

# Annual Report 2013



 **melba**  
SUPPORT SERVICES  
*Individuals with a disability leading everyday lives*

[www.melbasupport.com.au](http://www.melbasupport.com.au)

## OUR VISION

A society that values the individuality and rights of all people

## OUR MISSION

Individuals with a disability leading everyday lives

We achieve this through our commitment to:

- Respecting and safeguarding the human rights of all people including their right to be safe, well and free from abuse and neglect;
- Valuing and respecting the individuals who access our services;
- Individuals developing the skills and/or networks to advocate for themselves;
- Individuals developing and/or maintaining family relationships, friendships and intimate relationships;
- Individuals identifying and pursuing a broad range of social, educational, vocational and recreational opportunities that bring meaning and value to their lives;
- Individuals being recognized and accepted as valued and contributing members of their community;
- Listening to and focusing on each individual and the choices they make;
- Leading and managing staff (in ways that respect and enhance the skills and experience they have to offer) in assisting individuals to achieve the outcomes they desire in life;
- Improving the quality of our services in line with ongoing feedback from the individuals who use our services and externally recognized benchmarks;
- Working in partnership with local communities;
- The effective use of resources to maximise outcomes for the individuals who use our services.

Annual Report  
**2013**

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Australia Day Awards, 2013.  
Pictured top from L to R: Glenn Foard, Antony O'Donnell,  
Mayor Jim Child.  
Pictured bottom from L to R: Cr Len Cox, Ron Weiss, Glenn  
Foard, Cr Maria McCarthy

## President's and CEO's Report

In writing this joint report, we have reflected on the events of 2012-13. It was undoubtedly a great year! Not only did Melba celebrate its 40-year history of achievement in style, the Australian Government passed legislation, with the unanimous support of all members of parliament, to introduce what we believe will be a truly transformational change to disability services – the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Since 21 March 2013 when the new legislation was passed by both houses of government, a launch site has begun in the Barwon region of Victoria. While this means that those in the Yarra Ranges and other parts of the State won't be able to access the scheme initially, it is a very important first step that will change the landscape of disability service provision forever. Under the NDIS, people will be entitled to receive support funding to enable them to participate fully in our society. It is a remarkable step forward, underpinned by many years of campaigning and widespread community support for reform. It is a great example of the best of Australian traditions – giving people a fair go!

And there were many other highlights in 2012-13 apart from the NDIS, as well as challenges along the way.

We are justifiably proud of Melba's well-earned reputation and many times this year we have been inspired by the quality of support our staff provide to people. Marisa Dominich, who was the recipient of this year's individual Stevenson's Award, typifies the service excellence Melba strives to provide. Marisa's dedication and commitment make her a great role model for other staff. She took the initiative in September to organise a trivia night and raise funds for the purchase of iPads to be used by people we support. A great night was had by the over 100 people who attended and the iPads are proving to be very important communication aids. Thanks Marisa!

Staff from the Larbert Road group home won the team Stevenson's Award in recognition of their support of two people during significant hospital admissions. Staff provided constant bedside support while people remained in hospital. They assisted people to communicate their needs, provided an in-depth understanding to hospital staff and were a friendly face in what can be a foreign environment. By doing so, staff made a huge difference to each person's health and well-being. They also supported the families of those in hospital through some very difficult times.

We saw staff "go the extra mile" - in fact many miles! - when supporting people on holidays, including several people from our Eucalypt Drive group home who travelled on a cruise ship to New Zealand this year. We hope to provide more holiday opportunities to people living in our group homes in the future.

Our Community Connections staff also demonstrated their commitment. In addition to the great work they did supporting some 80 individuals take on valued community roles, they volunteered many hours on a variety of projects including raffles, a painting working bee, the trivia night, World Parks day and our community fair.

All our staff, whether they work in Community Living Support Services, Community Connections, Individual Support Arrangements, Respite, Planning or administrative roles are to be commended for the work they do.

We also commend staff who advocate passionately for people they support. While we are not funded to provide an advocacy service, it is a strength of Melba and is often recognised and remarked upon by medical professionals and others. Melba will continue to do what we can to advocate on behalf of people when the need arises.

Melba continues to push the boundaries of traditional support models and this year we started a new campaign to develop choice in accommodation for people we support. We can't solve the puzzle overnight but, in December 2012, we were able to assist one young woman, supported by our ISA staff, move into a place of her own that Melba now manages on her behalf. The apartment we created is now



*Dr John Annisson, President*



*Glenn Foard, Chief Executive Officer*

lit up by the young woman's stunning smile signifying how much she is enjoying having her own home. We hope that many more people will be able to enjoy choice in accommodation at Melba and we will continue to strive for better accommodation outcomes for people we support. This is just one example of seeking to continuously improve the support we offer. Striving to always do better is a challenge, but one we are eager to meet.

Of course none of what Melba does would be possible without the assistance of government funding. We enjoy an excellent working relationship with the Department of Human Services and we thank departmental staff for their ongoing support and for sharing our view about the importance of living everyday lives.

In September 2012, Melba undertook a reaccreditation process with the Council on Quality and Leadership, or CQL. The process focussed on 'Person-Centred Excellence' as well as the Department of Human Services' new standards. More than 50 individuals from across Melba's diversity of stakeholders participated in the process; people supported by Melba, families, advocates, funders, staff, Board members, organisational leadership, and community members all came together to talk about best practice strategies and priorities and develop an action plan. We were proud to receive very positive feedback from CQL during the process, and to receive confirmation of our accreditation just a few weeks later. Melba is the first organisation in Australia to be accredited against CQL's Person-Centred Excellence framework!

Accreditation is a critical element of our quality assurance. So, too, is our Human Rights and Quality Advisory Committee. Our committee members keep an independent eye over our work and we are very grateful to have people who share our passion for human rights assist us in this way. We thank all our committee members for the time they devote to this task.

Our Community Connections redevelopment and relocation project has made significant progress this year. A broad consultation process resolved that the model of support that we provide at Community Connections is the best model for people we support. This was affirming news! It means we're on the right track, and ready to consider relocation and the establishment of a community hub - a new space to operate in which will bring the community to Melba complementing our work supporting people to engage in community life.

Thank you to everyone who has served on the redevelopment committee – especially Cathy Holleran and Wendy Church, who volunteered their time to provide us with invaluable perspectives as family members, and Colin Rose who volunteered his time representing the Board.

Members of Melba's Advisory Group were on hand last year to greet our local MP, Christine Fyffe, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Family and Community Services, Andrea Coote when they visited Ormeau Road. Together we talked about the NDIS and how individualised supports can change the lives of people with a disability. Andrea and

Christine, who is a long-time supporter and friend of Melba, really enjoyed the opportunity to hear from Melba's Advisory Group.

It is also of note that when the CEO met with the Shadow Minister for Disability Services, Danielle Green, she commented that she had heard good things about Melba from MPs from both sides of the house. It is always nice to receive such feedback!

In December 2012, Melba hosted a visit from Tony Smith MP, Federal Member for Casey and Senator Mitch Fifield, then Shadow Minister for Disabilities, Carers and the Voluntary Sector to showcase Melba's innovation in service delivery. Senator Fifield is, of course, now the Assistant Minister for Social Services.

Melba's senior leadership team is well respected within the disability sector and once again this year members were invited to speak at conferences, as well as host visits from organisations in other parts of the country.

Throughout the year we have continued to participate in events that aim to increase awareness of disability in the community. In November 2012 we threw open our front doors and held a community fair! It was a great day, there were smiles all round and we made lots of new friends in the community. Life Governor, Mrs Nan Stevenson, and Melba's Ambassador, Mr Brett Ratten, led a rousing rendition of happy birthday before cutting a superb 40th anniversary cake prepared for the occasion by Melba's Able Bake House. Melba is fortunate to have the support of our widely respected Life Governors and Brett Ratten – a highly decorated AFL champion and coach who is very generous in making his time available to assist Melba.

On 13 October 2012, Melba held its 40th Anniversary Ruby Celebration dinner and it was a sight to see! Melba's community of staff and volunteers (past and present), people we support, families and community supporters enjoyed the opportunity to reminisce about Melba's history, and do some 'crystal ball gazing' as we plan for the next 40 years. Once again, it was great to have Brett supporting this event. He had a great night listening to stories (and posing for photos!) and shared with us some stories of his own.

One heart-warming element of the night was the presentation of a history of Melba on DVD, "Melba turns 40" made by Kate Lee. Kate is a Melba stalwart who continues to support our efforts with her incredible talent behind the lens. "Melba turns 40" is a moving account of the organisation over four decades, featuring passionate individuals telling heart-warming stories. Kate's gentle ways and keen eye for the heart of a story is a powerful combination and everyone at Melba is grateful for Kate's effort and incredible generosity.

We would also like to thank members of Melba's Marketing and Development Advisory Council who have given generously of their time over the last 12 months to support Lisa Glassborow's excellent work in fundraising, along with the individuals and businesses that joined Melba as 'Ruby Partners'. Our Council members and Ruby Partners are listed later in this annual report. We thank them and everyone who provided essential financial assistance this year. The generosity of donors makes a huge difference to what Melba can offer to people we support, and we are extremely grateful for the continued support we receive from our donors.

In January 2013, Melba was the proud recipient of the Yarra Ranges Community Group of the Year award. Ron Weiss (a member of the Melba Advisory Group), Graham Leaver (Board Member) and the CEO accepted the award at a ceremony where Mayor Jim Child and Cr Len Cox spoke very positively about our work in the community.

