

# Fabulously purposeful lives

Annual Report 2022–2023



## Values



## Vision

A society that values the individuality and rights of all people.

## Purpose

To open up a world of opportunities for people to live a fabulous life.

# Human rights underpin everything we do

**Melba Support Services would like to thank the following people for their support over the last year.**

- The people who choose Melba as their support provider
- Families, friends and advocates of people we support
- Melba employees
- Community partners
- Donors and supporters
- Our supplier network



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Melba Support Services acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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# From the CEO and Chair



**There is no doubt the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we all do so many things. As we adjust to the new, post-pandemic world and after years of being somewhat disconnected from each other we wanted to introduce our annual report together.**

> **Hayley Dean, CEO & Arvind Nathan Chair**

We remain exceptionally proud of how Melba's community responded to the constantly evolving COVID-19 situation. The organisation has remained vigilant and prepared. Our strategic approach to risk mitigation along with our COVID-19 Committee ensure our response to the pandemic remains nimble and effective.

In recent years, our values have uniquely positioned us to embrace the opportunity to examine how we do things and explore new ways of working. Office-based employees are supported to work flexibly, from home as well as from the office, enabling both collaboration and a balanced work/life schedule. We searched for and implemented more effective communication pathways which, for an organisation with a large geographic spread, will be immensely valuable for years to come. Most pleasingly, we are challenging 'old-school' beliefs about service delivery and excitedly asking how do people want to explore and participate in their communities and express their individuality?

There are so many highlights we want to mention, like visiting Narelle in Horsham and being gifted some of her beautiful art, being invited to be the subject of a photography workshop at Arthur Creative, and seeing Ben move into his own home that he has been dreaming of for so many years. A meaningful and significant moment for both of us was Melba's invitation to appear at the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability to talk about our human rights-based approach to everything we do. This high-profile focus on human rights validates all the work we have been doing for over 50 years. We are eagerly awaiting the day that human rights for people with disability is enshrined in federal legislation; just one of 222 recommendations made by the Commission.

ARROW, Melba's group of self-advocates, continues to play a critical role in all things we do. The voices of people we support have to be the loudest and must always be heard. People must be the decision-makers in their own lives. Inclusive governance is vital to ensuring people with disability self-determine in all parts of their life. We strive to ensure people have ultimate choice and control over their lives, whether that's about the delivery of day-to-day supports or from a governance perspective. ARROW is a vital part of this work – making sure that individuals (in particular those with complex needs, and who may not use words to communicate) have a true, impactful and lasting voice.

## From the CEO and Chair (continued)

It was great to be able to meet with ARROW members once again in person this year. The importance of ensuring that our board members hear directly from people we support lies not only in valuing and respecting their unique experiences, but also about all of us having a deeper understanding about what day-to-day life is like for people with disability. The Board visited ARROW members across different regions this year and is using these experiences to improve the way we govern.

Our 2023 annual report refers to ensuring Melba is 'future fit'. This means laying the right foundations that will enable the organisation to be agile as well as strategic. It's about ensuring that our values continue to drive our work to support people to realise their hopes, dreams and aspirations. It's about being open to all that is on offer (now and into the future) and exploring how technology, robotics and artificial intelligence could be thoughtfully used to open up new freedoms for people we support. It's the foundation to truly achieve our vision – to open up a world of opportunities for people to live a fabulous life!

We acknowledge that more can always be done. We know we won't always get it right but at the core of all our efforts lies The Melba Way. Our relentless commitment to supporting people to live the lives they want, their way, remains unwavering. We will continuously strive to improve, ensuring the person supported is not only at the heart of everything we do but directing our future endeavours.

We thank the dedicated Melba community we have around us for always speaking up when we need to do things differently.

Thank you to everyone in the Melba community for giving their all this year; every person we support, their families and advocates, and every Melba team member that has contributed to the year being the success it has been.

Tricia Malowney has had to step down from the board given some work she is doing with reviews of the NDIS. While this is an incredible opportunity for her, and we know the NDIS will benefit from her wisdom, we were sad to see her go and wish her all the best.

