



**ASTERIA  
SERVICES**

## Annual Report

# 2023



|                                                |               |
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# Mission

## **Our Vision – What success looks like**

To be a nationally respected leading provider, which strengthens regional communities by enabling people to have choices.

## **Our Mission – What we deliver**

Through innovative programs and services tailored to individual needs, we remove barriers and maximise opportunities.

## **Our Values – How we deliver**

We embrace collaboration

We champion our changing environment

We value diversity

We build on people's strengths

We deliver on our promises

We focus on outcomes

We recognise the need to be commercially focussed and capitalise on opportunities

We adapt readily to the changing needs of our customers

We respect each other

We are always compassionate



# Corporate Governance

ASTERIA Services Inc. is governed by a Board of Directors, appointed by the members of ASTERIA Services Inc. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the organisation's direction and performance, through strategic planning; approval of the annual budget and monitoring financial performance; assessment of the performance of the Chief Executive Officer; monitoring of managerial performance; ensuring significant risks facing ASTERIA have been identified and appropriate controls put in place; and reporting to members, stakeholders and regulatory authorities.

The ASTERIA Board is a skills-based Board of Directors, and Directors are appointed on the basis of their ability to assist in furthering the objectives of the organisation.

All Directors have a duty to act honestly at all times, with reasonable skill, in good faith and in the best interests of ASTERIA. This means taking proper action where necessary, declaring any conflicts of interest, and avoiding mismanagement. Directors must also adopt and follow sound business policies and practices.

ASTERIA also maintains membership of appropriate peak and industry organisations, to ensure that it is aware of changes to policy and procedures in the disability and wider not for profit fields. The Directors also make themselves available for specific training, conferences, meetings and briefings to ensure their currency and competency in their responsibilities.



# Board of Directors

## **Chair – Michael Ritchie**

Michael is a retired businessman having worked in teaching, livestock and owning a local newsagency for 27 years.

Qualifications:

Diploma of Teaching (Primary). Michael has been on ASTERIA Services' Board since September 2004

## **Vice Chair – Dr. Simon Sheed**

Dr Simon Sheed is a consultant Dentist at the Clarendon Street Dental Practice in Maryborough Victoria where he was a Principal Dentist from 1975 to 2019. He has represented the Australian Dental Association (ADA) as the Victorian representative on the Rural and Remote Oral Health Committee and as convener of this Committee represented it in Canberra on the National Rural Health Alliance for 5 years. He is currently the ADA representative on the Grampians Regional Oral Health Network. Simon has been on the ASTERIA Board since May 2010.

## **General Member – Philip Norris**

Phil is a Graduate of Management Competence. Working for the Department of Justice, Phil has managed a number of large facilities. He has also worked overseas as a senior consultant in a post-conflict country, under the auspices of AusAID. Phil has been a passionate supporter of ASTERIA for many years and joined the Board because he believes he has the commitment, experience, and hard work ethic to achieve the best outcomes for ASTERIA and the vital service it delivers.



**Family Member –  
Debra Lilford**

Debra has been a carer for many years and has seen ASTERIA grow to its present strength. She is the President of the Carers Group and has overseen various iterations of the group as it responds to carer needs and changing environments. Debra has been the Family Representative on the Board of Directors since November 2016, a role which has allowed her to provide lived experience to the Board.

**General Member –  
Dominik Martin  
Krzywak**

Martin is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is a recognised expert in resilience management and corporate governance, having worked over 30 years across these fields with some of Australia's largest organisations and also internationally in Europe and the Middle East. Martin also has a wealth of knowledge and experience in Information Technology. Martin shares a passion for disability service provision being a primary carer for a family member. Martin has been on the ASTERIA Board since September 2022.

**CEO – Annie  
Constable**

Annie has extensive experience and a proud record of achievement in driving change management and introducing innovative programs within the disability and aged care sector at an executive level. The breakthrough Positive Ageing program in local government continues today. Annie's development of injury prevention and risk management products, has seen her presenting at Regional, State and National Conferences. Annie has been involved with ASTERIA since 2003 and maintains her passion for supporting participants and clients into the future.





# Chair

Welcome to the Annual Report of ASTERIA Services Inc.

The year began, unfortunately, with the resignation of Directors Peter Tate and Anthony Wood. Our thanks go to them for their contribution to the progress of ASTERIA and we wish them well for the future.

The Board began the year by approving the CEO's plans for a "Fit-for-purpose" accommodation building to be sited next door to ASTERIA at 12 Christian Street. The plans have been altered over the past twelve months in order to be more appropriate for the participants. Currently the plan is to build two separate buildings to house three participants and a carer. The difficulties with these forms of accommodation are waiting for approval for Supported Individual Living packages for each participant, or SIL's. Sometimes the approval from the relevant government department can be months behind the completion of the building and it can remain vacant for some time.

In August the Board approved Ms Debbie Lilford's nomination in the Family Member Category and, in September, approved the appointment of Mr Dominik Martin Krzywak to fill the General Member Category due to his familiarity with ASTERIA. Martin brings a broad wealth of experience including that of the disability sector along with government relations and information technology.

In September the ASTERIA community was saddened to learn of the passing of Mr George Barber who, as a parent, was one of the instigators of "Wattle House", as ASTERIA was then called, and who oversaw the construction of the Christian Street building. "Cometh the hour, cometh the man." George's ability to deal with politicians of all persuasions and at all levels was invaluable to Wattle House's success in its early days.

At this time the Board also acknowledged the passing of long-time client and NDIS participant, Donna Rickards and parent and former Board member, Judy Summers' dear husband, Clive. Our sympathy goes out to the families of those members of the ASTERIA Family.



In May, following an approach by the Maryborough Ladies' Benevolent Society, it was moved that the Board agree to accepting the offer of ASTERIA taking over the ownership and operations of Isabella Warton Place in Dundas Road, Maryborough. It was an honour to accept the offer from the 154 year old organisation and we anticipate being able to further their work in the field of social housing.