During the year, the Board decided it would be strategic to explore a merger with a like-minded organisation to improve our financial sustainability and expand our services to benefit those we support. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Impact Support Services allowing discussions to occur about a merger and undertake the necessary due diligence. To date, discussions have been positive and we expect to make a decision on the merger by the end of 2013.

Melba continues to be well served by a skilled and committed Board

of Management. Each Board member makes a unique contribution to our organisational governance and the achievement of our strategic objectives.

While the membership of the Board remained unchanged during the financial year, there were two important changes with respect to office-bearer positions. Steven Groves stood down as President after several years in the role and we would like to acknowledge Steven's fine leadership during that period. Similarly, David Johnston stood down after a significant period as Treasurer. We thank David for the financial acumen he has brought to the organisation. David has passed the Treasurer's baton to Brian Baker who, like David, is a former banker. Melba is fortunate to have people with the financial skills that our former and current Treasurer possess.

We thank all Board members who are profiled later in the annual report for volunteering their time and contributing to the work of Melba.

Our excellent staff are the central pillar of the high quality support we provide and their efforts are complemented by our truly wonderful volunteers who have supported Melba so strongly this year. From large-scale projects involving over a hundred people to the daily interactions on a one-to-one basis, from the Able Bake House to our Board sub-committees, our volunteers support Melba quietly and humbly. We are a better and stronger organisation for their work and so, to all our volunteers, our sincere thanks.

Another pillar of Melba's strength is the connections we enjoy with our local communities. In particular, thank you to David Watt, Jill Rule and everyone at the Mt Evelyn and Montrose Community Bank who have continued to support Melba, in myriad ways, across the year and into the future.

This year we bade farewell to a stalwart of the Melba community, David 'Harbo' Harbinson, who retired in April 2013. Amazingly, David has been a part of Melba since 1996 when he started as a volunteer. As Business Manager, he was a mainstay of the organisation. The many and varied things David did made the organisation work. He is loved by everyone here and, on behalf of the entire Melba community we thank 'Harbo' for his years of dedicated service.

In May 2013, we also said goodbye to Belonging Matters, a service Melba has hosted for a decade. It is great to see that Belonging Matters has established itself as a stand alone service and we were pleased to assist them enter this exciting new phase. We wish everyone at Belong Matters all the best for the future.

From time to time Melba acknowledges the significant contribution of an individual by appointing them an Honorary Life Governor. This year Melba has appointed three very worthy Life Governors; Anthony Kolmus, Angela Blomfield and David Johnston. All three served Melba over a long period of time with passion, vision and dedication and they join an important group of people within our organisation.

Through our unique recruitment process for direct support staff we have welcomed many new faces this year. Our administration team has also welcomed Lorenz Senn, Corporate Services Manager, Belinda Allwood, Volunteer Coordinator and Joanne Renehan, Assistant ISA Coordinator. We are fortunate to continue to attract high quality people to work at Melba.

Looking forward, Melba is aware that disability services are clearly changing and even within the next five years we can expect to operate in a different world. Change can be challenging, but the future directions within disability services are overwhelmingly positive. It will be an exciting time, full of possibilities, particularly via the NDIS. We believe that Melba's unique culture, focusing on personal outcomes, respecting individual choice and supporting people to exercise their human rights and enjoy valued roles in their communities, places us in a very strong position. We are both excited and privileged to lead Melba into this new era.

Dr John Annison  
President

Glenn Foard  
Chief Executive Officer

## Community Living Support Services

Choice; it is the building block of how we want to live our lives. It is the foundation of where we want to go and how we want to get there. Choice gives us the right to self determination. Our greatest strength comes from the power to choose. Everyday we expect staff will listen to and focus on each individual and the choices they make; this is every person's right.

One of the most important roles we play as a provider of services is to ensure that choices are afforded to the person. The right to choose allows us the freedom to be who we are. Choice is empowering, encouraging people to take control and giving them the courage and confidence to live an everyday life.

Dr Rhonda Galbally AO comments that "for choice and control to be really meaningful it requires service innovation and transformation so that people with disabilities and families can truly participate fully in every aspect of Australian society". We understand that people's lives are more fulfilled when they can determine a lifestyle of their choosing and we assist people to make choices which bring meaning to their lives. We also know that as a provider of services, we have been constrained in providing alternative accommodation choices to people.

Sixteen years ago we opened seven homes for people and whilst we strongly believe that we provide very good accommodation services, people still do not have a choice of where and with whom they live. Giving people this choice allows them the dignity of personal and social development to exist as an equal in their community; it provides an opportunity that can promote initiatives and self reliance. Melba is exploring a number of partnerships and alliances that we hope will assist us to provide opportunities for people to choose a home of their own that affords them the life experiences and opportunities that all members of the community have a right to expect.

Unfortunately, for many people to access accommodation supports, we have to wait for others to move on. This can either be through a person passing away or sometimes when a person exercises their right to say 'this isn't right for me'.

It was with sadness that we supported Heather Bell to pass away at her home DeFelice Place on 17th March 2013. Heather was our Melba Matriarch; she lived a full 82 years. Life without Heather has changed for people who loved her. She will remain embedded in our consciousness as somebody who made her choices in life. Heather was never one to miss an opportunity to make it perfectly clear what she wanted and even though she could not use words to communicate, no one was uncertain about the choices she was making.

On the 18th April 2013, Linton Smith passed away at Monash Medical Centre. Throughout his life Linton demanded to be listened to; there were no half hearted attempts at listening accepted. For Linton it was all or nothing, and he would yell loudly, and you were never left wondering about how he wanted his life to look. Linton could never be ignored. He made it perfectly clear what he wanted in his life and his last days were filled with people who cared deeply for him.

For the staff at DeFelice Place and Lara Court, Melba thanks you for all the support, comfort and dignity you provided to Heather and Linton.

Katie West decided living at DeFelice Place was not for her. She told us that she was not happy living there as it was not what she expected, so we supported Katie to move to another accommodation service. This was Katie's choice. This was what she wanted in her life, not what others thought was best for her - a powerful difference.

We welcomed Amie Lowther, Carl Smith and Alistair Murphy to DeFelice Place this year. Each person brings their distinctive personality and character to this home, and with these unique differences come

varied expectations of what life looks like. It will take staff time to make sure people's choices are fulfilled and we are all working together to make sure this happens.

I mentioned the fact that we believe we provide very good accommodation services and this is a claim we can confidently substantiate. At the end of 2010 La Trobe University sent out a request through the sector asking if people could nominate a



"Great Group Home". La Trobe had completed a study some years earlier with the deinstitutionalisation of Kew Cottages and people moving into group homes. What La Trobe found was that after considerable staff training, poor practices and a devaluing culture still prevailed in the group homes. La Trobe now went looking for "Great Group Homes". They wanted to understand what made a good culture and how it has emerged and what practices support it; they also wanted a group home that supported people with severe and profound intellectual disabilities. Eucalypt Drive and Larbert Road were nominated by Melba, as well as The Community Visitors Program and one other disability organisation as great group homes to take part in the study. For the next 12 months the principle researcher worked as a member of staff at each of the group homes, observed staff practices and collected information. The format they used was identified as "natural conversation". The researcher would observe practices and then ask staff what they were doing and why they did it that way. At the end of the study the researchers concluded that Eucalypt and Larbert were indeed "great group homes". And I believe these two group homes are reflective of all Melba's group homes. Staff are rightfully very proud!

Many people have supports that are complex and diverse, but they deserve the right to choose where and with whom they live. Some of you may have seen Sarah's story, about a young woman who was desperately unhappy in her living arrangement with other people and how, with the generosity of others and the support of the Department of Human Services, we helped Sarah move to a home of her own. Sarah's life looks a whole lot different today; she smiles a lot and she has control over what she does each day. The change in Sarah is extraordinary and I thank CLSS and ISA staff for their ability to be flexible, responsive and collaborative in supporting Sarah to move to her new home.

Being able to choose motivates us towards our future development and inspires us to move forward to achieve our dreams. It gives us power to make decisions and achieve our goals

Thank you, to all our CLSS staff for your dedication, commitment and passion in delivering services that empower and inspire people to have a worthwhile, productive life of their choice. To my colleagues in the senior management team, thanks for your support and encouragement. Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution: it represents the wise choice of many alternatives – choice not chance, determines your destiny. -Aristotle

Penny Kendall  
Manager, CLSS

## Individual Support Arrangements

It is annual report time again and the theme we were encouraged to explore in this year's report was 'Choice'. I want to begin by highlighting that in my time working in the disability field I have noticed that every few years or so the field evolves in response to new research or practices which then results in fundamental changes to how we all do our work. Such evolutions include deinstitutionalisation, community inclusion, the person-centred movement, individualised approaches and funding and the human rights movement. So what does choice have to do with these things? Well, in my opinion 'choice' underpinned each of these fundamental changes. But what is choice anyway?

To me choice is something we all do every day of our lives. We make choices about where we want to live and with whom we want to live. We make choices about what we want to eat or what clothes we want to wear. We choose where we want to go at any given time and who we want to associate with. We make choices about where we work, where we shop, when and where we go on a holiday. We choose who we want to vote for in an election. We make choices about when we want to get up in the morning (well I did until my wife and I had a baby about 14 months ago!).

But have you ever thought about what life would be like without choice? What if we could not choose the things I just mentioned? Or what if we needed someone to help us make these choices? Even worse, what if we needed help to make these choices but no one ever bothered to give it? Unfortunately this is a reality experienced by many people around the world, including people who have a disability.

If you can't speak, how can you ask for what you want? If you can't use your hands, how can you pick out what you want? If you can't speak or use your hands, how can you make any choice at all? For many of the people we support this is their reality. The universal declaration of human rights is clear that all people are equal and have a right to choose how they live their lives. Therefore a large

part of our work is focused on developing ways in which the people we support can make real choices about what happens in their day and about what their lives look like.

Our staff teams regularly reflect on their practice and how the things they do when supporting people either allow them to exercise choice or limit their ability to do so. If a person does not have access to their money, how can they

choose how to spend it? If a person cannot access the coffee jar, how can they choose to make a coffee? If a person is presented with only one option, how can they choose something different? If we do not ask a person what they want in their life, how do we know what we should be supporting them with? If we don't know how a person communicates how can we support them to make a choice at all?

Fortunately, the people we support are offered choice, are asked what they want their lives to look like and our staff work tirelessly to achieve the outcomes people have chosen for themselves. This year one of the people we supported was clearly showing us that they were unhappy with where they were living, so after a lot of hard work we were able to offer them another choice about where they live and support them to move somewhere that suited them better. Another person chose that it was time for them to retire, wanting to live a more laid back lifestyle focusing on the things they enjoy, so we assisted them to do this. There was another young man who chose that he wanted a job; not just any job, but a job in a café and after a lot of hard work from him, his family and support staff he now works in two cafés!

I am proud of the work our staff do and want to sincerely thank them for this. I am even more proud that each and every person who has an ISA could share similar stories about the choices they have made and continue to make in their lives. While I am thanking people, I would also like to thank our two ISA Coordinators for all that they do to keep the people we support and their families moving forward (I'm sure they would also say they keep me on track too!) and a big welcome to Joanne who joined our ISA team earlier this year!

In closing, I encourage you to take a moment to think about your life and the choices you make every day. Now take a moment to think about how your life may look if you could not make these choices so freely, or if you had to rely on someone else to help you do so? It's not a pleasant thought is it? Choice is a powerful thing but is also something too many of us take for granted.

I hope that the next time you choose what you want to eat for dinner or choose to visit a friend you have not seen for a while; you take a moment to reflect on what choice really is and how fundamental it is to a good life.

Aaron Fry  
Manager, Individual Support Arrangements



Pictured: Peter Hitchener and Peter Cornwall

## Community Connections



Community Connections has continued to surge ahead in the past year. Returning with a positive bottom line, I see is a huge step forward when you look at all the innovative and creative projects and work being undertaken by Community Connections across all sites.

Support staff flex and modify what they do each day to support people to be involved in a range of activities and valued roles of their choice. These staff are some of the most incredibly skilled people I have had the opportunity and pleasure to work with. At Ormeau Road the vast majority of people supported don't use words to communicate, so it is the intimate knowledge and relationships that staff have that provide the insight in to what each person is saying they want and need. To ensure people have productive and positive days staff support people to make choices using communication cards, key word signs, and "knowing " various gestures, personal signs , vocalisations and mannerisms. All of this critical information is also contained in each individual's Personal Communication Dictionary, which details for each person what we believe to be the intention of each behaviour, whether that be a vocalisation, look or body language. It also goes on to

then advise staff of their required action in response to this communication is .i.e. When I do this, you should do ...

Differently, at Wray Crescent many of the people supported do use words to communicate and can clearly articulate each day to Megan and the staff team what it is they want to be doing or where they want to be going. Staff need to be able to think on their feet and often become masters of negotiation to keep the cooperation and harmony happening as well as ensuring that individual choices are respected and honoured wherever possible on any given day and across any given week.

When considering what people attending Community Connections have been saying they want, need and desire through 21 Outcomes and personal planning, the past year has seen many alterations and changes to peoples' days and weeks. A few examples of this are as follows:

- The Able Bake House continues to grow, going from strength to strength with more than 30 people involved.
- Yarra Valley in a Box has commenced. Rhiannon, Matt and Bec are all involved.
- The "young blokes" group has evolved and continues to transform a group of 18 -21 year old boys into men; travelling on trains, swimming and other physical activities see this group busy three days each week.
- The seniors group at Wray Crescent has had another group join them.
- Rosie has stepped away from volunteering at Anglicare.
- Amanda has stepped away from baking with the Able Bake House, whilst Steve is looking to join them.
- Casey has commenced work at The Mt Evelyn Primary School.

- Carolyn has retired from Community Connections to spend more time at home and shopping (she is often seen out enjoying a cuppa, saying g'day to everyone she knows).
- Kevin has reduced his days at Community Connections to be truly semi-retired.
- Ron has joined the Melba Advisory Group.
- Jackie and Chantal have increased their time spent at Community Connections, with Jackie commencing work at Petstock.
- Nick T is horse riding each Friday morning.
- Dan P is helping an elderly friend with the upkeep of her much beloved chooks, while glamming up on a Friday for a role within the admin team of Appleby Real estate.
- Aaron is working with the Admin team at Oxley College, supported through our longterm relationship with the school.

### CHOICE:

Noun. An act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two or more possibilities.

Adjective. (esp. of food) Of very good quality. Synonyms. noun. selection - option - pick - election - assortment

Adjective. select - selected - picked - chosen - exquisite

The past year has been a busy and productive one and the one ahead is shaping up to be no different.

Sally Nicol

Manager, Community Connections

## The Redevelopment

The redevelopment of Ormeau Road is moving along. We have completed Phase 1 and 2. To this point Synthesize Consultancy has assisted us to consult with families, primary carers, community partners and Melba staff. The focus was to hear from people what they perceived as the positive aspects of Community Connections, the areas that they felt could be improved and what people were fearful of when it came to relocation from Ormeau Road, given that Ormeau Road had been the base for Melba and Community Connections for almost forty years.

We learned that the culture, the space inside the building as well as the external surrounds, and our flexible, responsive and individualised approach were critical "must keep" factors. People

didn't comment on transport, but when it was raised for discussion, all were in agreement that this too was important because it added to people's ability to have flexibility and responsiveness in their days. One issue that people have had difficulty grasping was that Melba had not already identified and purchased or leased sites. It was our aim to be open and transparent and we started this redevelopment process with a truly blank canvas.

At this point in time Lilydale, Croydon and Mooroolbark are key suburbs for consideration when looking at demographics for where people currently reside (people supported, their families and staff) but Melba's Board has not yet made key decisions about the redevelopment and potential relocation.

## Valued Roles through Volunteering & Work Opportunities



### Valued Roles through Volunteering and Work Opportunities

Having a valued role to play within our community is one of the things that makes us feel connected and good about ourselves. We support many people to contribute to their community in a number of ways. The following are just some examples!

- Cecelia continues with her work at Coles in Lilydale twice a week and also works at AliAndra's Hair and Beauty once a week.
- Tony is busy with his gardening business. He has purchased his new mower and it's all systems go.
- Rebecca, Phil and Robert deliver meals on wheels.
- Tracy works at Morrison House Childcare Centre, assisting them to meet their quality assurance requirements.
- The Glad Man Delivery Service sees Matt (pictured) visit St Francis Xavier College's campuses delivering their internal mail. Matt is supported by college staff and has been a team member at the college since 2010.
- Malcolm C volunteers at Hope City Op Shop and is supported to work by the op shop staff. He also works independently at Morrison on the Park Café.
- Anglicare in Lilydale have Sally and Malika volunteer there on a weekly basis.
- Working independently, Jacqui works at Second Bite in Bayswater where she packs fruit, vegies and bread for delivery to families in need. She also catches the bus to and from work independently.
- Ron continues his work at IGA Mt Evelyn where he has worked for 8 years and is a very valued member of the team.
- Volunteering for the SES is a valued role performed by Mark, Matt R, Shane and Sean L.

- Kevin, Tony and Mark work at Sherar Enterprises Wholesale Flower Farm in Silvan, weeding and mulching.
- Phil, Ashley, Mark and Tony are involved in mail deliveries to Mt Evelyn Primary School, St Mary's Primary School and Discovery Church.
- We also have a team of people responsible for all of Melba's mail outs, other mail outs as well as newspaper rounds.

We thank each of the businesses who work with us to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to develop their skills and enter the workforce in valued roles.

### YARRA RANGES IN A BOX

Yarra Ranges in a Box is a project aimed at creating valued roles within the community, increasing people's skills so that they can enter the work force and, of course, providing the local community with affordable fresh fruit and vegies. Melba has recently launched this new initiative and already have 26 people involved in the project. Yarra Ranges in a Box provides a range of opportunities for people to participate in ways that both interest them and that draw on their strengths. Delivering from Yarra Glen to Boronia and throughout Mt Evelyn, the team has secured a number of regular customers to whom they supply their weekly fresh produce.

### ABLE BAKE HOUSE

The Able Bake House continues to grow into a successful social enterprise. Led by Kerry Kift and Head Pastry Chef, Jodie King, the enterprise has been involved in a number of activities and events throughout the year.

# the Able BAKE HOUSE

EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH BAKING

Catering for the Social Enterprise Academy in Mt Evelyn, speaking at a range of workshops sharing the story of the Able Bake House, catering for the Yarra Ranges

Council and participating in the Mt Evelyn Street Party, the team at the Able Bake House has enjoyed sharing their much regaled products with new and existing customers.