**Hayley Dean, CEO**  
**& Arvind Nathan Chair**



We base what we do on dignity, equality and mutual respect. We recognise the value of every person who chooses Melba Support Services (Melba).

# About Melba

At Melba we open up a world of opportunities for people to live life – proudly, joyously, creatively, adventurously – however they want.

'The Melba Way' is how we go about doing this. Every person we support has a set of unique skills, abilities and characteristics. The Melba Way honours and sustains this uniqueness by creating, maintaining and refining a person's individualised service, minute by minute, hour by hour and day by day. We do this one person at a time.

Our approach is driven by people we support. Every person is supported to identify and create their own individualised pursuits as included members of their community.



We support people:

- to take on valued roles
- by providing opportunities to gain new skills or pursue their personal interests
- to have full access to all the opportunities available to any other community member, and
- to have total choice and control over what their life looks like.

These opportunities are as individual and unique as every person who chooses Melba, and as diverse as the communities we live in.



**What we do >** Since 1972, we've been providing services that focus on supporting people to dream big, embrace life and do what they choose and value. Melba recognises that part of living a happy, healthy life is being independent and being able to do the things that bring us joy.

## Home and living options

- Supported Independent Living (SIL) – providing people with 24/7 support in their homes. Funded by the NDIS, this type of support is funded when a person lives in an SDA (Specialist Disability Accommodation) built/renovated home. This may be an apartment, unit, townhouse, shared living or group home, that is built or designed to SDA requirements.
- Individualised Living Options (ILO) – provides support for people to live the way that suits them. Supports may be 24/7 or a couple of hours a day. This may be in a self-funded home, a rental property or a home shared with other family members.

## Holidays and short breaks

- Short Term Accommodation and Assistance (STAA) is commonly referred to as respite. It gives individuals and families the chance to enjoy a break in a supportive environment. Melba offers respite for adults and children.
- Our Leisure and Recreation Program provides tailored holiday options for individuals. This ranges from day trips to overseas holidays.

## Support Coordination

Our Support Coordinators help individuals make the most of their NDIS plan. Melba provides a range of Support Coordination services including Specialist Support Coordination, which is a time-limited service designed for people who have more intensive or complex needs.

## Practice, quality and safeguards

This includes:

- Person-Centred/Directed Planning through Personal Outcome Measures (POMS)
- Communication supports and advice
- Complex health support and advice
- Quality/Practice
- Practice Coaches – including 24/7 practice support line, and
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).

Our PBS practitioners base their work on the principle that behaviour is a form of communication and work to understand why behaviours of protest occur. We use a person-centred, evidence-informed approach that is respectful, ethical and supports a person's dignity and human rights.

## Community participation and inclusion

Melba provides group and individualised supports to access meaningful community activities, including day services options. Community participation and inclusion initiatives are co-designed, which means the person (this may include their advocate or loved ones) directs the thinking, planning and implementation of ideas and services to meet their goals and lifestyle.

## Individualised supports

Melba provides one-to-one support for individuals to fully participate in life, in whatever form or support activity that person wants. This could be furthering their life experiences, whether that be social, recreational, at home or in the community, or it may be skill development or vocational support.

## Arthur Creative

Arthur Creative offers a range of arts-based workshops for emerging and established artists. This incorporates artists supporting artists in all creative forms together with creative management, arts administration and project development.

# Our impact 2023



Home and living options

Based on our view that there is 'no one size fits all', we work with housing and supported disability accommodation providers and other like-minded organisations to offer a range of options including shared and individual living arrangements across many styles of housing such as houses, townhouses, units and apartments.



**Short-term accommodations (respite)** offering short holiday and break options.



**Day support and community inclusion connections programs**, which offer skill-based, meaningful activities with the aim of creating more community inclusion options and to connect people to support networks and services.