You will notice elsewhere in the Annual Report that ASTERIA regularly undergoes Financial Audits. These are not the only audits that we are subjected to as we come under scrutiny from various governmental departments such as the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing or DFFH and the National Disability Insurance Scheme or NDIS. These audits require a large amount of time in preparation but are essential for the well-being of our participants.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate and thank our Chief Executive Officer, Ms Annie Constable for her dedication and tireless work in ensuring that ASTERIA is running "at full throttle" and on an "even keel" to mix metaphors. I also wish to thank my fellow Board Members for their unwavering support during the past year and wish everyone best wishes for the coming Financial Year.

**Michael Ritchie**  
Chair





# Chief Executive Officer

The 2022-2023 year was a challenging year. However I am pleased to report an improvement on the previous year. We had so many learnings from 2020-2022 and did not allow COVID to be the focus, rather, we continued to be mindful of our responsibilities and outcomes, and successfully navigated our way through any potential risk.

We successfully adapted to the challenges that presented and remained connected with our participants. With a can do attitude, our enthusiastic team continued planning for much needed housing options for participants. Participants' requiring a SIL as part of their NDIS plan remains problematic.

Staff continue to inspire me, bringing an abundance of enthusiasm, experience, with a deep sense of commitment and energy that contributes to the positive outcomes of participants and clients that we are so very privileged to support.

***ASTERIA continues to invest in participants, clients, projects and community.***

The following captures our planning and activities for 2022-2023.

## ✓ 8 Argyle Road Maryborough.

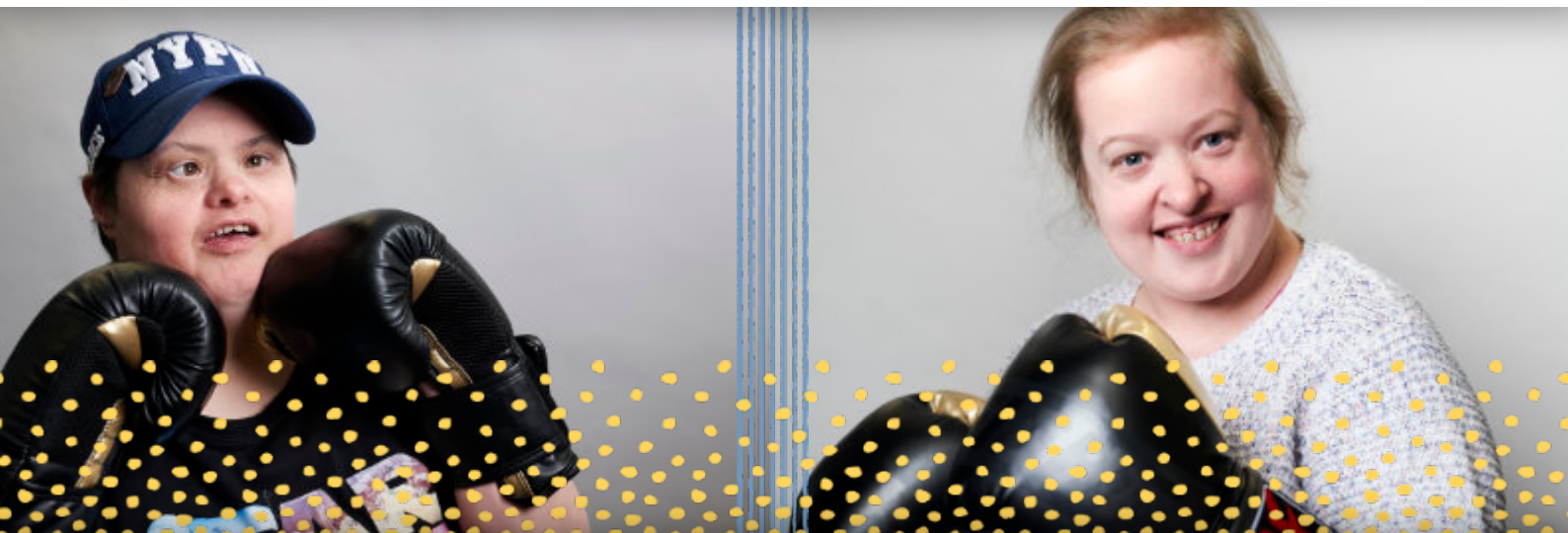
The completion of a six bedroom dwelling, each with ensuite, and open living plan, to accommodate four participants' who now call this home.

## ✓ 6 Argyle Road Maryborough.

A significant refurbishment was undertaken to provide short-term accommodation for up to three participants.

## ✓ 160 Railway Street Maryborough.

This build consisted of two purpose builds, each with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, study, sound security systems, beautifully landscaped and will provide additional accommodation options. There is a third refurbished home in this complex which has had an external ramp and other modifications and provides short to medium accommodation for up to two participants.



✓ **64-68 Nelson Street Maryborough.**

The mezzanine at Nelson Street will be fitted out to provide work stations and meeting rooms for staff, ensuring a smooth transition when relocating administration and other services from Christian Street to Nelson Street, which is proposed for the end of September, 2023.

✓ **12 Christian Street Maryborough.**

Planning for two purpose built homes is well underway. These will each accommodate three participants and one staff. We are hopeful that completion will take place in mid-2024.

✓ **14 Christian Street Maryborough.**

A fit for purpose, modern facility for participants will be ready for use in Spring 2024.

✓ **Goldfields Restaurant Maryborough (formally known as Ripples).**

This project has taken longer than anticipated. Purchasing the abutting land on the North side will ensure that this beautiful building, with water front views, is a wonderful place for community to visit and enjoy the vista when having a coffee and chat. ASTERIA Supported Employees will have the opportunity to work in and around the Goldfields Restaurant which is expected to open 2024.

✓ **14 Lockwood Rd Kangaroo Flat.**

During 2022 Lockwood Rd was purchased for the purpose of creating offices with a space for delivering participant support programs. This has been a fabulous acquisition for both participants and staff.



# Chief Executive Officer ~ continued

## Future projects

### →> **Maryborough Benevolent Society (aka Isabella Warton Place).**

This wonderful community estate was gifted to ASTERIA at the end of the 2023 financial year. ASTERIA will ensure this remains an affordable community housing solution.

### →> **Majorca Rd Robust Build.**

ASTERIA has partnered with a developer to provide 5 NDIS robust builds. Completion is expected June 2024. ASTERIA will provide services and supports without any capital outlay.

### →> **Information Technology.**

Significant resources have been allocated to facilitate a digital transformation project to migrate the Terminal Server to Microsoft 365. It is essential that ASTERIA has up to date hardware and software as the organisation continues to expand.

### →> **Container Deposit Scheme.**

ASTERIA was successful with a VISY Expression of Interest, over the counter recyclables scheme. This will be an exciting venture.

## Awards

We were most pleased to be named in September 2022 as a Finalist in the Business Achievement Category of the Victorian Regional Community Achievement Awards.

## Grants

Grants received during the year included support from Bank Australia to conduct an upcoming Tennis Program; and from Equity Trustees for the purchase of iPads for use in program delivery.





### Special Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude to our small group of volunteers for their dedication and ongoing support to ASTERIA.

To the Executive Team, thank you for your hard work, perseverance, commitment and collaboration. You continue to inspire the team by ensuring both the organisation's objectives and participant outcomes are achieved.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Board of Directors, who continue to motivate, mentor and reshape me to lead the organisation to achieve our goals.

Special acknowledgment to the Department of Family Fairness and Housing, the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Department of Social Services.

Thank you to our participants and carers who choose ASTERIA to be their preferred provider. We do not take this for granted and we are continuously reviewing our practices to ensure we provide services that enhance and benefit your wellbeing.

**Annie Constable**  
CEO



# Audit & Risk Committee

I am pleased to present the committee's report into the key activities undertaken during 2022/2023.

During 2022/23 the committee continued to focus on the audit, assurance and risk management processes within the business in addition to its oversight of financial and other regulatory requirements. The committee met regularly during 2022/23. Members collectively have a broad range of financial, commercial and risk management expertise that enables them to provide effective oversight of financial, operational and risk matters and to advise the Board accordingly. All members of the committee are independent non-executive directors. The CEO is invited to committee meetings as required.

The committee identifies the major risks on which it reports and seeks from management, advice on the mechanisms already in place and whether any additional mechanisms are needed.

In relation to the internal control and risk management systems, the committee's responsibilities include:

- ensuring ASTERIA maintains a current risk identification process and reporting mechanism
- assessing the internal processes for managing key risk areas, including but not limited to litigation and claims, non-compliance with laws and regulations, including environmental and occupational health and safety laws
- evaluating the process ASTERIA has in place for assessing and continuously improving internal controls, particularly those related to areas of significant risk
- assessing whether management has controls in place for unusual types of events and/or any potential events that may carry more than an acceptable degree of risk
- dealing with the major reviews initiated regularly by management and from time to time by external bodies where there are matters raised which warrant the committee's attention.

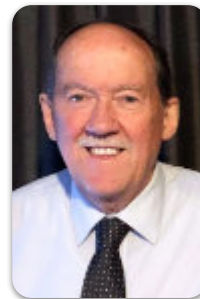


The CEO is implementing many exciting operational improvements in the next 12 months. The committee and CEO have been working closely to introduce the COEUS Pre-certification Program which is envisioned to provide a more streamlined efficient regulatory oversight, improved quality/safety/pro activeness to address known and emerging risks timely availability of solutions, enhanced regulatory simplicity and experience and business simplicity and faster/timely access.

In addition to the introduction of COEUS, the committee will be evaluating and assessing the three main approaches to the measurement of OHS ASTERIA has in place which is distinguished by (1) result-based approach, (2) compliance-based approach, and (3) process-based approach.

The committee is dedicated to quality and governance improvement and is committed to providing a rigorous and innovative approach to improving the system while also ensuring there are appropriate safeguards in place to facilitate high quality support provision.

**Philip Norris**  
Chair





# Financial Report

ASTERIA returned a solid financial result this year.

In 2023 Land, Buildings and Site Improvements were valued by a Certified Practising Valuer. The assets were revalued using "Fair Value" which resulted in a net decrement.

ASTERIA continues to invest in its' capital infrastructure to ensure the organisations strong financial viability. Significant capital projects included the purchase of one property in Maryborough, the refurbishment of 6 Argyle Road Maryborough and Lockwood Road in Bendigo as well as the completion of our Railway Street Development.

The 2023/24 financial year will see the reinvestment of the surplus into:

- Christian Street Development
- Goldfields Restaurant Refurbishment

We look forward to 2024 being another year of growth and opportunity.

**Sharon Pike**  
Manager Finance



## Statement of Comprehensive Income

|                                                                 | 2023<br>\$         | 2022<br>\$       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Revenue                                                         | 14,664,161         | 13,561,280       |
| Other Income                                                    | 1,603,698          | 739,969          |
| Employee Benefits Expense                                       | (12,050,472)       | (11,660,147)     |
| Depreciation and Amortisation Expense                           | (511,061)          | (469,724)        |
| Operational Expense                                             | (1,431,439)        | (1,161,677)      |
| <b>Net Result from Transactions -<br/>Net Operating Balance</b> | <b>2,274,887</b>   | <b>1,009,701</b> |
| <b>Net Result for the Year</b>                                  | <b>2,274,887</b>   | <b>1,009,701</b> |
| Other Comprehensive (losses)/Income                             | (1,139,928)        | -                |
| <b>Total Other Comprehensive (losses)/income</b>                | <b>(1,139,928)</b> | <b>-</b>         |
| <b>Comprehensive Result for the Year</b>                        | <b>1,134,959</b>   | <b>1,009,701</b> |

## Statement of Financial Position

|                                      | 2023<br>\$        | 2022<br>\$        |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                        |                   |                   |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                |                   |                   |
| Cash & Cash Equivalents              | 2,991,165         | 2,742,309         |
| Trade & Other Receivables            | 610,407           | 1,142,148         |
| Other Current Assets                 | 84,678            | 63,363            |
| Financial Assets                     | 4,458,478         | 2,458,231         |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>          | <b>8,144,728</b>  | <b>6,406,051</b>  |
| <b>Non-Current Assets</b>            |                   |                   |
| Property, Plant & Equipment          | 15,552,892        | 14,446,427        |
| Intangible Assets - Goodwill         | 35,000            | 35,000            |
| <b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>      | <b>15,587,892</b> | <b>14,481,427</b> |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                  | <b>23,732,620</b> | <b>20,887,478</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>                   |                   |                   |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>           |                   |                   |
| Trade & Other Payables               | 868,123           | 803,016           |
| Employee Provisions                  | 1,180,477         | 1,069,933         |
| Borrowings                           | 5,000             | 5,000             |
| <b>Total Current Liabilities</b>     | <b>2,053,600</b>  | <b>1,877,949</b>  |
| <b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>       |                   |                   |
| Employee Provisions                  | 80,428            | 123,978           |
| Borrowings                           | 80,000            | 85,000            |
| <b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b> | <b>160,428</b>    | <b>208,978</b>    |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>             | <b>2,214,028</b>  | <b>2,086,927</b>  |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b>                    | <b>21,518,592</b> | <b>18,800,551</b> |
| <b>EQUITY</b>                        |                   |                   |
| Retained Surplus                     | 18,680,497        | 17,545,538        |
| Reserves                             | 2,838,095         | 1,255,013         |
| <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>                  | <b>21,518,592</b> | <b>18,800,551</b> |



**Independent Audit Report to the Members of  
ASTERIA SERVICES INC.**

**Unqualified Opinion**

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a general purpose financial report, of the ASTERIA Services Inc., which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows for the year then ended and notes comprising a summary of the significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position of the Association. In our opinion, the financial report of the ASTERIA Services Inc. has been prepared in accordance with the Div. 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- i. Giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- ii. Complying with Australian Accounting Standards – AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 entities and Div. 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission regulation 2013*.

**Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibility under those standards are further described in the *Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the auditor requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012* and, the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide basis for the opinion.

**Information Other Than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report Thereon**

The Committee of the Association is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Association's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2023, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report the fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.



***Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report***

The Committee of the Association are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 entities and the the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the directors determine necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Committee is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Committee either intend to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

***Auditor's Responsibility***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion, reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis on this financial report. As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report , whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion, The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures by the Committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Committees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report, or if disclosures are inadequate, to modify

**ACCOUNTING & AUDIT  
SOLUTIONS BENDIGO**

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- our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease or continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report presents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

**ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT SOLUTIONS BENDIGO**



**Bradley Dowsey**  
**Registered Auditor # 528899**

**Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023**



# Quality & Risk Management

ASTERIA has a Quality and Risk Management team which includes managers from each division. The team meets regularly which provides a chance to discuss and address issues raised by staff and customers, as well as talk about opportunities for improvement.

## Audits

ASTERIA's internal audit program ensures the organisation's capacity to meet due dates for reporting. It also provides sound preparation for external audits.

Quantum Certification Services provides external audit services for ASTERIA. Quantum conducted a surveillance audit against the Human Service Standards (HSS) in June 2023.

Feedback from Quantum included 'Evidence confirmed that the service is providing care and supports to each client according to their needs. Risks to the clients are managed appropriately. A parent interviewed by Quantum had positive feedback about the care ASTERIA provides to their child - they said 'the staff really do care about the children'.

The audit provided some opportunities for improvement. We have worked hard to close the gaps and are pleased to note that we fully comply with HSS requirements.

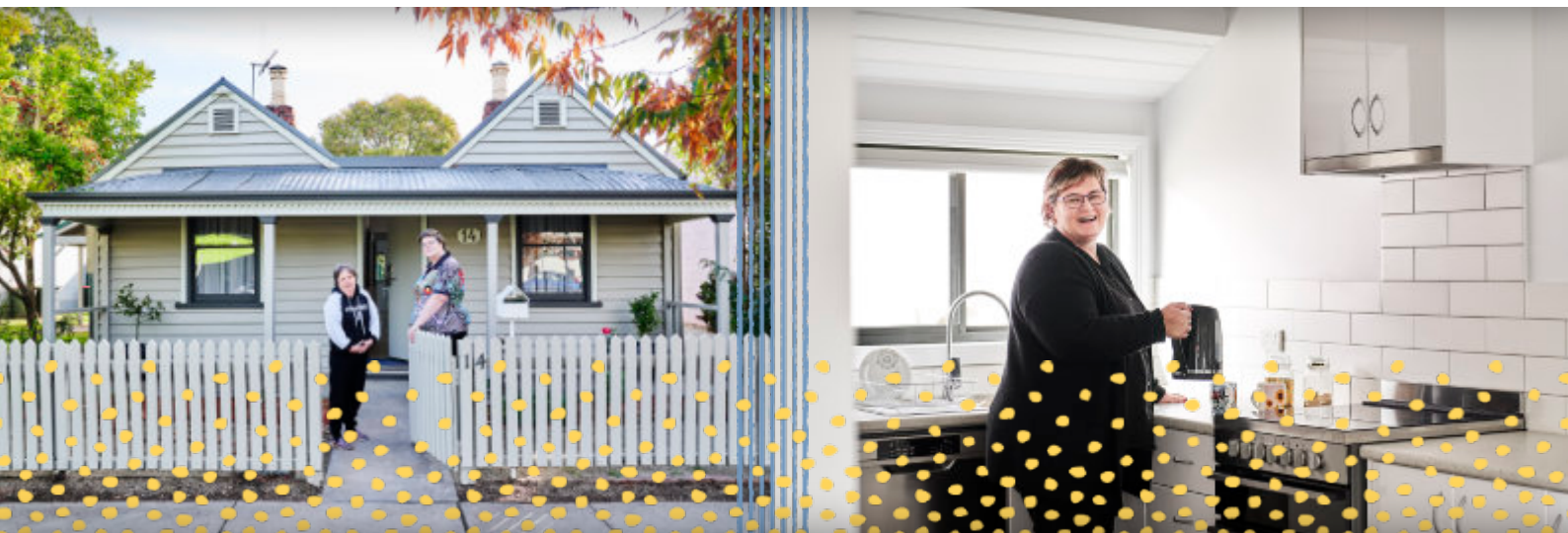
ASTERIA will continue to maintain systems and processes that meet the requirements of the NDIS and HSS, and provide quality care to all of our participants.

## COVID -19

The COVID -19 pandemic certainly has taught us to be agile and resilient!

Many of our policies and procedures have necessarily changed and we continue to monitor them to align with government guidelines and public health advice.

We are incredibly proud that 'Team ASTERIA' has pulled together to ensure that we are able to continue to offer supports and services through these challenging times.



## Customer Service/Intake

Our Customer Service team exists to help our participants, carers and members of the public.

The team works collaboratively with other areas of the organisation meeting regularly to ensure the efficient provision of supports to our participants.

We love to hear from you – if you have any feedback at all, please contact us. Our team can help you lodge your thoughts and ideas through our Feedback framework. Through feedback, we can be sure that we are providing what our community expects.

## Planning

Representation from ASTERIA's Planning team ensures that ASTERIA's voice is heard on many community committees and reference groups.

Some of the groups staff from ASTERIA contribute to include;

- NAIDOC Week
- Maryborough Volunteer Resource Centre
- 16 Days of Activism
- Local Safety Committee
- Central Goldfields Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan workshops
- Central Goldfields Shire Disability Action Plan
- Local Support Network
- Energy Breakthrough
- Healthy Heart Victoria (Jamie's Ministry of Food Program)
- Children and Young People First Program

ASTERIA forging partnerships is a valuable way to make sure that consideration is given to people living with disability.



# Quality & Risk Management ~ continued

## Innovation

ASTERIA continues to seek new and innovative ways to support its participants.

This year for example we were pleased to receive funding from the Bendigo Bank Community Grants program to trial a tennis activity for participants. This proved popular and successful and has been the forerunner to further funding (Bank Australia) and an expanded program, which will be conducted over a standard term.

The efforts and achievements of the ASTERIA team were recognised when we were judged as a Finalist in the 2022 Victorian Regional Community Achievement Awards - in the 'Business Achievement' category.

The monthly staff newsletter is a much anticipated source of information and education within the organisation.

## Reconciliation Action Plan

ASTERIA's Reconciliation Action Plan was officially endorsed by Reconciliation Australia on 28 July, 2022 with our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group attending to implementation of the strategies and commitments in the Plan.

We have been very pleased, among other things, to anchor local National Reconciliation Week, and NAIDOC Week, celebrations.

Significant Indigenous dates with narratives are included in each monthly staff newsletter.





### Risk Management Committee

The Board is committed to risk management principles and accordingly endorsed the following Risk Policy Statement at the Board meeting held on 28 July 2021;

"ASTERIA is committed to considering risk throughout all levels of its organisation and decision making and business processes. Our Risk Management Framework will be guided by AS/NZ ISO31000-2009 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines."

ASTERIA recognises that effective risk management enables us to:

- Seize new opportunities and meet challenges,
- Build a positive risk culture by ensuring that risk is everyone's responsibility; ownership and accountability is clear and embedded as core business across all strategic and operational activities,

- Improve our service delivery; protect our reputation and the interests of our participants (customers), external stakeholders including government regulators and the community.

### Incident Reporting

The Board has commissioned a review of ASTERIA's Incident Reporting process. Resilience Management was appointed to oversee the project that commenced in 2022. The goal of the project is to ensure the reporting of incidents is streamlined within the organisation.

**Marita Turner**  
Manager



# Business Services

ASTERIA Business Services (ABS) is committed to providing meaningful employment for the supported employees who work across the five business areas connected to our Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE).

Supported Employment at ABS is more than just a job, it is a place for employees with disability to grow and expand in a nurturing and caring work environment. Our comprehensive internal training programs and adaptable work environments, with an emphasis on skill development, enables participants to grow both personally and professionally.

Our commitment to quality is apparent in the range and quality of the products and services provided and the positive feedback received from customers. The staff who oversee the business units need to be commended for their efforts in fostering small business and the team of supported employees who work with them. All staff are passionate about their business areas and on top of interacting with customers; they are responsible for supporting, training and guiding the supported employees in their team.

All supported employees undertake internal training at ABS that covers Work Safely, Disability Service Standards, Code of Conduct, Health, Hygiene & Personal Grooming, Freedom from Abuse and Neglect plus other training requirements as they are needed. Training is undertaken in small groups in the ABS training room to enable the learning to be delivered at the employees cognitive levels.

Wellbeing is provided in various formats at ABS and is designed to assist supported employees, manage anxiety, behaviours and other stressors that can prevent them from maintaining their supported employment. Wellbeing support can range from undertaking debriefing sessions to art projects, colouring, and the favourites being tai chi, dancing and music. Wellbeing takes place in short spurts and assists supported employees to have a short break so that they can return to work prepared to continue undertaking their job tasks and working as a part of a team.

The ABS My Choice 1:1 Support continues to be a valuable service for the supported employees and the supports cover a range of needs from developing literacy & numeracy skills to providing assistance to attend medical appointments and many other support needs in between.

The changes to the Supported Employment Services Award made by Fair Work meant that ABS had to stop using the Greenacres Wage Assessment tool by 30th June 2023 and move to using the modified Supported Wage System where supported employees will be assessed purely on productivity by an independent assessor assigned by Job Access. To be prepared for the changes ABS staff have linked into online information sessions and supported employees have undertaken information sessions delivered by ABS staff.





ASTERIA recognise the importance of actively participating in and giving back to our community. Throughout the year, ABS engaged in various community initiatives, including NAIDOC Week celebrations, Anglicare National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, attended IGA market days and Shave for a Cure events, which fosters a sense of belonging and shared purpose. These initiatives not only benefit our employees, but also contribute to building an awareness of our presence in the community.

ASTERIA Business Services has developed a connection with Maryborough Education Centre and invited students and teachers from the specialist setting to visit ABS and explore opportunities for students when they leave school. From this visit, two students have undertaken work experience at ABS and are looking to work in supported employment once they leave school.

Environmental sustainability remains a priority for the business, and through our horticulture business area we can give back, by growing plants for the local Landcare group who assist with re-vegetation projects throughout the region. ABS sold its first batch of purposely grown natives to Landcare in June 2023 and are eagerly awaiting an order to be placed for the 2024 natives requirements.

Whilst we celebrate our achievements, we acknowledge that challenges persist. The ongoing impact of the pandemic as we move towards hopefully the end of it, coupled with changing NDIS landscapes, demands our continued vigilance and adaptability. As we look ahead, our vision remains unwavering - to be focused on empowerment, innovation, and inclusion for individuals with disabilities. We will continue to explore opportunities to expand our small business enhance employee development programs, and collaborate with partners who share our values.

None of our accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication and support of our staff, supported employees, CEO, Board, community groups and businesses. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all those who have stood by us over the past 12 months.

**Linda Gerring**  
Manager





# Community Options & Living

ASTERIA Community Options and Living offers a variety of services in both Maryborough and Bendigo including;

- Programs of Support including Cooking, Craft & Create, Community Gardening, Making Music and Functional Fitness
- 1:1 supports in home and in the community
- Supported independent living
- Short term accommodation
- Social groups

We pride ourselves on providing caring and meaningful supports for people with disability - supports that will enhance peoples' lives and provide fun and enjoyment along the way.

ASTERIA has a team of wonderfully helpful, experienced Support Workers backed up by an Administration team that is second to none, so you can trust us to provide professional supports to you at all times.

The Community Options and Living team has enjoyed a varied and exciting year providing interesting activities for Participants.

The Men's and Ladies' Social Groups were very active during the year - regular outings to the movies and to various restaurants around town featured heavily.

Below are some of our other highlights from the year;

## July 2022

- MEC Career Options Day provided an opportunity for us to highlight the terrific career opportunities available in the disability field to students.
- A trip to the Elvis exhibition at the Bendigo Art Gallery proved very popular.

## August 2022

- Our Christian Street Craft group visited Lexton Pottery and the Nelson Street Craft group visited Timor, Maldon & Castlemaine for photography.



### September 2022

- A visit to the Royal Melbourne Show was enjoyed by several Participants.
- Welcome to Central Goldfields project - Estella joined ASTERIA bringing a lot of joy and enthusiasm... and showed us how to salsa!
- Friday fitness group visited Gold rush Mini Golf in Ballarat – Was that sheep stations we were playing for??? The competition was fierce!
- The Maryborough Garden group visited Lambley gardens and nursery in Ascot.

### October 2022

- ASTERIA submitted feedback to the disability inclusion exposure draft consultation.
- Some Participants attended the inaugural Goldfields Community Festival which was held in Phillips Gardens Maryborough.

### November 2022

- A musical month with outings to the 'SOS – A Tribute to ABBA' show and the Nelson Street Music Group visited the Blues & Roots festival in Bendigo.

### December 2022

A magical and busy time of year with our Participants enjoying;

- A visit to the Myer Christmas Windows
- A Christmas Lights tour in Maryborough
- A Christmas Tree Competition pitting Bendigo against Maryborough for the second year in a row. The teams are now tied at one all – we look forward to Christmas 2023 to see who takes the lead in this annual competition.



# Community Options & Living ~ continued

## January 2023

- A busload of Maryborough Participants ventured to Sovereign Hill for the day and enjoyed every minute.
- Thanks to a grant from the local Bendigo Bank, a group of Participants enjoyed some coaching sessions for tennis and martial arts held at the Maryborough Tennis Centre.

## February 2023

- Swimming at the Maryborough Leisure Centre was popular with the Participants this month due to the extreme heat.

## March 2023

- Participants and staff took part in the very successful Goldfields Community Festival. Our stand showcased some wonderful paper craft ideas.
- ASTERIA was represented at the Maryborough Golf Day – it was a bit soggy, but still enjoyed by many.
- A very enthusiastic group of nature lovers made their way to Ballarat for the Ballarat Begonia Festival.
- Friday Fitness group held their Uno tournament – who knew we harboured so many card sharks?





### April 2023

- A call was put out to all chocoholics for a trip to the Chocolate Mill Daylesford - there was no shortage of volunteers.
- Our Photography group went on an excursion to Dunolly and took many interesting and beautiful photos.

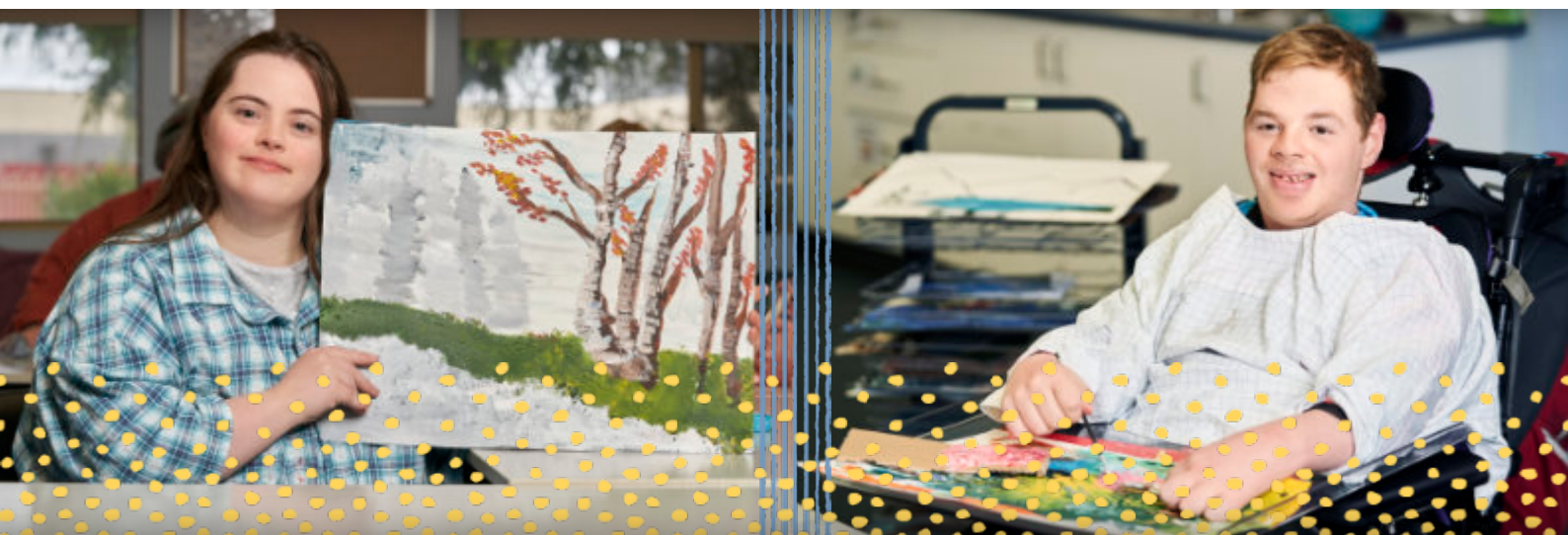
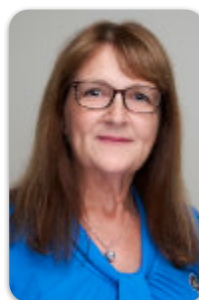
### May 2023

- Maryborough District Health Service facilitated a 5 week health program for our Participants that included Exercise for health, Healthy eating and shopping, Ageing and dementia, Financial health, and, Mental health.
- Bendigo and Maryborough Cooking Program Participants enjoyed a lunch together at a Bendigo restaurant.

### June 2023

- ASTERIA hosted a Flag Raising ceremony at Christian Street on 1st June in recognition of National Reconciliation Week.
- Participants and staff attended NAIDOC Week celebrations at Maryborough Education Centre, which were held on 22nd June.
- Some of our Bendigo Participants attended a 'Come and Try Futsal soccer' session and had a great time.

**Marita Turner**  
Manager



## Out of Home Care

2023 has seen the ASTERIA Out of Home Care (OoHC) Program provide care for sixteen children and young people. ASTERIA OoHC has continued to build close connections with the North and West Divisions of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). In particular, ASTERIA has worked closely within the Horsham, Central Highlands, Barwon, Mallee and Loddon regions.

An ASTERIA first was achieved within 2023, with OoHC successfully gaining two funded targets within the North Division for the next twelve months. This has been an exciting transition for the program, providing greater stability.

Throughout 2023 ASTERIA has continued to provide our clients with excellent access to health care. ASTERIA clients have progressed towards achieving all the physical developmental milestones from a healthy diet, childhood to puberty; immunisation against preventable illnesses; personal hygiene; injury prevention; good dental care; the provision of and the development and maintenance of a physically active lifestyle. Many of ASTERIA'S OoHC clients have engaged in community

sporting clubs and groups. This has been a fantastic way for our clients to feel connected to the Maryborough community.

Emotional and behavioural development for all OoHC clients has focused on the child's responses to other people and the world around them, as reflected within their feelings and demonstrated through their actions. Positive and nurturing relationships build healthy emotional and behavioural responses that equip children and young people to better deal with stressors and become more resilient.

All ASTERIA clients have the opportunity and right to engage in the educational pathways of their choosing. ASTERIA has enabled clients to remain connected with educational providers so that they do not lose those relationships with teachers and peers if they are transitioned from that region. Examples of this educational commitment from clients and ASTERIA staff has seen young people travel to Melton, Bendigo, Ballarat, Horsham, Kyneton and Echuca for education.



The OoHC goal for all clients is to establish meaningful, stable, appropriate and affectionate relationships with family and peers and others within their social network. ASTERIA has had a clear focus on making sure that each of our clients throughout the year has had a meaningful contact plan with appropriate members of their immediate and extended families. ASTERIA has also assisted Child Protection in supervising contacts and facilitating contacts with other community service agencies.

Clients within OoHC often struggle to identify who they are and where do they belong. ASTERIA Services prides itself on giving its clients the safe space to explore their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and physical appearance. Family, community and culture provide significant elements of a child's identity, especially for Aboriginal children. ASTERIA collates photos, certificates and mementos that recall and retell experiences the client has whilst in care.

2023 has seen growth within the program again and all involved with the program have demonstrated commitment to helping the lives of the most disadvantaged children and young people within Victoria. The concept of creating an ASTERIA Family for our clients remains at the forefront of our practice and OoHC will continue to advocate and represent our children and young people into 2024 and beyond.

**Brenton Pattison**  
Manager





## Support Coordination

A major highlight of the year has been the completion of the new six-bedroom 'fit for purpose' accommodation built by ASTERIA. The first of our Participants was able to transition to their new home in September 2022 with the home now fully occupied.

This significant investment by ASTERIA has enabled Participants to have access to permanent and secure accommodation suitable for their needs within their own community. The value of Participants remaining within their own community cannot be underestimated. This opportunity has afforded our Participants to remain connected to family, friends and importantly the security of remaining within their environment, which is both familiar and safe to them.

ASTERIA continues to demonstrate their understanding of the concerns and needs of Participants' families, particularly ageing parents with adult children; whose disabilities require daily supports. The desire of parents to know their children have access to safe, secure and high quality accommodation provides immeasurable comfort to them and their confidence in ASTERIA's care for their loved

ones. ASTERIA has further demonstrated their commitment to address these needs through the commencement of additional new accommodation builds at their Christian Street site.

The completion of new Social Housing by Department of Fairness, Family and Housing also enabled another Participant to transition from a home which did not meet their needs, to have ease of access with open plan living. This is the first time in the Participant's adult life they have been enabled to live independently.

Our Participants engaged in Supported Employment at ASTERIA Business Services, now have greater access if required to Support Coordinators, following the relocation of the Unit to the Business Services site. It is heartwarming to be part of our Participants' working day, with their casual banter as they head into work and at the end of their day hearing of their achievements, no matter how big or small.



Our Unit's strong relationships and partnerships with ASTERIA's internal Units and external Organisations was highlighted when securing supports for a Participant whose file fell within a restricted access category. A number of service providers declined service citing the process was too complicated. The ASTERIA Family continued to support our Unit to ensure the Participant received services despite the complexities in navigating the processes. Again, the partnership with ASTERIA has resulted in the Participant receiving supports for Social and Community Participation for the first time in their young adult life.

The ASTERIA Family continues to demonstrate through their practice and inclusive approach that all Participants have the right to access supports to assist them to live their life to the fullest. Acceptance into the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the support of ASTERIA Service Delivery has meant an adult residing in Supported Residential Services (SRS) is receiving individual support for the first time in their life, despite having had a life-long disability. The result of being provided individual supports to access community has been life changing for this Participant.

On reflecting on our year, it is rewarding to capture the difference the NDIS funding has made to the lives and independence of so many Participants; however, it is vitally important to recognise the funding is only one aspect required for achievement. It is the service and connection provided by supports within the NDIS Service Sector, mainstream supports assisting Participants and strong partnerships that afford Participants to live fulfilled lives. ASTERIA has been innovative and shown strong leadership in the sector, which has resulted in many Participants living their lives to the fullest.

**Sharyn Huggett**  
Manager





## Board Elections

In accordance with the ASTERIA Services Incorporated Constitution and Statement of Purpose, the following constitutes the 2023 declaration of poll.

Advertisements were placed seeking nominations to the Board of Directors for retiring members Michael Ritchie, Dr. Simon Sheed, Philip Norris and Debbie Lilford.

Nominations did not exceed vacancies in the General Members category, therefore a ballot was not required. Michael Ritchie, Dr. Simon Sheed and Philip Norris were returned for a further two years.

Nominations did not exceed vacancies in the Family Member category, therefore a ballot was not required. Debbie Lilford was returned for a further 12 months.

## Occupational Health & Safety

The ASTERIA Board of Directors continues to discharge its legal and moral responsibility of supporting a healthy and safe workplace. The OH&S committee meets monthly and reports to the Board of Directors with statistics, recommendations and observations to ensure ASTERIA is compliant with all regulatory requirements.

The OH&S policies ensure reasonable measures are taken, so far as is reasonably practicable, to achieve a safe workplace. Health and safety in project planning and work activities and involving our employees in the decision-making processes through regular communication, consultation and training, is a key focus. Our policies are based on a belief that the well-being of our staff, participants and other stakeholders, is a priority and a major consideration in all aspects of our work. People are our most important asset and health and safety in the workplace is everyone's responsibility.

We encourage employees to undertake education and learning to identify and control hazards in the workplace through a continuous risk management program. This supports them in taking the appropriate action to eliminate or control potential accidents/incidents.

The ongoing success of our health and safety management is demonstrated through resilient and pro-active planning of work activities that include OH&S controls appropriate to each situation. Understanding the total work process and associated OH&S risks, encouraging the work team to be committed in achieving our objectives and encouraging open and honest communication, remains a key priority.

In addition to our robust OH&S focus, we are also proud of our record in providing effective injury management and rehabilitation for all employees.



# Acknowledgements

## 5 years of service

### Staff

Kimberlee Adam  
Susan Anthony  
Tayla Burke  
Rhonda Byrne  
Nicole Davey  
Brendan Evans  
Kylie Goode  
Glenda Hecker  
Troy Higgins  
Karen Hughes  
Julie Hurrell  
Kim Lavery  
Allen Lebkowski  
Deborah Murray  
Ellen Neave  
Cassandra Parker

Brenton Pattison  
Sharon Pike  
Julie Saunders  
Sheila Smith  
Michelle Stiles  
Cathryn Taggart  
Marita Turner  
Rhonda Wood

## 10 years of service

### Staff

Amanda Foster

### Supported Employees

Gaylene Kitchen

## 15 years of service

### Staff

Leonni Desmond  
Alexandra Robertson

### Supported Employees

Paul Williams

## 20 years of service

### Staff

Steven Freeman  
Linda Gerring

### Supported Employees

Jack Spencer

## 25 years of service

### Supported Employees

Anthony Payne





**ASTERIA  
SERVICES**

**ASTERIA SERVICES INC. Annual Report 2022-23.**

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