brilliant job with their walk-through video of Brooksby Circuit, and we are looking forward to seeing more. The Cluster Coordinators are working towards filling our vacancies while exploring innovative ways to sell shared housing and shaping culture reform within those houses.

We are excited to see what the next financial year brings to the organisation and we will continue to work towards moving the organisation forward through the many changes and challenges we will no doubt face, adapt to, and overcome.

## QUALITY & COMPLIANCE REPORT

**MARGARET GIVEN, JAIMIE HARRISON, ELIANE NASR & LUKE NGUYEN**

The number of policies and legislative frameworks with which Gellibrand must comply continues to grow. Therefore, Quality and Compliance continues to be a challenging space and one that requires dedicated, focused, and knowledgeable attention.

We currently have a four-person Quality and Compliance team: Margaret, our Customer Wellbeing Manager; Eliane, our Quality and Compliance Lead; and our Quality and Compliance Administrators, Jaimie and Luke.

Gellibrand successfully passed the last certification audit with no major non-compliances. That doesn't just happen; it takes a lot of hard work from the Quality and Compliance team, the management team, and every team member who must ultimately implement and uphold Gellibrand's systems and processes. We thank team members for the patience they show in adapting to and implementing new systems when required. We appreciate it's not easy to adjust to new systems and processes, but we trust that team members understand new systems are not implemented lightly, and Gellibrand doesn't make adjustments without good reason.

The NDIS commission is always providing updates to standards to which Gellibrand must comply. This year has been no different with the commission rolling out important and necessary changes. As a result, high-intensity supports is an area into which Gellibrand has had to put strong focus.

High-intensity supports refers to when clients need support with things such as catheter care, stoma care, PEG and PEJ feeding, as well as assistance with meals where there is a risk of choking. Establishing a new framework to cover our many clients who require high-intensity supports has been a significant body of work for the Quality and Compliance team. Each client will now be assessed to see if they require high-intensity supports and, when they do, clients will have clear plans for the support provided within high-intensity categories.

One of the challenges of meeting industry standards regarding high-intensity supports is the requirement that suitably qualified professionals train our team members. It's not always possible to align all team members with occupational therapists or speech therapists for training and it's also not always possible to record training sessions. This creates significant challenges for us and the wider sector.

Nonetheless, Gellibrand fully understands and appreciates why high-intensity supports are required and the significance of ensuring we provide appropriate support to clients with complex needs. Quite often people with complex needs also have higher support requirements in relation to communication, and therefore are often at greater risk of abuse and neglect. Gellibrand remains committed to ensuring this client group is empowered and, where necessary, protected to ensure their good quality of life. We look forward to working with clients and their families to roll out the high-intensity supports framework.

Earlier this year the Fair Work Commission chose to zombie agreements pre-2010 (meaning the commission saw them as expired). This meant the Quality and Compliance team did some data crunching to see how our current EBA stood up against the industry award and to understand whether it would pass the required tests. This was a new space for Quality and Compliance and we found the work challenging and rewarding. As we move into the new year, Gellibrand is looking to adopt a new enterprise agreement that will hopefully meet the needs of clients, team members, and the whole organisation.

This year saw us upskill our internal auditors to ensure they could meet auditing's increased standards and demands. The Customer Wellbeing Manager and Quality and Compliance Lead also commenced their studies to obtain double diplomas in Quality Auditing and Business Compliance. Although Gellibrand acknowledges that qualifications don't necessarily equate to quality outcomes, we're committed to ensuring a robust and up-to-date knowledge base within the organisation. Encouraging people to seek training and upskilling outside the organisation assists with the building of knowledge.

As we commence the rollout of our high-intensity supports framework, we're also gearing up for our 2024 external audit, which will commence in February with Stage 1, Desktop Audit. Stage 2 in April will see the auditor attend Gellibrand and engage with families, team members, and managers to assess whether our practices reflect the policies and procedures that will be audited in Stage 1.

Last but not least, this year has seen Gellibrand invest in a document management system (DMS) in order to manage our internal quality control documents. All team members can access the DMS from any location and find all Gellibrand's policies, practice guides, and forms. The DMS is also Gellibrand's database for monitoring the review and upkeep of all required documents.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank team members, clients, and families who this year, as always, contributed to our quality and compliance through responding to surveys and phone call check-ins. We're committed to continuous improvement so the feedback we receive is vital for making sure the good ship Gellibrand is steered in the right direction. We look forward to receiving your ongoing feedback and support well into 2024.



# IMPROVING THE NDIS

MATTHEW HOYLE, MARGARET GIVEN & PAUL MITCHELL

It's been a busy year in disability policy. In June, the NDIS released a review titled 'What we have heard: Moving from defining solutions to build a better NDIS'. Then, in October, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability released its Final Report and made recommendations.

These documents ask for policy changes that it's hoped will improve the NDIS and life for people living with a disability. Dialogue about the recommendations will be ongoing and Gellibrand, with 50 years' experience in the sector, has five key points to make now:

## 1. HOUSING: TOGETHER ALONE\*

If every ill Australian wanted their own hospital – or even their own nurse while in hospital – the idea would be dismissed quickly. But something similar happens with the NDIS.

Choice is a core NDIS philosophy. It extends to how to live, including choosing to live alone. That choice, however, comes at a much higher cost to the NDIS than communal living.

We suggest the NDIS, wherever possible, prioritises housing that enables NDIS participants to live in situations that honour their choice to live alone, but in the company of others. To quote the title of a Crowded House album, call this 'together alone'.

It means people living close enough to allow emotional and social connection – and ease of care via support workers – while experiencing the privacy that is also their right.

Currently, some people's fair wish to live alone effectively means some people don't receive any services. That's clearly inequitable.

*\*Please also see on p. 28 of this Annual Report our response to the Royal Commission's Final Report recommendation about the future of group housing.*

## 2. PRIORITISE YOUTH

The NDIS recognises the importance of early intervention. That recognition, however, must be matched with funding – as much as possible to support children, especially those who live with behavioural issues.

Parents and carers need significant support when children, for example, act aggressively due to the disability with which they live. It's vital to assist parents because, by the time their kids are teenagers, challenging behaviour is much harder to manage. Teenagers may end up in outside home care arrangements – because parents and carers haven't been supported earlier.

## 3. IMPROVING NDIS ACCESS

Ten years on and access to the NDIS remains too complicated for many people. There are still far too many people saying, "I don't know what to do, where to start, who to talk to".

An approach that might help is to fund NDIS providers to offer pre-planning sessions for potential NDIS participants. Currently, NDIS providers who offer that support do so freely. That's a risk for providers – people may not decide to sign up with them after the free service. And, in truth, only providers that care deeply for the sector offer potential participants that free advice.



## 4. FIXING THE NDIS MARKET

The NDIS is an open market – registered providers abide by a set of rules, while unregistered providers don't.

The market was supposed to create competition for NDIS services that, it was hoped, would result in better and cheaper services due to market forces. The NDIS, however, knows this isn't working and has asked why. We think it's clear – some NDIS providers' primary focus is to make money, while others' primary focus is to care for people.

All NDIS providers must be on the same playing field – all registered, compliant, and quality controlled. Anything less means a two-stream system – the registered who follow compliance orders, and the unregistered who don't. It's inequitable, doesn't lead to good outcomes for participants, and must change.

## 5. IT'S 'REASONABLE AND NECESSARY' TO LEARN FROM DEBATES

Figures this year revealed the NDIA spends more than \$4.1m monthly on legal cases dealing with arguments about what constitutes 'reasonable and necessary', a key tenet in the provision of NDIS support packages.

It's a big spend, but it could be argued that, regardless of the cost, the questions surrounding what is reasonable and necessary should be debated so the best outcomes can happen. But \$4.1m per month with no significant learnings is deeply problematic.

Currently, when someone challenges an NDIS decision about a 'reasonable and necessary' provision, the NDIS pays lawyers to defend its position. The matter is contested and a regulatory body, such as VCAT in Victoria, decides. But the next day that same matter could bring a different decision from a different tribunal member. And similar matters are contested over and over.

The NDIS must learn from this \$4.1m worth of cases and develop the rulings into guidelines, which can be used to ensure clarity about what are reasonable and necessary provisions. Then, over time, the need for expensive legal cases should diminish.



# GROUP HOUSING: A CHOICE THAT MUST REMAIN

MARGARET GIVEN & PAUL MITCHELL

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability released its Final Report in 2023. We welcome this and the effort that went into ensuring the voices of lived experience were heard in considering how to avoid these negative impacts on people living with a disability.

The Final Report noted that group accommodation had historically been a factor in many of these negative outcomes. Consequently, it recommended that group housing required significant reform to safeguard people living with disability, and the majority of the seven commissioners recommended group housing should be phased out within 15 years.

Gellibrand has provided group housing for people living with a disability for more than 40 years. We have seen – and been involved in – recent changes in the accommodation landscape; people are choosing to live alone, with fewer people, or with family. Throughout these changes – as always – Gellibrand has made supporting our clients and their families our number-one consideration.

We are aware the Royal Commission's findings could concern our clients and their families. The news that people may have to move from homes they've lived in for many years is difficult to hear, along with considering what a transition to alternative accommodation might look like. Gellibrand will work with our clients and families to bring their voices to any discussions about the future of group housing.

Gellibrand doesn't believe in a 'one size fits all' approach to accommodation. We believe people living with a disability should have a full range of choice for where they live and who they live with – and that should include group accommodation. Any future policy that would end group housing takes away that necessary and appropriate choice.

We acknowledge and are saddened by the fact that people living in group accommodation have suffered abuses. But through our decades of experience, we know that properly administered, well-managed group homes provide the best-quality residential option for many people living with a disability. And, for some people, group homes are the only one in which they report having felt comfortable and secure. We must ensure group accommodation remains a viable option for these people.



## WHY GROUP HOMES WORK FOR SO MANY

A supportive, socially and community-connected home environment for people who have frequently experienced social isolation is of inestimable value, and contributes critically to the quality of life of people living with disability.

When careful supervision, boundaries, support, and respect are enabled and maintained, we have seen mutually supportive relationships flourish between people who live in group homes, developing into deep, long-term friendships. Together with the support they receive to engage with the wider community in activities outside group homes, the positive effect on their quality of life is immense.

We have seen group homes function to support and enable people to develop greater autonomy and independence from their families. This can be liberating, not only for the individual, but also for family members who, in many cases, have felt the weight of care as they age.

Group home processes unavailable in other supported accommodation models can enhance an individual's autonomy, supporting their choices and preferences. Examples include regularly scheduled house meetings and activities. These help develop skills and confidence, assisting people to self-advocate and function more independently.

Group accommodation provides an increased layer of protection for people who might be at risk of exploitation from unscrupulous community members. And, if people living with a disability experience challenges when in the community, group homes offer a place of retreat where they can get immediate assistance and support from dedicated staff and service providers.

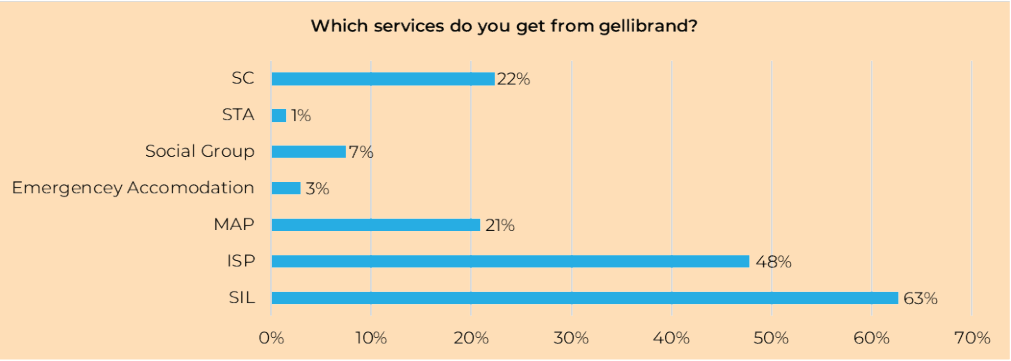
Properly-managed and well-equipped group homes can also be invaluable stepping stones to re-ablement for people who live with intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries, or newly acquired physical disabilities. Group homes offer a highly-supported environment where they can develop skills for independence, find new and more adaptive ways of coping and thriving, or re-learn lost skills.

Gellibrand has always been – and will continue to be – an advocate for people living with a disability, particularly those living with intellectual disabilities and acquired brain injuries. As the accommodation landscape evolves – and in keeping with the Royal Commission's vision for an inclusive Australia – we will actively work to ensure people living with a disability are strongly and fully represented and consulted so their choices are encouraged and respected.



# CLIENT SURVEY SUMMARY

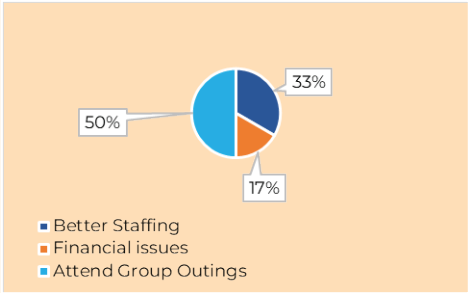
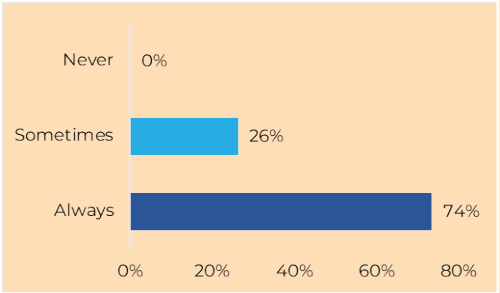
BETHANY GOLDSMITH & CHRISTIAN BULAON



Each year clients are given the option to respond to a survey that asks them about their satisfaction with the support they received from Gellibrand. The client surveys are written using NDIS standards as a framework, and the results are used to inform management decision-making in relation to delivering quality services.

Surveys for this report were administered in August of 2023. Service Managers were asked to assign team members to their sites to provide any support clients needed to complete the survey. The number of survey responses from this year's client survey (n=67) was higher than in 2021-2022 (n=51).

On the whole, respondents were positive about the service they received from Gellibrand. Only one question elicited positive responses below 80%, which was "When you go out, are you able to go when and where you like?" (Always: 74%);

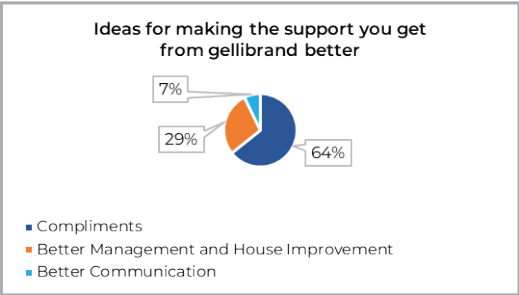
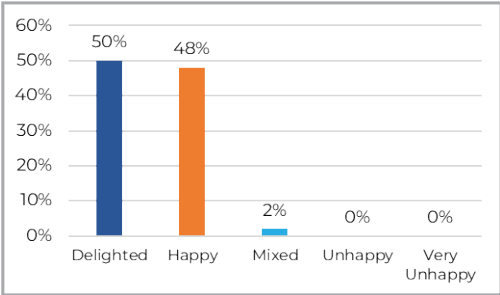


When asked if they had the resources they needed to access the community as they wished, 74% of clients who responded said that they always did, up from 70% in 2021/22. The number of clients who said they could always access the community as they wished declined steeply from 2019 (84%) to 2020 (48%). While not explicitly revealed in the comments, we attributed this decline to be a direct result of COVID-19 lockdown conditions. The return to higher numbers of people reporting they feel they can access the community as they wish this year, while not yet at pre-COVID levels, suggests that lockdowns were the primary driving force behind the steep drop in positive responses.

The 26% of respondents who indicated they did not feel that they could always access the community as they wished were asked for additional information. Nine clients identified their barriers, which fell into three distinct categories: Better Staffing; Financial Issues; Attended Group Outings. Specific comments included: "When staff drop their shift and no one is available" and "Sometimes I want to go out unplanned but my housemate doesn't so I can't go out as there's only 1 staff on."



## OVERALL SATISFACTION



Almost all clients (98%) reported being satisfied or above with the service Gellibrand provided. This represents a significant improvement from previous years, with satisfaction levels at 90% in 2021-2022 and 80% in the 2020 survey.

Furthermore, clients were given the chance to provide feedback on areas where Gellibrand could enhance its service. Out of the total respondents (n=16), approximately 23% offered constructive suggestions. Twenty-nine per cent (n=4) suggested management improvements such as improved rostering (regular team members) and maintenance (house improvements); 7% (n=1) suggested communication improvements such as letting clients know about upcoming events and outings in advance; and 64% (n=9) of clients used this opportunity to provide compliments and positive feedback about the support they receive.





# EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER SURVEY SUMMARY

BETHANY GOLDSMITH & CHRISTIAN BULAON

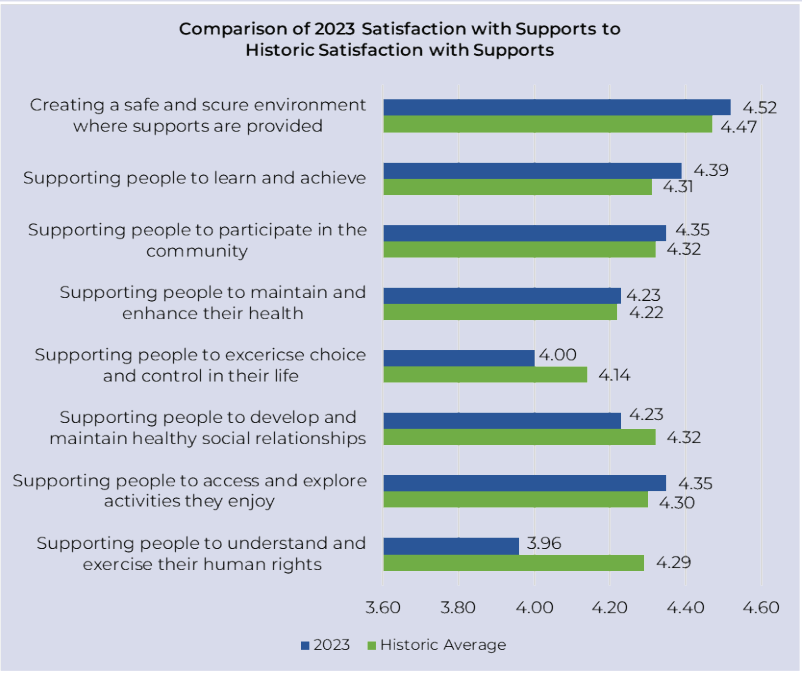


The external stakeholder survey is conducted every year. It asks the people outside Gellibrand who care for and support our clients to let us know their opinions about the support we provide, and their experiences in interacting and communicating with us. It is divided into two broad categories of questions: Support and Communication.

## SUPPORT

Most areas of Satisfaction with Supports scored above their historic average, and remained at or above the “satisfied” rating level of 4. There were only three areas that recorded mean scores below the historic average. These were: “Supporting people to exercise choice and control in their life” (M=4.00), “Supporting people to develop and maintain healthy social relationships” (M=4.23), and “Supporting people to understand and exercise their human rights” (M=3.96).

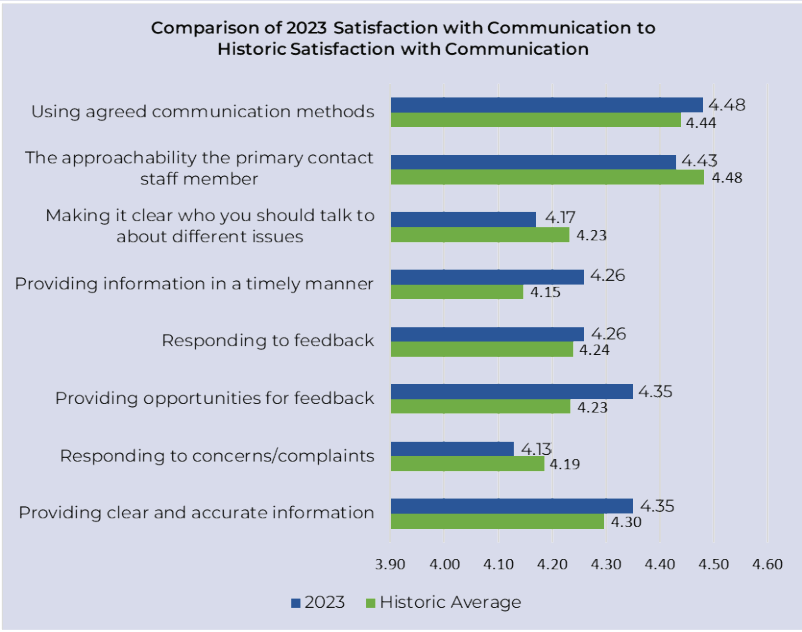
Comments relating to Support did not give much insight into why these three areas were below the historic average. Half of the written comments about Satisfaction with Support were praise, with a desire for more improvements in communication (37%) and suggestions for additional programs (13%) making up the remainder of the comments.



## COMMUNICATION

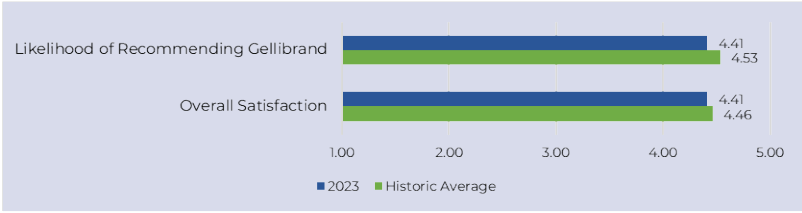
Most areas of Satisfaction with Communication also scored above their historic average. The largest difference from the historic average was “Providing opportunities for feedback” with increased levels of satisfaction. Only three areas recorded mean scores below the historic average: “Making it clear who you should talk to about different issues”, “Responding to concerns or complaints”, and “The approachability of the primary contact staff member”.

The comments reflected the overall positive trend of the responses, with 57% of those who provided additional comments on Gellibrand’s communication offering praise. Each of the comments providing suggestions for improving communication included requests for an increase in the amount of communication. Respondents also asked for more proactive communication and improved response times to emails and phone calls.



## OVERALL SATISFACTION

Overall, while the 2023 average was slightly lower than the historic average, stakeholders reported consistently high levels of satisfaction with Gellibrand and a high likelihood of recommending our services to others.





# TEAM MEMBER SURVEYS SUMMARY

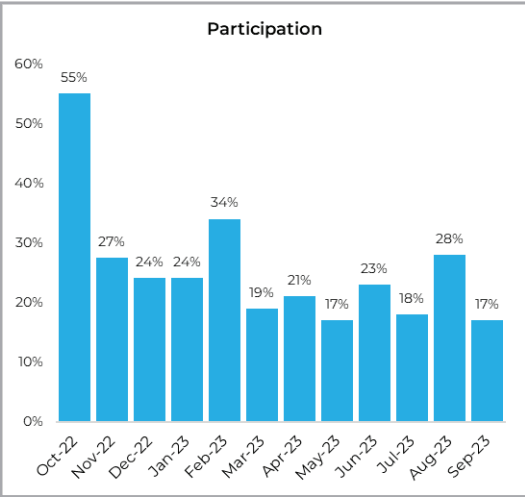
BETHANY GOLDSMITH & CHRISTIAN BULAON



The Gellibrand Team Member Engagement Survey asks team members a series of questions about different facets of their work life. These surveys are delivered using the online platform 'Culture Amp'. The survey questions are from a set that Culture Amp has compiled, which have been shown to be a valid measure of employee engagement. Employee engagement represents the levels of enthusiasm and connection employees have with their place of work. It is an important measure because it focuses on things a manager can action to influence employee performance, satisfaction, and retention.

The Culture Amp platform allows Gellibrand to take regular 'pulse' surveys, checking in with team members monthly to monitor how things are going. The platform analyses the results and suggests areas of focus for managers based on which will have the biggest impact on improving team member engagement.

The results below show an overview of the 12 monthly surveys which were conducted between October 2022 and September 2023.



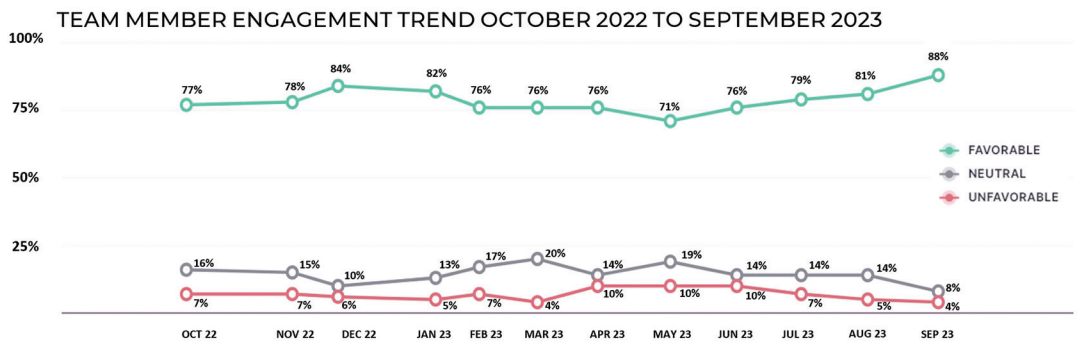
## PARTICIPATION

Team members' participation in the monthly surveys is optional. Culture Amp reports that 70% of their customers have a 75-90% response rates. Gellibrand has never achieved response rates at this level, having received responses from the majority of team members on only one occasion in this period, when the response rate peaked at 55%. That rate is more than double our average response rate of 25.5%. The reason for this increase is attributable to additional questions which were asked alongside the usual monthly set in October 2022. As well as measuring their engagement, the additional questions invited team members to appraise the CEO's performance.

We don't need to aim for full participation in each survey, but getting responses from a majority of team members is considered an indicative sample. Continuing to find measures which improve Gellibrand's response rate is a focus going forward as it will provide Gellibrand with more reliable results.

## ENGAGEMENT

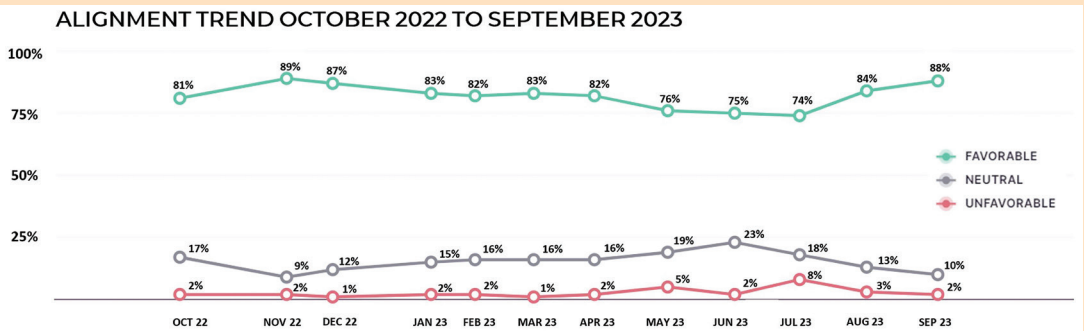
Favourable scores for Overall Engagement remained above 70% over the past year, with an average engagement score of 79%. The lowest recorded favourable level was in May, with scores trending steadily upward since then, peaking at 88% in September of this year.



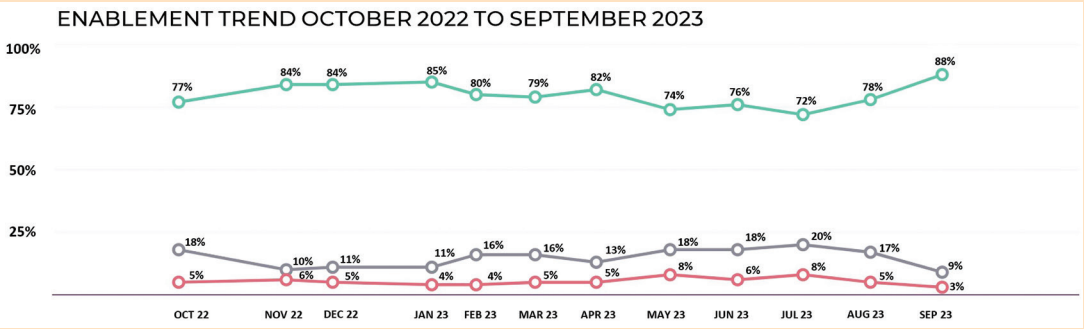
## ENGAGEMENT SUB-FACTORS

Culture Amp breaks down overall engagement into four broad areas of engagement: Enablement, Alignment, Development, and Leadership.

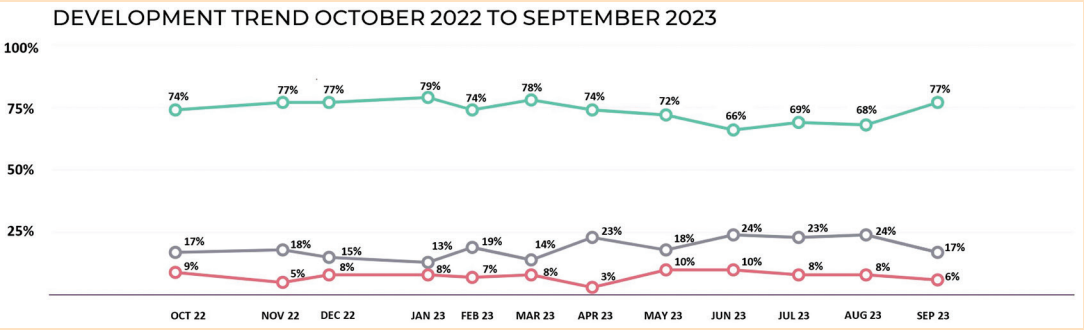
**Alignment** measures how closely team members values and drivers match with Gellibrand's. This score was the highest of the sub-factors, with an average favourable score of 82%.



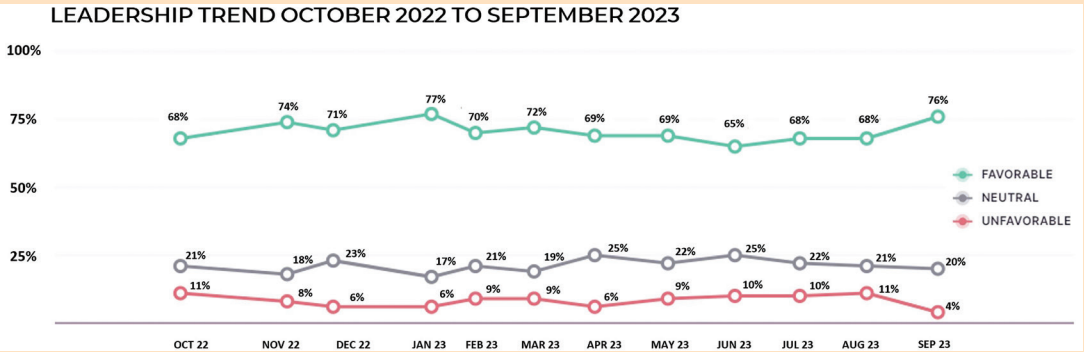
**Enablement** measures how well team members feel the organisation facilitates them to deliver the best supports possible. This factor scored second highest, with an average favourable score of 80%.



**Development** measures how well team members feel they are being supported to learn, grow, and progress in their careers. This factor scored an average favourable score of 74%.



The final sub-factor is **Leadership**. This measures how well team members feel the organisation is being led, and how effectively they are being managed. This factor scored the lowest of the factors, but had a still positive average favourable score of 71%.





# A 30-YEAR JOURNEY IN THE DISABILITY SECTOR

MARGARET GIVEN

This year I found my mind blown when I realised that 2023 was my 30th year in the disability sector. So much of my life has been spent in this amazing sector. What a ride it has been and how quickly it has gone.

I find myself reflecting on the many clients who have come, gone, and remain in my life. It has been wonderful to reflect on the impacts those clients have had – and continue to have – on me, as a support worker and as a person.

When I started in disability in 1993, Kew Cottages was still a fully functioning institution and it was where I had my first student placement – and my first interaction with people who live with a disability. Talk about an eye opener that gave me a reality check! My time at Kew Cottages cemented my commitment to the sector and to people who live with disabilities. I wanted people to be supported to have their rights respected – and fulfilled – and for them to have a good life, on their terms.

While I was at Kew Cottages, I was completing my Bachelor's Degree in Disability. But what I saw and what I was being told were different. What I was being told was what I believed. What I wanted for my family member who lived with severe intellectual disability and cerebral palsy was what I wanted for all people who lived with disabilities. It lit a fire in me, a fire that burns so high sometimes I have to take a step back and remember that not everyone has the passion and fire that I have.

I am not negative about institutionalisation. I understand that some things are for a time and there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to meeting people's needs. Some people had only known institutions so moving them would have meant a trauma from which they may never recover. In disability, as in all aspects of life, we grow, we deepen our understanding, and we adapt based on that understanding.

When deinstitutionalisation commenced, in line with newly developed concepts such as normalisation and social role valorisation, I saw a whole world open up for so many people. The sector had a medical model, with rows of beds in a ward and clients sharing clothes. They were moved as on a conveyor belt through shared baths in water that wasn't changed between clients. Then the sector changed and I saw those same people living in their own homes, their own bedrooms, skill building, and being socially included for the first time. I had the privilege of supporting one of those Kew Cottage clients move to a home he still enjoys at Gellibrand. What a joy that was.

I saw the 'cottage parent model' of supported accommodation commence. I lived with six clients in their home seven days per week and I supported them from Sunday to Friday, with three hours off per day. What a time that was! My cat lived at work with me; OHS was not really even conceived of in the sector; we had tea towel fights, we hid in the pantry from each other, we shared meals, and we shared life. When I had a death in my family and I couldn't leave, the clients became my support. It was a time in my disability career that I loved and those clients were the best people to teach me the basics of disability. Sadly, all those clients have passed away now, but none of them are forgotten, especially the one with whom I share my birthday.

Shared supported accommodation then replaced the cottage parent model. Compliance became a focus, for good reason. We all came to understand that safeguards were necessary to ensure people received quality supports and Team Members were safe, but also to ensure that clients were protected when needed.



In my 30 years, I have learned so much and have dabbled in many different areas of supports. Most importantly, I have learned that at the core of disability supports, if we want to be the best support workers we can, we have to have heart, passion, empathy, and a strong will – and to sometimes just “let go”. I have also learned that good disability supports don't just happen; we have to know our clients, accurately identify their needs, and then have the right people in place to meet those needs.

You also need good families who support you and believe in you. When tough decisions need to be made, you want to know that families are there and supporting you in those decisions. In my journey – and it's been a journey – I have met families who are so invested in the lives of their family members, in wanting them to live their best lives. I have been lucky enough to work with some really amazing families who have seen the passion I have for their family members, and equally for Gellibrand, to be everything I have always known it can be.

To every client, family member, team member, and lecturer who ever crossed my path and helped make me who I am (a continued work in progress), my sincere thanks goes to you. To my nephew Anthony Given; what a spark you were to pursue this career; what an inspiration you have been to continue on the tough days and to fight for the clients for whom I have needed to fight.

Here's to another 20 or so years of working to make sure all clients who cross my path receive the service I want you to have. The standard is high, but achievable, if we all give a little and, sometimes, a lot.

# GELLIBRAND & WORLD DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

PAUL MITCHELL

First recognised in the 1980s, every October is World Down Syndrome Awareness Month. At Gellibrand, it's been our joy and privilege in our 50 years in the disability sector to support many people living with Down syndrome.

Currently, Sammy Sammartino, who lives a full and connected life in one of our homes, is the only client we're supporting who lives with Down syndrome. Sammy has been with us for many years, coming to Gellibrand from the former Kew Cottages.

In an era when people living with Down syndrome are no longer institutionalised, life expectancy has jumped in the past half century from 25 to 60 years. And Sammy makes the most of every minute, let alone every year.

When supporting Sammy – or anyone who lives with a disability – Gellibrand asks what an individual needs as a person, not as someone living with Down syndrome or any other disability. That means their support needs are tailored to them, not to the traditional needs that a disability might say they require.

Down syndrome is the most common genetic cause of intellectual disability and it makes up 15% of Australian people who live with an intellectual disability. But, with Gellibrand's support, it doesn't stop Sammy from engaging in the activities he loves and that are meaningful for him.

Sammy is an avid participant in our Meaningful Activities in Partnership (MAP) program and, as Service Manager Teigan Mateos says, he's always eager to get involved in new adventures.

“From thrilling outdoor expeditions to creative workshops and skill-building activities, Sammy and his friends embrace it all with unwavering enthusiasm,” Teigan says, adding that each adventure becomes a chance for Sammy to discover new things about himself and the world around him.

“Sammy's world expands in delightful ways,” she says. “He finds joy in exploring new terrains, whether hiking through picturesque trails or discovering hidden gems in the city.”

We look forward to supporting Sammy – and all our clients – to continue to achieve the outcomes they want as valued community members.





# IN MEMORIAM:

## SUSAN GRECH

DI HUYNH

Being a support coordinator has been an incredible journey for me, one that's been both rewarding and at times extremely difficult. The passing of Susan Grech earlier this year hit me really hard because Sue wasn't just kind, brave, and selfless; she also had an uncanny ability to light up a room and make everyone feel like they were on top of the world. And let's not forget her fierce fighting spirit during the plan reviews – she was a force to be reckoned with and we made a great team.

Sue's 25-year struggle with cancer showed me the true meaning of resilience; she won time and again. Throughout it all, she remained dedicated to her family, friends and everyone around her. Sue always had that warm smile and, with her kind spirit, they were her trademarks.

Our regular catch-ups were filled with shared jokes, especially those about taking on the NDIS and kicking butts like the A-team that we were. The memory of the last time I saw Susan, 48 hours before she left us, was an experience that broke my heart. Yet, her smile when she saw me and her words, "I'm glad you came" will always stay with me. They reminded me that despite tough moments, I wouldn't change a single thing. To be lucky enough to learn lessons from and provide support to extraordinary souls like Susan is a privilege that only few people are able to experience in their lifetime.

# DEAN BROUGHTON

CONSTANDINO KTORIDES, DEAN LAMBRICK & ROMEL CARTAS

In loving memory of Dean, a cherished client of Gellibrand Support Services. Dean's presence and vibrant spirit touched the lives of many, leaving an indelible mark of warmth.

Dean was more than a client; he was a remarkable individual known for his cleverness, his love for independence, and his playful, endearing nature. Behind a seemingly shy exterior was a soul brimming with happiness, always eager to engage and contribute. He found pride in his daily accomplishments and valued inclusion, appreciating when others involved him in their plans.

A tech-savvy enthusiast, Dean found joy in spending time with his computer, mobile phone, and iPad, expressing his thoughts through writing. His appreciation for organisation and cleanliness reflected his attention to detail and his preference for a structured environment. Dean had an enthusiasm for cooking and truly excelled as a chef. He was most proud when he recently received a 10 year certificate at the Mambourin AGM.

Amidst his interests in action movies, wrestling, and the TV show *ER*, Dean found solace in simplicity – short walks with team members, relishing takeaways, and the joy of ordering his favourite foods. He possessed a sophisticated taste in clothing and relished the finer things when the occasion arose.

Dean's heart belonged to his cherished family – his beloved Mum Joanne, his devoted Dad Russell, and his two brothers. Their unwavering support and advocacy ensured he received the necessary care and opportunities. The bond with his family was his anchor, a source of unwavering strength and comfort.

At home, surrounded by cherished housemates Dale and Glen, Dean found camaraderie and shared experiences. Their outings to the park and evening dinners with team members and family that brought immense joy. His room was his sanctuary, where music, his favourite programs, and video games provided solace and happiness.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gellibrand would like to congratulate these team members on remarkable milestones they have achieved. Gellibrand truly appreciates all their hard work, dedication, and amazing supports they provide to clients.

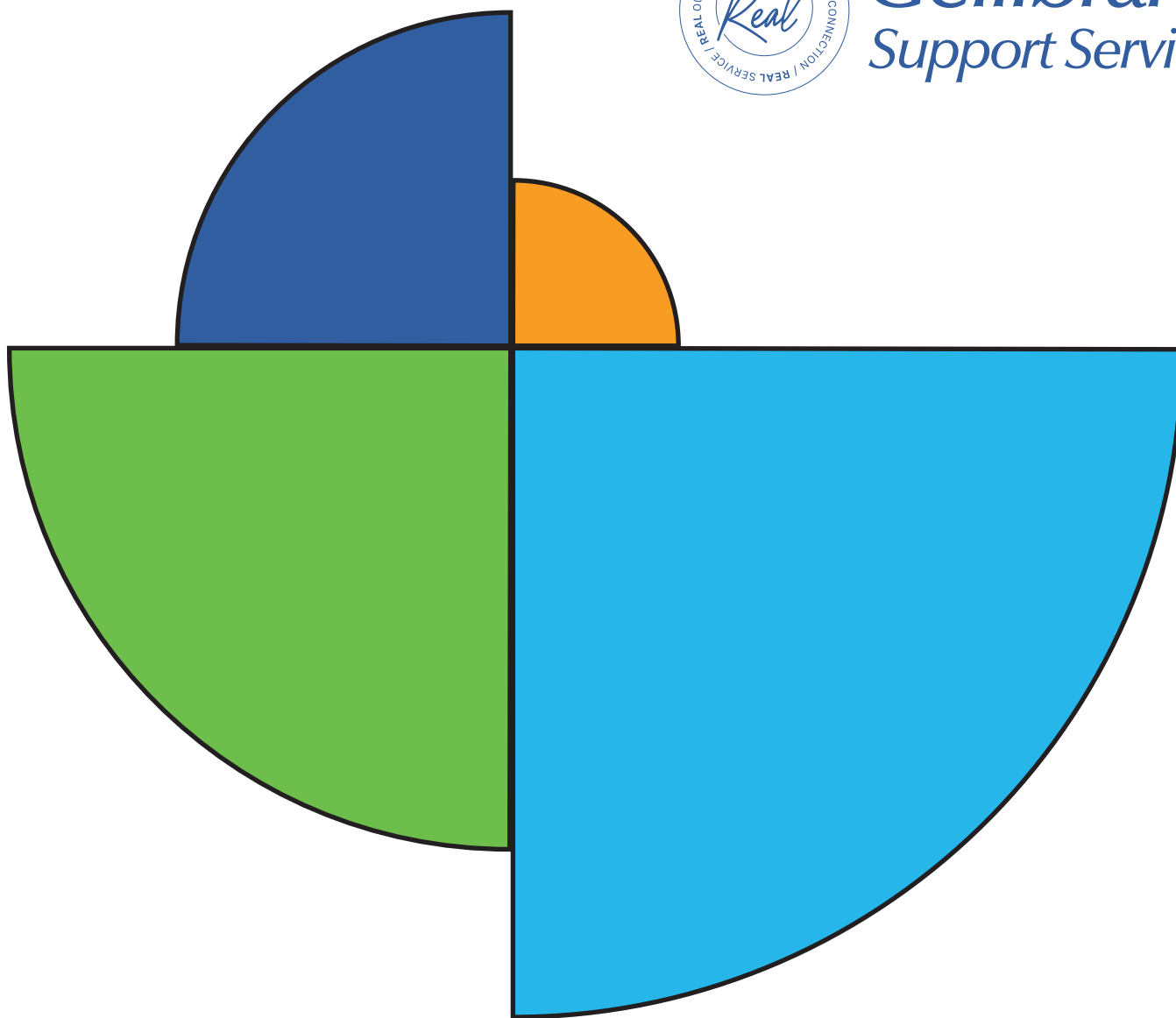
<b>MATTHEW HOYLE</b>	<b>35 YEARS</b>
<b>DEBRA DAVIES</b>	<b>35 YEARS</b>
<b>SANDRA FREEMAN</b>	<b>30 YEARS</b>
<b>MARGARET GIVEN</b>	<b>25 YEARS</b>
<b>BETHANY GOLDSMITH</b>	<b>20 YEARS</b>
<b>AMELA OMERCEVIC</b>	<b>20 YEARS</b>
<b>MARC HARRISON</b>	<b>15 YEARS</b>
<b>DINO KTORIDES</b>	<b>10 YEARS</b>
<b>JOANNA TANN</b>	<b>10 YEARS</b>
<b>JOB LODU</b>	<b>10 YEARS</b>
<b>JENNIFER MAKI</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>ADAM VEDAT</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>EDELYN PLEOPHET</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>SACHI NAYYAR</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>WILLIAM KOVACH</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>AKENEHI SMILER</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>ANGOK KOOCH</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>KYLIE ADEOYE</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>PIM DEE</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>EDWIN BOBADILLA</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>AARON BRYLA</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>ANDREW SABA</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>ANTONIO EPIFANIA</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>CARLOS MENDOZA</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>ELSA GIDAY</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>OLUSEGUN AGBEJA</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>ROMMEL SANTIAGO</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>SAMEH FAHMY</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>
<b>ZACK KEVIN</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>







# Gellibrand Support Services



## **HEAD OFFICE**

24 Withers Street, Sunshine, VIC 3020

## **MARY BURBIDGE HUB**

98 Agar Drive, Truganina, VIC 3029

## **ALBERT STREET COMMUNITY SPACE**

131 Albert Street, Sebastapol, VIC 3356

## **EMAILS**

Service Enquiries: [services@gellibrand.org.au](mailto:services@gellibrand.org.au)

Recruitment: [recruitment@gellibrand.org.au](mailto:recruitment@gellibrand.org.au)

Volunteering: [volunteer@gellibrand.org.au](mailto:volunteer@gellibrand.org.au)

## **PHONE NUMBERS**

General Enquiries: 03 9300 5400

NDIS Enquiries: 03 9300 5491

Recruitment: 03 9300 5431

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Monday to Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

## **WEBSITE**

[www.gellibrand.org.au](http://www.gellibrand.org.au)