**5 offices**

Ballarat, Horsham, Lilydale, Morwell, Scoresby



Individual supports across Victoria



**1,449,692**

Hours of support delivered



**Ben exploring  
a world of  
optical illusions  
and trick-art  
at ArtVo**

# Future Melba



...Becoming future fit for people we support, their families and advocates, our employees and other stakeholders.

Future Melba is our transformation strategy, which builds on our strengths so we can provide high-quality services now and into the future.

It equips our highly engaged, skilled and values-driven workforce with the tools and technologies required to deliver outcomes in the most effective and efficient way – vital to opening up a world of opportunities for people to live a fabulous life!

## Future Melba's five strategic pillars highlight our focus areas



Our Melba community has shaped the vision for implementing effective transformational change. This includes engaging our workforce, strengthening our capability and capacity, and delivering key outcomes that contribute to our five strategic priorities.

## Engaging our community in Future Melba transformation

More than 550 employees came together at various events across the state to learn about the Future Melba strategy and activities. Feedback on our priorities and the approach we are taking was overwhelmingly positive.

## Building internal capacity and capability to deliver Future Melba

We continue to build internal capacity and capability to deliver the Future Melba strategy. Our core transformation team supported senior leaders as owners of the different workstreams, and engaged with stakeholders across the sector to develop initiatives that will help facilitate our strategy.

Spending time with House Supervisors and Outcomes Leads to inform the prioritisation and development of initiatives for Future Melba has been critical. Understanding their daily operations, processes, pain points and areas of change will better enable the sustainable delivery of high-quality support.

## Leaders are at the heart of any successful transformation

Over the past year, approximately 165 leaders attended a 'Leading Through Change' workshop to help them understand the different responses people can have when faced with change. Leaders honed their skills in how to effectively lead their teams through the transition and embed new ways of working across our day-to-day activities. Each session garnered a strong sense of commitment and enthusiasm from our leaders and, as new initiatives are rolled out, we are seeing evidence of these new change leadership skills actively being put into practice.



## Future Melba (continued)

### Improving digital networks

High-speed digital networks and appropriate technology are fundamental to Melba's ability to deliver streamlined and reliable operations across all locations. Digital connectivity is also vitally important for people we support so they can be connected to their families and communities.

We are addressing connectivity issues and upgrading IT equipment (such as computers and mobile phones) on our pathway to making Melba future fit.

Implementation of reliable, fast internet, wi-fi and new IT hardware kits for supported independent living homes will be completed by early 2024. Employees across Melba will have access to equipment such as new screens, laptops, mobiles, iPads and headsets.

### Strengthening cyber security

To ensure security protection for Melba's critical data we have introduced multi-factor authentication for all employees. This additional layer of security ensures Melba's systems can only be accessed by authorised people and are significantly less likely to be compromised.

### Helping workers connect from wherever they are

During the year we rolled out a new mobile app, CarelinkGo, to employees in eastern and southern regions. CarelinkGo lets people action tasks, such as viewing rosters, logging in and out of shifts, tracking mileage and compiling shift notes from wherever they are.

### Offering easier access to professional development

A key objective of our 'employer of choice' strategic pillar is to build employee capabilities and provide better access to career opportunities at Melba. To facilitate this, a new Learning and Development Hub was launched, providing employees with direct, centralised access to self-learning tools, guides and support.

### Responding to centre-based NDIS billing changes

The NDIS announced new changes for people using centre-based programs, including Community Connections and Breaking Ground. This change reflects the breakdown of direct supports, capital costs and non-face-to-face supports versus the previous single centre-based rate.

Taking a best-in-class approach for people we support, aligning with NDIS billing changes and further simplifying our billing process, Melba introduced Programs of Support for these services. Programs of Support set out the individualised support to be provided over a set time period, consistent with the goals and outcomes of an individual's NDIS plan.



“

## Welcoming our Future Melba Champions

We established a strong network of 30 Melba community members including people we support and employees from different teams and regions of Melba as Future Melba Champions. Their role is to facilitate communication about the Future Melba program. