

# 2023 Annual Report



## Our Mission

To empower people with disabilities, and their families, to achieve the extraordinary.





# Extraordinary Together

At Devonfield, we create opportunities for people living with disabilities. As a registered provider of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Devonfield provides services including employment, school leaver employment, accommodation, in-home support, vocational and life skills, plus community access and social participation, to meet the needs and goals of people with disability.

Our mission is to help you live the life that you want to live, by offering you support with the intention to help assist you, create opportunities and connect you with the community. Together we can achieve the extraordinary.





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# Chairperson Report 2023



Dear Devonfield Enterprise Inc members,  
2023 was a year to be proud of!

Our success is directly linked to the hard work of our team. We have made extraordinary progress this year, and I'd like to personally thank every team member for their energy, commitment and consistency in driving our business forward.

Some of my personal highlights from our activity this year include:

- Appointment of our ongoing CEO, Mrs Sharlene Knight.
- The establishment of a leadership team and an organisational structure that is cohesive, demonstrating exceptional skills for each of our business areas.
- This leadership team has confirmed their capability by leading us through and achieving compliance in four major audits. We should all be proud of this achievement!
- Achieving new contracts in Business Services, catering for Camp Banksia and packaging for Nichols Chicken.
- Celebrating 2023 Christmas at Market Square Pavilion for all staff and our participants. Some travelling from Launceston with family to attend.
- Embedding consumer Voice in our board meeting.

We'd like you to join us in welcoming new starters : Mr Matthew Bennet, Management Accountant, Belle Jones, Intake and Community Engagement Officer, Alex Groves, Operations Manager Business Services, Jess Benge, Operations Manager Participant Services, Tony Hausknecht, NDIS Claims Officer, Josh Groves, Business Services Coordinator. We also said goodbye to Matthew Gaffney this year who, we can all agree, had a big impact during his time here.

As always, we must extend our gratitude to past Board members, Chairperson, John Blyth and Directors, Mr John Carr and Mr John Gibson for their guidance and past support. We welcomed two new Directors to the Board Mr Allan Branch and Mr Allan Reeves both exceptional credentialed Directors to compliment our existing team of Directors.

Also, we welcomed the outcome from Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. The recommendations provide a road map for change and to see Australia become a more inclusive country. Leadership will use these guiding principles to ensure Devonfield is a leader in inclusive practice and reduce opportunity for abuse and neglect of vulnerable peoples.

This year, our plans for expansion include:

- Building more inclusive activities embedding the voice of our consumers in all that we do.
- Further investigations into our property and resources portfolio
- Strengthening our workforce through training and opportunity

There are also some plans that are in their very early stages, but I look forward to sharing them with you all soon.

Thank you all for your support and we look forward to achieving a more inclusive Australia in 2024.

Kerrell-ann Hack  
CHAIRPERSON



# CEO Message 2023



Dear Members,

I am honoured to present the Annual General Report for the year 2022/2023, a year that exemplifies resilience, change, and our unwavering commitment to transparency.

As I reflect on the months since assuming the role of CEO in late March 2023, I extend my appreciation to Matthew Gaffney for his tenure as Acting CEO.

Upon joining Devonfield, my immediate focus was on strategic decision-making and aligning our team with our mission. Recognising the importance of having the right individuals in the right roles, we embraced a back-to-basics approach. This involved refining our policies and processes and emphasising the fundamentals that lay the foundation of our organisation.

Understanding that our team is the heartbeat of our success, we prioritised recruitment and training initiatives. This investment fortified our organisational capabilities and equipped our workforce to meet the evolving needs of the individuals we serve.

I am delighted to announce that, despite the challenges faced, Devonfield has achieved a small surplus. This financial milestone underscores our unwavering commitment to sustainability, ensuring we can continue to provide essential services and support to our community, even amid economic uncertainties.

Our accomplishments stand as a testament to the collective efforts of our members, dedicated staff, and the unwavering support of our Board of Directors, led by our Chair Kerrell-ann Hack. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your commitment, resilience, and belief in Devonfield's mission.

As we turn our attention to the year ahead, Devonfield remains dedicated to our mission and the invaluable lessons learned in the previous year. We face the future with optimism, armed with the knowledge that our collective efforts will guide us through any challenges that may arise.

In closing, I express my sincere gratitude for your continued trust and support. Devonfield's success is a testament to the strength of our community, and I am confident that together, we will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Devonfield family.

Kind Regards

Sharlene Knight  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Kerrell-ann Hack**  
CHAIRPERSON



**Justine Keay**  
VICE-CHAIRPERSON



**Maryanne Peebles**  
TREASURER



**Judy Richmond**  
DIRECTOR



**Allan Branch**  
DIRECTOR



**Allan Reeve**  
DIRECTOR

# EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Sharlene Knight**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



**Alex Groves**  
BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGER



**Jess Bengé**  
OPERATIONS MANAGER



**Brett Joyce**  
QUALITY AND RISK MANAGER



**DJ Stubbs**  
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER



# Operations

The 2022/2023 year has been one of growth, change and impact.

It was identified early that there were substantial areas requiring effective and relatively immediate change. Throughout this report you will notice these areas in which we have been working on and will continue to work on into the future.

Key areas of improvements have been in the residential locations of participants. Over the past year there have been numerous moves which has been of benefit to enriching participants lives as well as ensuring their funding ratios are correctly matched to their NDIS plan.

This is still an ongoing project, as we have worked towards having as minimal impact on participants as possible.



The past year has been about opening the doors of Devonfield, creating positive working relations with other stakeholders within the industry has been a large on-going process. To some stakeholders, families and other relevant disability industry member Devonfield's doors were shut, and communication was low. We have worked towards reopening these doors by effective and prompt communication with those we have worked in. The results and outcomes of this have been evident in the way we are receiving feedback from the people in which we are collaborating with.

Our service coordinator role was implemented to ensure a sustainable and enjoyable day and community access program. There has been a lot of feedback into the progress of this, with the retention of participants and staff in this area are clear indicator. We have not actively marketed for vacancies in this area as we worked through ensuring we are providing positive active support. A key portion of this role was to plan the new programs of supports model, where we will then actively market for new participants to join the fun.

Team leaders have been a part of both self and team development over the last year. They have had aspects of their role change, and new portions implemented to help better streamline processes. We have made changes to areas in which team leaders are leading, including the number of participants, or the complexity of the supports they are being provided. Team leaders have been able to recognise the need for some change and have adapted to this well understanding the enrichment of participants lives by undertaking these changes. Service agreements were originally completed by the former client services team, with guidance this how now become a part of the team leader role. Team leaders have up skilled their knowledge in an area in which they hadn't been involved in before. Service agreements are instrumental in the consistency and thoroughness of claiming.





# Operations (continued)

We implemented the participant focus group, a group of participants who were elected by their fellow participants to part take in monthly meetings to ensure their needs, ideas and future dreams and plans for Devonfield are heard.

The focus group is a positive and beneficial group that has provided varying inputs and implemented new activities, programs and fundraisers. The growth and confidence in participants who are a part of this group has been recognised across the organisation.



In line with the training department, we have worked towards matching participant mandatory attributes with staff attributes. At beginning of the year, it was identified that there was requirement for continuous improvement in training.

The training department has had quite a large overhaul and the direction in which this is now going is around monitoring, further training and re training where necessary. Once again this is a benefit to our participants to ensure appropriate and active supports are being provided.

In closing it has been a productive year full of growth and change, with a lot more to come in future. It is a privilege to be in the role as Operations Manager and to work along side such a dedicated and passionate team.

Jessica Bengé  
OPERATIONS MANAGER





# Business Operations

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## I. Executive Summary

The year 2023 brought significant changes to Devonfield, not only due to shifts in the NDIS but also due to transformations in the industry landscape. Core focus areas encompassed finance, rostering, Business Services, and enhancing the overall departmental resources' capabilities.

This report encapsulates the operational transformations undertaken since the inception of the 'Business Operations Manager' role in early June 2023.

The finance team dedicated considerable efforts to analysing claiming-related data, resulting in a substantial back claim with the NDIS. While most issues have been tackled, ongoing discoveries point to lingering claiming-related issues. We anticipate resolving all these matters by early 2024.

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## II. Operational Performance Review

### Efficiency improvement:

#### Group recruitment:

In a deliberate move to enhance our recruitment strategy, we've transitioned from traditional one-on-one interviews to a group-based assessment centre approach. This shift reflects our commitment to not just evaluating individual competencies but also assessing how applicants perform in a collaborative, team-oriented setting, their problem-solving capabilities, and their alignment with our business values.

The group-based assessment centre method offers a multifaceted evaluation platform where candidates engage in collaborative activities, simulations, and discussions. This approach allows us to observe firsthand how individuals interact within a team dynamic, their communication skills, leadership potential, and their ability to collectively solve challenges.

By focusing on group dynamics, this new approach aligns perfectly with our ethos of valuing teamwork and collaboration within Devonfield. It enables us to identify candidates who not only possess the required skills but also demonstrate a strong understanding of and alignment with our company's values and culture.

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#### Finance:

To address significant challenges in claiming funds, managing invoices, and streamlining payroll, substantial changes were made to our finance processes. A pivotal part of this transformation was the transition to MYOB accounting software.

With MYOB, we've experienced enhanced accuracy and efficiency in our financial transactions, resulting in a significant reduction in errors and discrepancies. The software's features have allowed for better tracking and management of claims, invoices, and payroll processes, providing a more transparent and streamlined workflow.

This transition not only addressed existing challenges but also positioned our finance team to be more proactive and agile in handling financial matters.



# Business Operations (continued)

## Business Services:

The Business Services stream of Devonfield encompasses a diverse range of essential functions, including hospitality, garden and ground crew services, and the CAS room (Collating, Assembling & Sorting). Recognising the pivotal role these services play in our overall operations, we've strategically focused on bolstering these areas by recruiting additional resources and increasing capacity of current team members.

The recruitment of new talent has been instrumental in not only strengthening our current operations but also in laying the groundwork for growth and expansion within the Business Services stream. These new team members bring valuable expertise and dedication, enabling us to enhance the quality and efficiency of our hospitality services, elevate the standards of our garden and ground crew operations, and optimise the productivity of the CAS room.

The Business Services areas are expecting to experience significant growth in the 23/24 financial year, with work ongoing with Tas Foods, Department of Health, Anvers and the Department of Education along with loyal grounds maintenance customers.

## Major focus areas:

We've initiated a strategy aimed at reducing ongoing costs across various facets of our operations. Through examination and targeted adjustments, we're actively identifying areas where efficiencies can be maximised, and expenses minimised.

### Examples of our ongoing cost-saving measures include:

1. **Internet Upgrades:** Negotiations are ongoing with Devonfield participants to pass on the cost of internet in SIL houses. The main site at 133 Middle Road also now has a new fibre connection which will allow us to manage speeds, accounts and costs moving forward.
2. **Digital Transformation:** Leveraging technology to automate processes, thereby reducing manual labour and associated costs. This will include the additional of DocuSign for internal/external process relating to finance and service provision.
3. **Additional resources:** With the addition of the 'Maintenance & Asset Coordinator' role, we have been able to significantly decrease our reliance on third party trades for matters that can now be addressed internally.

Our commitment to ongoing cost-saving measures reflects our dedication to operational efficiency and sustainable financial management. By continuously identifying opportunities for improvement and implementing prudent measures, we aim to ensure the long-term financial health and stability of Devonfield.

Alex Groves  
BUSINESS OPERATION MANAGER





# Quality and Risk

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for Devonfield Enterprises, highlighting the significant progress made in quality and risk management during the fiscal year. As the newly appointed Quality and Risk Manager, I commenced my role on May 27, 2023, and would like to share the achievements and initiatives undertaken to ensure compliance with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) practice standards.

## 1. Internal Audits and Compliance Preparation:

1. Conducted internal audits against the NDIS practice standards.
2. Updated policies to align with relevant NDIS practice standards.
3. Established a Continuous Improvement Group to ensure ongoing compliance through weekly meetings.

## 2. Midterm Audit Preparation:

4. Engaged HSEQ Auditing and Consulting to audit Core modules 3 and 4.
5. Addressed non-conformances identified in the 2 A module from the previous audit.
6. Identified the need to update service agreements and support plans in line with the Emergency Management Practice Standard.

## 3. Audit Provider Change:

7. Transitioned from Global Mark to QMS Certification Services for the Midterm Audit to reduce costs and eliminate potential bias.

## 4. Focus for the Next 12 Months:

8. *Resetting Internal Audit Schedule:*
  - a. Undertaking a comprehensive review and reset of the internal audit schedule to ensure compliance and best practices in all NDIS Practice Standards.
9. *Improved KPI Reporting:*
  - a. Enhancing reporting of key performance indicators to ensure clarity, transparency, and the achievement of best practices.
10. *Development of Company-Wide Risk Assessments:*
  - a. Initiating a company-wide effort to develop robust risk assessments to identify and reduce risks across all aspects of our operations.

In summary, our proactive approach to aligning practices with NDIS standards, changing our audit provider, and setting the stage for future improvements demonstrates our commitment to continuous enhancement and fiscal responsibility. Looking ahead, we are dedicated to resetting our internal audit schedule, improving KPI reporting, and developing comprehensive risk assessments to further strengthen our position as a leader in the industry.

I appreciate the support of the entire team during this transition period and look forward to the successful completion of the upcoming Midterm Audit and the implementation of our future-focused initiatives.

Brett Joyce  
QUALITY AND RISK MANAGER



# Treasurers Report

30 June 2023

*This year has been a year of satisfying transition and change.*

- We welcomed our new management accountant Matt Bennet in December last year.
- We appointed new auditors early in 2023. Synectic were appointed from their sector reputation in the auditing of disability services.
- Our new CEO, Sharlene Knight came on board in March 2023.

These changes have brought fresh eyes to our accounting systems, financial reporting, and indeed all our processes. This has highlighted some errors and omissions in prior year reported results, requiring adjustment as noted in note 2 of the financial statements.

On a positive note, we are confident that moving forward, these deficiencies have been overcome, and that we can have confidence in our reporting.

Another change for Devonfield, along with other NDIS providers in Tasmania, has been the transition to PACE, the new NDIS portal. Tasmania was selected as the trial state, for this change, therefore the transition occurred ahead of the other states. One of the fundamental features of this new operating system has been changes to booking support, which quarantined funds for the benefit of the service provider. This has meant that timely invoicing of all support has been imperative. Our team have worked very hard to ensure that all invoicing is done on a timely basis. This has the positive effect of a boost to cash flows and reduces the chance of billing errors.

It is pleasing to note that a small surplus was achieved for the year to 30 June 2023. Our management team, along with all our wonderful staff, are to be applauded for bringing this about. All processes and procedures have been reviewed, refined and have been improved, where the need has been identified.

This management style of continual improvement has been positive not only to the smooth running of the organisation, but also to the energy and vibrancy of our activities.

Maryanne Peebles  
TREASURER







# OUR MISSION

To empower people with disabilities, and their families, to achieve the extraordinary.



# OUR VISION

Through client focused support, that promotes freedom of choice, we provide respect and dignity and aim to be drivers of change, and strivers for excellence.



# OUR VALUES

We listen with passion to your goals and dreams.

We communicate with all your support network to succeed and exceed.

We support you to become an active and valued community member.

We celebrate your life achievements.

‘Together anything is possible’