The team welcomed two new people this year; Josh, who is a versatile young man renowned for his spruiking at the markets; and Mandy, who volunteers every Thursday to help with the packing of the products. Expanding the product range, the Able Bake House now also produces jams and chutneys, with many of the ingredients grown by friends of the Bake House. Many thanks to Brian Bennett who grows the tomatoes and donates them to us.

Yarra Ranges in a Box and The Able Bake House are always looking for new customers, so please contact Kerry Kift at [ablebakehouse@hotmail.com](mailto:ablebakehouse@hotmail.com).

### BECALICIOUS BUTTONS

As an artistic and passionate person, Rebecca Church (pictured) was looking to put her creativity into something meaningful and rewarding.



'Becalicious Buttons' is Rebecca's project, where she creates fabric covered buttons and turns them into beautiful accessories for girls and women of all ages. Rebecca hand crafts every button with the upmost precision, love and care, creating unique, one-of-a-kind pieces.

## Respite

It has been a year of change for the Respite Program. We bid farewell our long time Coordinator, Daniel Jarvis, thanking him for all of the work he put into building the program, ensuring that the respite provided met the needs and desires of everyone involved.

With Daniel moving on, I am excited to have stepped into the role of Respite Program Coordinator and have begun meeting with the people we support, their families and staff to find out what has been working well and what might need changing. We want to make sure that everyone gets the most of out of the program, so it is important that we first ask what it is they want!

It has been great getting to know all the families who use our service and the staff who work in this program, and in response to the feedback we received when we met with each group we will be making changes to some of the activities. These may include shifting one of the day outings to

an evening outing once in a while, or trying some new activities. We will, of course, hold on to some of the favorites like the Flowerdale Pub for a yummy lunch and chat with their friendly staff.

Pemm Garratt  
Respite Coordinator



*Pictured: Top L to R Edward Gruenberger, Dunja Poletti-Kopesic, Jo Kipa, Bottom Peter Kearney*

## Executive Office Manager

Volunteers, human rights and quality – what a year it has been at Melba!

Our new Volunteer Coordinator, Belinda Allwood, started in January 2013 and immediately set to work reigniting our volunteer program. Belle's warm and engaging personality is inspiring and infectious and she eagerly accepted the challenge of more than doubling (actually, more than trebling!) our existing volunteer numbers. Volunteering is a truly unselfish and noble activity and while people decide to volunteer for lots of different reasons, the impact a volunteer can have on the quality of life of someone supported at Melba is immeasurable. Thanks to Belle for starting on a great journey with Melba's volunteers!

In September 2012 I was excited to be involved with Melba's accreditation process. It was great to meet Epp O'Neill and Christine Norris from the Council on Quality and Leadership, and be involved in such a critical part of Melba's quality process. It gave us a chance to again review many years' worth of data from personal outcome measures (POMs) interviews; looking for trends, thinking about what's really working well for the people we support – and what's not, and talking about what can we do about that!

Later in the year we were also given the exciting opportunity to reflect on our POMs data compared with the rest of the world! For a lot of the indicators Melba's results are very similar to the rest of the world, and in a few we're ahead of the game. But the data also helps us to reflect on those areas where the outcomes aren't so great for the people we support. One of those key areas is that people choose where and with whom they live; these choices are



often severely limited for people with a disability. Since then we have been directing our energy into our Accommodation Choice initiative; a really exciting project aimed at improving the situation and supporting people to exercise real choice about how they live. We've got a long way to go, but it's a great step in the right direction.

This year we also reviewed our human rights checklist. A unique document, the checklist is a great way for the people we support to make sure

their fundamental human rights are respected. People are holding Melba accountable to its mission, and that's just the way it should be! Melba's Human Rights Committee, which regularly reviews the checklist outcomes, spent many hours fine-tuning the new checklist before it was 'road tested' by support staff. The result is a really great, user-friendly document which supports Melba's fundamental organisational values in relation to human rights. Thanks to everyone who has been involved in the new checklist.

Have you been to Ormeau Road recently? If you have, you will no doubt have been greeted by our wonderful receptionist, Kim Harvey. Kim manages the comings and goings of the Ormeau Road reception with amazing ease and perfect patience. This year she even looked after a beautiful stray dog who had wandered away from home on a hot day! Thank you Kim – you are a tremendous asset to Melba.

I'm very excited about what the next year will bring!

Kirsten Filmer  
Executive Office Manager

## Outcomes Development



With a focus on improving the quality of life for the people we support through person centred approaches, our work is underpinned by our mission to help people to live an everyday life. We use many tools to help us support people to live 'their own life; to plan, to contribute, to participate, to choose and to be respected and valued'. That is after all—'What Really Matters' (Council on Quality and Leadership).

Personal Outcome Measures interviews

are a tool that continues to help Melba provide responsive services that move in the directions people 'tell' us they want and need. Helping people make choices goes beyond simple daily decisions such as what to eat, wear or watch on DVD. Rather, it includes those choices and decisions that are life changing and to support someone to make these choices, we must know them and listen to them.

Melba's Personal Outcome Measures data clearly identifies that less than 15% of people we support have outcomes in the area of choice around where and with whom they live. If you and I were told we had to live with people we didn't know, and in a community we had never been to or knew about, supported by staff we don't know, would we be happy? Yet for the people we support the expectation is one of gratitude to have a roof over their heads. At Melba, we believe that this is unacceptable, and that it violates people's basic human rights, and we are working hard to make inroads into improving this situation.

Cecelia lived with her dad, and on his passing her future looked destined to be in services. Cecelia asked if she could try living on her own. She knew she would need support of sorts but she wanted to try, to give it a go! Now, after detailed planning for her choice to become a reality, Cecelia lives in her own privately rented flat in her community, with creative use of her support dollars. She's happy, content and living her life!

Our facilitated person-centered planning process strives to help people, along with their support network, to learn about their unique preferences. These plans are often the first steps in helping people to evaluate what it is they want, and sometimes don't want, in the future. We supported a person who desperately wanted to be a part of a social outing with his housemates. When told it was a porcelain doll show he was excited. When I saw him the following day his diary read what a miserable time he had, that he was bored and clearly not happy about being there. When asked if he wanted to attend the following year, he was very animated in gesturing NO! He learned from experience that porcelain doll shows were not for him! Today the same gentleman is part of a morning walking group which he enjoys weekly.

Our aim is to continue helping people to make choices, experience their choices, confirm their choices and be supported to have as much input and control within their lives as anybody else. It is, after all, our choices which define who we are and who we become; they provide us with control over our own destiny, the measure being our level of happiness, contentment and peace.

Sarina Bunnett  
Coordinator, Outcomes Development

Some of the achievements over the past year include:

- We have revised the Human Rights Checklist and introduced a document which explains how to fill in the checklist.
- To ensure Melba continues to review its quality services and systems, Melba now has a joint Quality and Human Rights Committee.
- Melba's Advisory Group has been working tirelessly on helping community members and organisations understand more about people's human rights. They plan to develop a Roadshow about human rights. Thank you to Ron, Michael, Cecelia, Jim, Scott and Antony for your dedication to this group.
- Facilitated person-centred planning continues thanks to Olivia Bailey and Pemm Garratt. This planning helps us to focus on people's gifts, strengths and accomplishments, and identify what really matters.
- Personal Outcome Measures interviews continue, helping a person gain focus for their planning meeting, and to gather data which highlights areas where Melba need to focus their energy. Thank you to Sue, Sharen, Adele, Megan, Cas, Marisa, Kathy and Wendy.
- Communication remains a major focus for Melba. Each service has a Communication Peer Support staff person. Thank you to, Adele, Harriet, Anne, Jenn, Katherine, Olivia, Tracy, Kim and Bec for supporting our staff and the people paying for our services to have the necessary communication supports to make choices and decisions which affect their lives.
- Many people have purchased their own iPad with Community Connections now trained in the use of Proloquo2Go an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) solution for people who have difficulty speaking or who do not use words at all. Proloquo2Go provides a 'voice', enabling people to talk using symbols or typed text in a natural sounding voice that suits their age and character.
- Kevin Gardam helped run the session for the year 9 students at Oxley College on how to best communicate / interact with the people Melba supports preparing them for their time at Community Connections.
- SCOPE's Living Distinctive Lives Communication Coordinators and Melba's Communication team worked together on a joint Communication Plan to support people to have consistent approaches with their communication supports.
- Jo Watson Speech Therapist from SCOPE's Communication Resource Centre continued working on her PhD in the area of "Supported Decision Making". This project has seen three people supported by Melba, along with several others, to have people in their lives vested in supporting them to 'lead an everyday life'.

## Living Distinctive Lives

Living Distinctive Lives, or LDL, has had an incredible year of change. Changes in lifestyles, in homes, in the activities and daily experiences people are engaging in, in the housemates, support workers and other community members who are such an integral part of their lives. Their Coordinator, Jo Walters, recently moved on, and LDL has completed the Community Inclusion Project which employed me to actively work in community inclusion and engagement. All of this change has brought loss and a bit of chaos, but it has helped to focus what is important and how resilient, resourceful, inspired and creative families are. It has inspired hope and innovation and it has chiselled a new way forward for each family that makes up LDL and for the community at large. I have witnessed a growing strength in families' capacity to self-manage, to utilise the resources they have in creative ways, to embrace the circles of supporters around them a little more, allowing more care, attention, love and support to be shared amongst more people. I have witnessed them expand their sense of community and to begin to explore and address some of life's bigger questions in relation to their futures. So in boldly embracing the changes that life brings these families have united even more, have dug even deeper into their pools of strength and have re-emerged asking 'So, where to now?'

LDL families would like to thank Jo Walters for her dedication, her service and her commitment to the group for such an extended period of time, and wish her all the best in her new adventure. She has seen the group through incredible expansion, has helped in the education and exploration of a number of areas such as self-governance, community, and self-directed approaches. She was an inspiring leader and facilitator and a source of strength to LDL – THANK YOU Jo. Further thanks need to go to the increasing number of support workers, family members and friends who gather around individuals with a disability to empower them in the realising of their own personal dreams. Sincerest gratitude and admiration go to the Governance Group members for their tireless effort in contributing to LDL and the everyday lives of their children. And finally, to acknowledge the dreams, the struggles and the triumphs of each individual who experiences a disability, for their contributions to the community via their work, their play, their leadership, their residency, their place within their family and the community at large. They certainly are Living Distinctive Lives.

Teresa Micallef  
Facilitator, Living Distinctive Lives  
on behalf of the LDL Governance Group and all LDL Members

## Belonging Matters

This is our final contribution to the Melba Support Services Annual Report. After a 10-year relationship with Melba our vision to become an incorporated association with a strong and vibrant membership came to fruition in May 2013. We are extremely grateful for the administrative support from Melba over the last 10 years.

The highlight for us this year was holding our 5th "One Person at a Time Conference: What Could Be that 270 delegates attended. Our key note speaker, Tim Costello, reminded us about the importance of community in a fast-paced world often driven by market place and materialism. He said "Commerce doesn't define, us community does"! It's now our challenge to not get swept away with the lure of competition, systems and commerce and uphold the sanctity of relationship, belonging and community for the people we support.

On behalf of the all of those involved with Belonging Matters, I would like to pass on our sincere thanks to Melba.

Deb Rouget

## Melba Staff

*Left to Right: Kim Harvey, Nicole Stow, Kym Fraser, Sharon Robinson (nee Aitchison), Sibylle Ahlhaus, Adele Castles, Dawn Reynolds, Mara Robertson, Kathy Hamilton, Sue Smith & Megan Jacobs, Jo Renehan.*



## Volunteers



To become a volunteer, offering up your time for the benefit of others, is a choice that we are sincerely grateful to others for making. The roles that our volunteers fulfill either on a regular basis, or just when they are able, provides assistance to Melba that is invaluable. That said, the value of the time and services that they do provide helps us to fill a gap that we otherwise could not fill.

At Melba we are so pleased with the outcomes that our valuable volunteers have supported people to achieve over the

last 12 months. Through the involvement of our volunteers we have had great success with many projects, and the people we support have been able to enjoy greater choices in their life.

One big project was a “makeover” to Melba’s Roland Avenue property with thanks to a grant from the Mt Evelyn and Montrose Community Bank. A huge force of volunteers came from the Lilydale Rotary Club and the Discovery Church (formerly Careforce Church) and spent a day working both inside and outside the building. Almost 100 volunteers worked in the gardens and renovated the building, which now has an apartment where one of the people we support has chosen to live. Alongside our volunteer projects we have a great group of volunteers who regularly contribute time to Melba in many and varied ways. It could be supporting someone to go swimming, being involved with the Able Bake House, providing musical entertainment, or simply ‘hanging out’ with someone. These volunteers not only play a role in supporting a person to enjoy their chosen activity, they also often become a friend. They are someone who is not paid to spend time with a person. This is key to helping individuals build upon their social capital.

I also want to acknowledge the terrific efforts of those individuals who support Melba by contributing their time and expertise on the Board of Management or on one of several committees. This form of volunteering can often bring with it a great deal of responsibility. We are very grateful for the energy, passion and time each of you gives.

Earlier this year we said ‘Thanks a Million’ to our wonderful volunteers at a special afternoon tea as part of National Volunteer Week. I really enjoyed meeting some of our ‘vollies’ for the first time and listening to their fantastic stories about the people they help to support at Melba. Time and time again, I was reminded of that great quote, ‘Those who can, do; those who can do more, volunteer’!

Melba is passionate about seeing growth in our volunteer numbers. We would love your help! You may know someone who could be a great volunteer. That someone could even be you!

For further details on Melba’s Valuable Volunteers please contact me on 9760 8217 or at [belinda.allwood@melbasupport.com.au](mailto:belinda.allwood@melbasupport.com.au).

Belinda Allwood  
Volunteer Coordinator



Members of the Lilydale Rotary Club



Pictured: Shanae Hogan

## History

Melba began in the early 1970s, established out of a need for a day service for children with disabilities. It also provided a support network for parents, who had nowhere to go and no one to turn to for advice and help. Through the generosity of community members, a congregate care facility was built which was used until the late 1990s. As society changed, so too did the views on providing supports to people with disabilities. Congregate care facilities dissolved and houses located in the general community were purpose built; adult training day services became places

where people could come, not just to learn life skills, but be assisted to make meaningful connections to their community through employment, volunteering and developing friendships. The focus moved away from ‘care’ and towards the provision of support to achieve outcomes for each person, centred on each individual’s likes, dislikes, dreams and desires. Today, and throughout its more than 40 year journey, Melba has held a reputation within its field as progressive, forward thinking and always a provider of quality services.

## Thank you

Melba would like to thank the following businesses, groups and individuals for their generosity and support throughout the financial year.

Anderson and Associates  
 Andrew Erikson  
 Andrew and Jenny Graham  
 ARP Smash Repairs, Peter Seiber  
 Beryl Kearns  
 Beacon Lighting, Ian Bunnett  
 Bernard & Mary Euheus Charitable Trust  
 Bev and Ray Galloway  
 Brett Ratten, Ambassador  
 Burtec Distribution, Mr Bert Darwinkel  
 Christine Fyffe, MP and staff (Sue and Mitch)  
 Communication Resource Centre  
 David Watt  
 Department of Human Services  
 Dirke Bouma, Estate of  
 Doherty Family  
 Don Challenger, Estate of  
 Earney Family Trust  
 Eastern Volunteers Resource Centre  
 Eastwood Ladies Golf Club  
 Effron Family Foundation  
 Elite Customer Solutions  
 Equipment Recycling Network,  
 Russell Foreshaw  
 Fred and Jeanette Van't Riet  
 Graham Sprague  
 Greyhound Racing Victoria  
 Glynne Linnell Beaumont, Estate of  
 Hatrick Communications  
 IGA Supermarket Mt Evelyn, Tony and staff  
 Kate Lee Productions  
 Ken and Chris Dowling  
 Lajari, Lori Lay  
 Lilydale Rotary  
 Linda and Bob Woodward

Lioness Club of Ballan  
 Lions Club, Croydon  
 Lions Club, Healesville  
 Maria McCarthy  
 Maroondah City Council  
 Mollie Quinton, in memory of Rebecca Britt  
 Monash Medical Students  
 Montrose FIDA Football Clinic, Chris Dowling,  
 Terry Layton, Glenn Rickard  
 Montrose Football Club  
 Montrose Recreation Reserve Committee  
 Mr G Haggard  
 Mt Evelyn Community Bank & Districts,  
 Jill Rule and David Watt  
 National Disability Services  
 Pam Usher  
 Patricia Broadbent  
 Pinnacle Print Group, Justin Hall  
 Power Packed Electrics, Geoff and Deb French  
 Quest Payment Systems  
 Rotary Club of Montrose  
 Silvendale Transport  
 Training Unlimited  
 The Mail, Mt Evelyn  
 Vivienne Cerolini  
 Yarra Ranges Council  
 YMCA, Trish, Frank and Staff  
 And special thanks to our anonymous donors

We would also like to thank our Ruby Anniversary Partners, and we thank you for your support in commemorating this very special and important moment in history.

Business Partners:  
 ARP Smash Repairs  
 Beacon Lighting  
 Bernard & Mary Euheus Charitable Trust  
 Commonwealth Bank, Chirnside Park  
 Eastwood Ladies Golf Club  
 ERNI Recycling

Evolution Business Systems (EBS)  
 Generation Investments,  
 Mr David Smorgon  
 Greg and Carissa Earney  
 Hatrick Communications  
 Healesville Toyota  
 HMA Consulting  
 Hocking Stuart  
 Human IT  
 IGA Mt Evelyn  
 Mount Evelyn Pharmacy  
 Mt Evelyn Community Bank  
 OnCall Personnel  
 Quest Payment Systems  
 Vivienne Cerolini and Chris Murphy

Individual Partners:  
 Ann Wheeler  
 Anthony Kolmus  
 Bill Van den Akker  
 Broadbent Family  
 Christine Fyffe, MP  
 Cr Tim Heenan  
 Glenn Foard  
 Gracie and Mia Glassborow  
 Graham and Anne-Marie Leaver  
 Hilda and Eric Calvert (in memory)  
 Hocking Stuart, Mooroolbark  
 Ian Pollock  
 Jacqueline George (in memory)  
 Joan and Robert Nicholson (in memory)  
 Joanne Groves  
 Kristy Burrows  
 Lajari, Lori Lay  
 Lea Corbett  
 Nan Stevenson  
 Paula Herlihy  
 Steven Groves  
 Tim Greene



Melba Support Services AGM 2012



Pictured: Brett Ratten & Danielle N

## Community Relations

The past 12 months have been very exciting, rewarding and busy in Community Relations. Whenever I spend time with the people we support and our staff, I continue to be amazed and impressed by the unique and personalised support that Melba provides to each person, and I am reminded exactly why I choose to do what I do in Community Relations; that is, asking others to choose Melba to be their 'charity of choice'.

We engage with our friends, supporters and partners via number of ways, including through our quarterly newsletter. Our newsletter enables us to share just some of the wonderful stories and experiences that the people we support enjoy, and we hope that by sharing these, we are able to provide some insight into the ways in which we support people to lead everyday lives. A big thank you to each person, their families and support staff who have shared their stories over the year; thank you to Lori from Lajari Design House and Justin from Pinnal Print Group for your expert support in producing the newsletters; and a HUGE thank you to the Mt Evelyn Community Bank for your generous support in enabling us to produce this high quality and important publication.

Our Ruby Anniversary celebrations culminated in our Ruby Anniversary Dinner in October, a night which was shared by over 200 friends of Melba. I would like to thank our Ruby Anniversary partners, everyone who attended and the many people who contributed to the night in some way. Whilst we raised over \$35,000 on the night, our biggest success was to share this momentous occasion with so many of Melba's past and present friends.

In early 2013 we launched our new-look website. It has been refreshed to be more user friendly, provide better information more often and to help share the Melba story with as many people as possible. All at the same address [www.melbasupport.com.au](http://www.melbasupport.com.au). If you haven't already, please visit the site and check it out! While you are there, please sign up to our contact page so that we can keep in touch with you electronically.

We continued working with our fabulous Ambassador, Mr Brett Ratten (pictured), throughout the year. Brett was involved with our Ruby Anniversary Dinner, Community Fair event and he introduced our new Promotional DVD. Brett's integrity, combined with his easy-going, friendly nature makes him a valued friend of Melba. Thank you Brett for your continued support.

In late 2012 Melba's Promotional DVD was created to help us share what is unique and great about Melba with those who may not have heard about us before. We believe we have captured the essence of Melba in this short, nine minute presentation, and should you be interested in checking it out or sharing it with others, you can find it on the home page of our website or a copy can be obtained by emailing me.

An important group of people that we connect with are Melba's Life Governors. To ensure that our past remains part of our future, we invited our Life Governors to a dinner where we shared with them the future directions of Melba. It was wonderful to have all of these visionary people in one room, and to have our CEO share with them our vision for the future – one that they were very excited about.

Melba's Development and Advisory Council met quarterly over the past year, coming together to provide expert advice, information and share ideas around our Fundraising and Marketing activities. I would like to thank each of our members for the support that they



provide, and the time that they choose to donate to Melba. It is very much appreciated. Thank you to Mr Andrew Graham, Mr David Watt, Mrs Maria McCarthy (outgoing), Ms Pam Usher, Ms Vivienne Cerolini, Mr Brian Baker and Mr David Johnston (incoming).

As the Yarra Ranges Community Group of the Year 2013, we have enjoyed some terrific media attention, particularly from our local media outlets. We were also invited to share in the Australia Day celebrations with the Yarra Ranges Council and their guests, which was a great experience. We would like to thank the Yarra Ranges Council for their recognition of our contribution to the local community and for choosing us as the recipients of this award.

We have enjoyed working with many of our local community partners over the year, including the Mt Evelyn Community Bank, the YMCA, local church groups Discovery Church and the Church of Latterday Saints, Lilydale Rotary and The Mt Evelyn Mail. We also shared our beautiful space at Ormeau Road with many local businesses and community members at our Community Fair.

All of this work isn't possible without the support that I receive from Glenn Foard, Kirsten Filmer, the Leadership Team, staff and of course Penny Glassborow and Ebony Monteau. Penny left to become a mum for the third time early in 2013, and we welcomed Ebony to the role of Community Relations and Development Coordinator shortly after. Both of these ladies have been invaluable in the support they provide in the role, and I thank them for their dedication, commitment and passion.

Being a part of Melba is something that I take great pride in. I am constantly inspired by the stories that I learn and hear about, and I feel privileged to then get to share them with others. It is my vision to be able to share those stories with as many people as I can, helping and encouraging others to get involved. I would like to thank each of our donors, grant makers, sponsors and supporters for their contribution over the past 12 months. Without your generosity, it is difficult to continue to provide the kind of support that we believe is important to ensure people have everyday lives. I hope that you continue to choose to support us, and perhaps I can be so bold as to ask you to help us share our stories with others, helping them to make that simple, yet important choice to make Melba, their 'charity of choice'.

Lisa Glassborow  
Manager, Community Relations and Development

## Melba's Timeline

- 1972** The Melba Centre is established out of a need for a day service for children with disabilities
- The Melba Centre is named after Dame Nellie Melba, with Lady Vestey as Patron
- 1973** Melba Centre opened in the Lilydale Presbyterian Church Hall (now Uniting Church) two days a week staffed entirely by voluntary helpers, for twenty-one children
- 1974** Seven and a half acres of aqueduct land in Mt Evelyn were purchased from the Melbourne Board of Works for the establishment of a day training centre
- 1975** Rosine Nursing Home opens and becomes home to over 32 children with a profound level of disability. This was funded and built privately by the Stevenson Family
- A temporary Melba Day Training Centre commenced with a full time teacher and supervisor. Eventually 19 children came on a rotational basis
- The Mt Evelyn Sunday Market, operated by Melba Centre and managed by Don Bissett opened in the old Millard Building on York Rd
- Community contributions totalling \$127,000 for the new Melba Centre flowed in
- 1976** Rosine Nursing Home was purchased by the State Government and administered by Melba
- 1977** Opening of the Melba Centre by The Honourable Sir Rupert James Hamer, MP Premier of Victoria
- 1981** Gwenorm and Harvey House were opened, as two 10 bed units in addition to the Rosine site, to accommodate children and adults, opened by the Minister of Health, Mr Bill Borthwick and Sir Billy Snedden representing the Gwenorm Foundation
- 1985** The Junior section of the Melba Day Training Centre was transferred to the Education Department and continued to occupy buildings at the Melba Ormeau Rd complex.
- 1989** Rosine ceased operation as a Nursing Home and became an Accommodation Support Service, known as Melba Residential Services, under the Disability Services Act (1986)
- 1991** The Junior section of the Melba Centre, now known as the Mt Evelyn Special Development School and funded by the Education Department moved to the Morrison Reserve site
- 1992** Green Gums Child Care Centre opened at Ormeau Rd, providing both child care and a registered kindergarten
- 1994** An off-site program, Warren House Campus, opened in Lilydale
- 1996** Melba Centre changed its name to Melba Support Services
- Carson and McLellan Business Plan on Melba's Sustainability
- 1997** Melba Residential Services changed its name to Community Living Support Services
- 6 residential houses located throughout the then Shire of Yarra Ranges, opened and 36 residents of the CLSS moved out of the congregate care facility and into their new homes (all on one weekend!)
- Warren House Campus relocated to another site
- Formal separation of Ormeau Rd and Warren House ATSS
- 1998** Official opening of 6 CLSS houses, by The Honourable Dr Denis Napthine, Minister for Youth and Community Services
- Green Gums ceased operation
- 1999** Relocation of Ormeau Campus to administration building
- Church commences leasing the south wing of Ormeau Rd
- 2000** Official opening of the 7th house, Blue Ridge, by The Honourable Christine Campbell, Minister for Community Services
- The inaugural Stevenson Award was given to Emma Hardie, Lara Crt
- 2001** Individual Support Arrangements portfolio commences
- 2004** Melba becomes accredited by the Council on Quality and Leadership, USA
- 2005** Warren House Day Service closes and relocated to Wray Crescent
- 2006** Birmingham Rd Day Service commences
- 2012** Melba celebrates 40 years of service to people with a disability and Mr Brett Ratten appointed Ambassador.
- Melba is the first Australian organisation to be accredited against CQL's Person Centred Excellence framework
- 2013** Melba is awarded the Yarra Ranges Community Group of the Year
- Roland Avenue remodelled to provide independent living service



*Pictured: Fiona D*

## Life Governors

Melba's Life Governors have each made major contributions to the organisation over many years. They have dedicated enormous hours, given endless energy and worked tirelessly for the organisation and the people we support from the early days to today. These individuals' efforts have been recognised through the awarding of Life Governorship, by Melba's Board of Management.

This year, Melba's Board of Management awarded 3 Life Governorships.

### ANGELA BLOMFIELD (nee Carter)

In 1973 Angela Blomfield (or Angela Carter, as she was known then), together with Pauline Jones, realised that there was a real need for a support group for mothers who felt isolated because their child had a disability. They ran a morning tea and some twenty mothers came along, and the support network was born. From there grew the Melba Day Centre.

As well as Angela's many years committed to ensuring Melba succeeded, she was also integral in commencing a Home Help service to assist parents and served as Vice President on the Melba Centre Ladies Auxiliary.

In an era in which disability wasn't talked much about, and families endured awkward conversations with people about their child with a disability, Angela recognised that social change was needed, and she took every opportunity to make a difference.



### ANTHONY KOLMUS

Melba's core values include a strong commitment to improving the quality of our services, listening to and focusing on each individual and the choices they make, and making sure we effectively use our resources to maximise the outcomes for the people who use our services. Almost 20 years ago, in a very different time, Anthony Kolmus started at Melba and, in line with these values, radically changed the way Melba did business.



In early 1995 Anthony was appointed the Director of Disability Services and became Executive Director in 1997. He continued in this role until 2008 when he resigned from Melba.

Anthony was instrumental in the redevelopment of the accommodation service in the 1990s and in identifying a range of strategies to eliminate a large debt that Melba had. He also worked tirelessly to raise the profile of Melba in the sector. During his time, Anthony introduced a quality assurance program, first internally and then with the Council on Quality and Leadership.

During his time as Executive Director (and CEO) Anthony created a lasting legacy at Melba. He is a forward thinking and greatly respected person in the disability sector.

### DAVID JOHNSTON

Good governance is critical for any organisation, in particular the management of its finances. Melba has been fortunate to have a very skilled, dedicated and experienced Treasurer and Board Member for more than a decade in David Johnston. David has served on both the Melba Board and the Finance Sub-committee, overseeing the strategic financial goals of the organisation and ensuring the organisation's financial viability into the future.

David has volunteered on Melba's Board for more than ten years as Treasurer, bringing with him his experience in the banking sector, which has been tremendously valuable to the organisation.

David's commitment to Melba has been exemplary, and he is a worthy recipient of our Life Governorship award.



Angela, Anthony and David join an esteemed list of visionary, passionate and important people in Melba's history.

CB Soward (dec)

GT Stevenson (dec)

Mrs Nan Stevenson

Mrs Pauline Jones

Mr Harry Jones

Mrs Penny Buck

Mrs Jeanette Van't Riet

Mr Geoff Welsh

Ms Angela Blomfield (nee Carter)

Mr Anthony Kolmus

Mr David Johnston

We want to ensure that our past is part of our future

## Human Resources



It never ceases to amaze me the commitment and dedication of Melba's staff; it is seen in so many ways throughout the working week and year, volunteering extra hours when they see the need, sometimes putting their own life and family on hold when required. We all have core hours of work we need to complete but many of Melba's staff go over and above that time and time

again. That is the difference with Melba staff; that commitment to make things better for people. They don't just see a problem and say "what can I do" they see a problem and ask "how can I help?" Other organisations may have "specialised" and "highly trained" staff - Melba has that too - but the difference is that our staff want to make a difference in people's lives and are committed to do whatever it takes to make that person's life better.

Whist many staff commit to going that little bit further, it is very important that when they do get paid they are remunerated in an accurate and timely manner. Mandy Lister (pictured) manages Melba's pay roll function in a professional and highly competent manner and always with a smile. Never underestimate the complex role of ensuring all people get paid at the right time, the right amount and at the right rate. There have been some unusual circumstances that have threatened the timely transfer of people's pays but, ever the professional, Mandy has delivered, working dilligently to ensure that staff get paid on time.

But Human Resources is, of course, much more than just paying people!

### WELLBEING PROGRAM

Taking care of ourselves, mentally and physically is important for all of us, but critical for direct support staff at Melba. So, before winter really took hold this year, Melba organised for free flu vaccinations for staff. Many staff took advantage of the flu vaccination and had a healthy start to the season.

Workplace Health Checks have also been made available to all staff. Melba staff who wished, booked a free private consultation with a trained health professional who collected information and provided advice on any healthy lifestyle changes that may help staff reduce their risk of chronic illness.

And wellbeing isn't just about the body; keeping a healthy mind and attitude is just as vital. In August, for the second year in a row, Melba held a training workshop on resilience, facilitated by Stuart Taylor and Peta Sigley from the Resilience Institute. Stuart and Peta are excellent presenters and they deliver many important messages about maintaining resilience and positive attitudes. This year we planned well in advance and provided the opportunity for all Melba staff to attend the Resilience workshop – more than a hundred did so!

An Employee Assistance Program, or EAP, has been offered to Melba staff for more than ten years. We believe that the overall

well being of staff is an important factor in Melba being able to deliver high quality support services. EAP is a free, confidential and professional counselling service available to all staff and their immediate families. For the last eight years Elissa Jackson has provided this counselling service. This year she has decided to move up north for a "tree change" and we would like to thank her for her services. I have heard many times from staff who wanted to share their experience that Elissa was open, friendly and helped them through a difficult time. We have now engaged Jennifer Dooley and Andrea Lim to provide Melba's EAP as we continue to support and strengthen the health and wellbeing of our staff into the future.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Melba strives to provide a safe work environment for our employees and for those we support. Our Occupational Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to review any incidents that do occur and develop proactive strategies so that the risk of future incidents is reduced.

We have actively encouraged reporting of all near misses and incidents in the last year. This reporting assists us to improve work practices and highlight any areas requiring changes. We thank our Health and Safety Representatives and all committee members for their ongoing diligence and efforts this year.

### GENDER EQUALITY

In accordance with the requirements of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, Melba lodged its 2013 public report with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency earlier this year. You may access a copy of the report (and of previous years' reports) on the Agency's website ([www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au)) and provide comment either to Melba or to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. More details are on the website.

### RECRUITMENT

Melba's recruitment process has been very successful for us over the last ten years; we are committed to employing people who show the right attitude and values, and who understand the meaning of human rights. We acknowledge the importance of education but it is not the certificate or the degree that drives people to work in this field, it is an understanding that all people have the right to have an everyday life. This year we have held three information nights and continue to employ people who show empathy, commitment, initiative and a desire to make a difference. Due to an increase in the numbers of people we support, particularly in Individualised Support Arrangements, we have struggled to meet the number of staff we require on both a permanent and part time basis. This will see an increase in the recruitment process next year.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme will change the way disability support is offered in Victoria, and we will need to be smarter in the way we recruit staff. We will need to have significant strategies in place to ensure that we can move with the changes and continue to be an employer of choice.

Penny Kendall

on behalf of the Human Resources Department

## Board of Management



**Dr John Annison**  
**MEMBER**

John joined the Board in July 2010 and became President in March 2013. With a long and distinguished career in the disability sector (both government and non-government) John was the Principal Lecturer in Deakin University's Disability Studies, as well as being the President of the Council of Intellectual Disability Agencies (now merged with National Disability Services, Victoria). John was also a former President of Inclusion Melbourne.



**Ms Kristy Burrows**  
**VICE PRESIDENT**

Kristy is an Associate Director of Beaumont Lawyers and joined the Board in 2008. Kristy is in her eighth year of practice as a Solicitor having worked in the real estate industry for six years prior to joining the legal profession.



**Mr Graham Leaver**  
**MEMBER**

Graham has been a member of the Board since 2006 and is the father of David who is supported through Melba's Community Living Support Service and Individual Support Arrangements. Graham has been involved with Melba since 1988 and has played an integral role within Melba on many committees and working parties during this time.



**Mr Steven Groves**  
**MEMBER**

Joining the Board in 2008, Steven took on the role of President in 2010 after previously serving as Vice President and Assistant Treasurer. In March 2013 Steven stepped down from the role of President, but remains active on the Board.

Steven has over 20 years experience in accounting and taxation, is a CPA, a Fellow of the Taxation Institute of Australia, and is Director of Astute Business Pty Ltd.



**Mr Colin Rose**  
**MEMBER**

Colin has been involved with Melba for about 14 years now and came back onto the board recently after some time off. Colin has been a board member in the past at Melba as well as serving on other committees and offers great insight into the disability field. Colin also works for DHS and has been an active member of the Lions Club for the last 30 years. Colin is also involved in a variety of other voluntary work.



**Mr David Johnston**  
**OUTGOING TREASURER**

David has been on the Melba Board for 11 years, all of them as Treasurer. David has an impressive 30 year employment history in banking and private industry, holding senior management positions at Westpac and Sigma Pharmaceuticals.

David gave notice in December that he would be retiring from the Board, but that he would spend time with incoming Treasurer, Brian, to hand over.



**Ms Jan Calvert-Rebbechi**  
**SECRETARY**

Jan has been on the Board since 2000 and has held the role of Secretary for five years. Jan is the mother of Miles who attends Ormeau Rd Community Connections. Jan is a strong advocate for her son and others who attend the day service and has contributed in a range of consultation groups over her 15 year involvement with Melba.



**Mr Brian Baker**  
**INCOMING TREASURER**

Brian Baker is a semi-retired wholesale banker, who has been involved with the origination and management of complex structured financial and property transaction and treasury products for over 30 years. He is a member of CPA Australia, Chartered Secretaries Australia and Australian Institute of Company Directors. Brian is the incoming Treasurer.



**Ms Sue Driscoll**  
**MEMBER**

Sue specialises in providing communications and marketing advice and support to the Victorian community sector. Her clients include all areas of healthcare: metropolitan and rural hospitals, aged care and disability agencies, mental health services, community health, health partnerships, general practice organisations and disease-specific support groups.



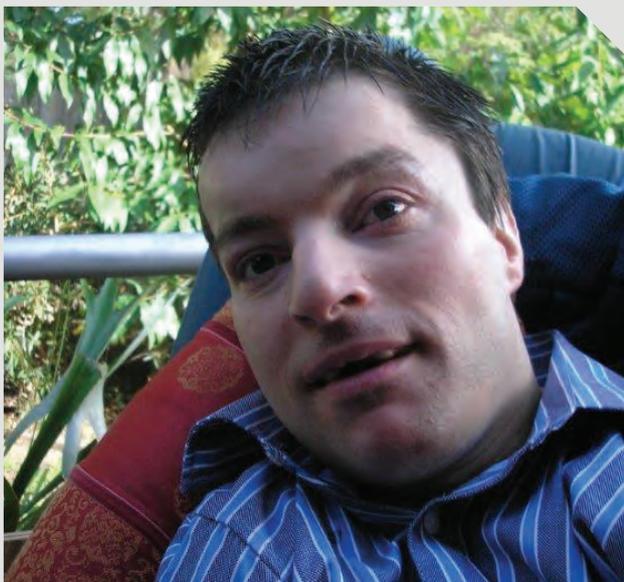
**Mr Glenn Foard**  
**EX-OFFICIO MEMBER**

Glenn has extensive experience in the sector, including 11 years with DHS, Executive Management in both Commonwealth and State Governments and, in earlier years, he worked in research and academic institutions.



**Mrs Kirsten Filmer**  
**MINUTES SECRETARY**

Kirsten is the Executive Office Manager of Melba Support Services. She has over 10 years experience working in the disability and aged care sectors and has served on a number of not-for-profit committees. Kirsten has supported Melba's Board as Minutes Secretary since February 2012.



## Vale Linton Smith

On Thursday 18th April 2013, Melba lost a dear friend in Linton Smith.

Linton was a much loved member of the Lara Court family where his extremely loud and self-assured personality endeared him to everyone. Linton's love of attention would often lead him to get up to all sorts of antics – keeping everyone on their toes which often made him laugh. He was a person who knew exactly what he wanted, and if that wasn't what was happening at any stage in his day, he would certainly make no excuses for letting people know – sometimes yelling loudly to get someone's attention.

Linton had a passion for motorbikes, and he also enjoyed watching the kids in the street play and ride their bikes. Linton loved arm wrestling (when he won!) and he enjoyed spending time at the Yarra Junction Men's Shed with Dave and other friends. Linton also regularly attended his local church, where he was a welcome part of their community.

Linton will be remembered as a lively chap and will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

## Vale Heather Bell

It is with great sadness that we advise that Heather Bell passed away on 17th March 2013.

A lady who will be remembered for her compassion, her sense of style and her wicked sense of humour, Heather was a huge part of the DeFelice Place household and is very sadly missed.

Heather's naturally social personality endeared her to many, so it was lucky she had an amazing memory for people and faces. Even if she hadn't seen a person for 10 years, if they walked by her while she was out, or popped in at home, she would always remember them. Heather also loved a good gossip, and her face would light up as she sat with staff as they had a chat.

With a love for shopping, Heather always made sure she had 'the right accessories' for every outfit. Heather had a real passion for hats, jewellery and scarves, and her wardrobe would have rivalled some of Melbourne's best fashionistas!

A deeply affectionate person, Heather enjoyed giving huge hugs, especially in the last 12 months – it was like she didn't want to let you go. She certainly made you feel very special when you were in her company.

For the past 20 years, Heather had been connected with the Montrose Church of Christ's 'Sing-a-long' session, where she made lifelong friends, like Gwenda, who continues to visit DeFelice Place now. Heather loved spending time with her many friends at the church and we know they will certainly miss her.

What Heather will be remembered fondly for the most will be her mischievous personality. She was always playing jokes on the staff at DeFelice Place and had everyone in fits of laughter. She would hide handbags and keys when she wanted you to stay longer and she would then throw them at you and send you away with the wave of a hand when she'd had enough of you. It always made the staff feel as though they could head out the door as she was sending them home – even if they hadn't finished their shift!

Heather's close relative, Pam, who had been a lifelong connection,



always took part in her special celebrations and occasions and the staff at DeFelice Place hope she still will continue to drop in from time to time.

As Heather never forgot anybody, so she will certainly never be forgotten by those at Melba who knew and loved her.

## Corporate Services

I am pleased to report that for the financial year 2012-13, Melba produced a net operating surplus of \$48,017.

This minor surplus, of just 0.44% of our total income, is clearly a reminder that we operate in the community sector, which has, and will continue to be, subject to financial restraint. There is no room for complacency and only limited opportunity to reinvest in our infrastructure and staff to improve productivity and future sustainability. We are, therefore, particularly thankful for the hard work, resourcefulness and dedication of the people who work for and with Melba to enable it to deliver quality services to the people we support. Equally we are appreciative of the support we receive through donations. We certainly hope that this generous support will continue into the future as these funds are vital to the

quality of the supports we provide and the outcomes we achieve through the expenditure of our funds.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme will bring with it more opportunities as well as competition to the sector and we will continue to align our systems and thinking to succeed in this new environment, whilst ensuring that our 'person centred' approach underpins everything we do.

I take this opportunity to thank our hard working Treasurer, Mr Brian Baker, the Finance Sub Committee of the Board of Management, especially our volunteer members Diannah Parker and Angela Stainwall, and CEO, Glenn Foard, for their on-going stewardship and support. I acknowledge the dedication, commitment and professionalism of my working colleagues, Karen Gibson, Mandy Lister,



Leigh McAlister and Craig Woods. Finally, special thanks to David Harbinson who stepped down as Melba's Business Manager this year, for his 16 years of dedicated service to Melba.

Lorensz Senn  
Corporate Services Manager

## Financial Statements

The following information is an extract from the Annual Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2013.

### INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

	2013	2012
Total Income	10,864,310	10,158,737
Total Expenditure	<u>10,719,048</u>	<u>10,004,779</u>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS</b>	<b>145,262</b>	<b>153,958</b>
(before depreciation & abnormal expenses)		
Depreciation	<u>97,245</u>	<u>91,459</u>
<b>OPERATING SURPLUS</b>	<b>48,017</b>	<b>62,499</b>
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR	<u>1,173,676</u>	<u>1,111,177</u>
<b>ACCUMULATED SURPLUS C/Forward</b>	<b><u>1,221,693</u></b>	<b><u>1,173,676</u></b>
(at the end of the financial year)		

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2013

Total Current Assets	3,590,360	3,635,502
Total Non-Current Assets	<u>2,195,877</u>	<u>2,183,638</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>5,786,237</b>	<b>5,819,140</b>
Total Current Liabilities	2,133,110	2,352,605
Total Non-Current Liabilities	<u>454,366</u>	<u>322,841</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>2,587,476</u></b>	<b><u>2,675,446</u></b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>3,198,761</u></b>	<b><u>3,143,694</u></b>
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	1,221,693	1,173,676
Reserves	<u>1,977,068</u>	<u>1,970,018</u>
<b>TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>	<b><u>3,198,761</u></b>	<b><u>3,143,694</u></b>

The full set of financial statements including accompanying notes and the audit certificate can be obtained by members by contacting the Corporate Services Manager at Melba Support Services Inc.



Karen Gibson



Leigh McAllister



Craig Wood

## Looking Forward

Reflecting on the year that was is important. It helps us take a moment to enjoy our successes, review our achievements and activities, and identify areas that may require further attention. It reminds us to thank those who have helped us get from one point to the next. However, whilst we do this, it is important to also look forward, to ensure that our future direction and activities are underpinned by the same values that we have always worked by, and to provide a link between our past and future.

Therefore, as we have reflected on the past year in this Annual Report, we will also provide you with some information about what lies ahead for the most important group of people connected to Melba; the people we support.

If you would like more information on how to get involved and support Melba in any of these areas, please contact Lisa Glassborow at [lisa.glassborow@melbasupport.com.au](mailto:lisa.glassborow@melbasupport.com.au) or on 0402 302 477.

### RELOCATION OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND ADMINISTRATION FROM ORMEAU ROAD

Work will continue on the Relocation Project, aimed at moving Community Connections and Administration from the Ormeau Road site, to another site. This is an enormous project that will require many hours and significant funds to achieve.

### ACCOMMODATION CHOICE

We believe that it is a basic human right that a person can choose where, with whom and with how many people they live. For a person with a disability, that is often not the case, and we will continue to encourage support for our Accommodation Choice Project, through which we hope to provide greater choice to people in this critical area.

### EVERYDAY CHOICES, FOR AN EVERYDAY LIFE

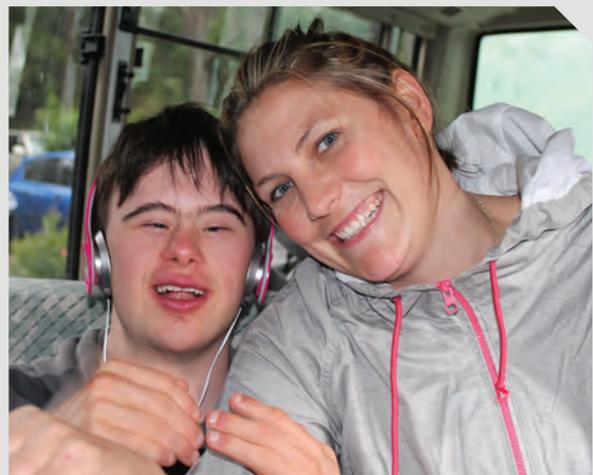
Through the support of our donors, sponsors and partners we will continue to provide individualised support to the people who access our services. Your donations help us to provide more 1:1 staff support, provide support for people to make real and valuable contributions to their community, and to explore new ways we can help individuals lead a life of their choice.

### COMMUNICATION

As many of the people Melba supports do not use words to communicate, understanding each person's gestures, vocalisations and other methods of communication is imperative for us to learn from each person what is important to them. Without this information, we cannot support them to lead the life that they want. Our work around communication aids, including the use of iPads and community request cards, will continue to be individually tailored.

### BUS SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Maintaining our fleet of almost 20 buses and transport vehicles is a costly exercise. We have introduced our Bus Sponsorship Program to help us offset these costs, and will continue to seek support for this. We offer businesses the opportunity to advertise on the sides and backs of our buses for a very reasonable fee, for a 12-month period.



*Pictured: Left photograph Mark Libbis with Christine Fyffe MP, right photograph Nic Moore & Sarah Parsons*

# Annual Report 2013



thank you for your support in 2013

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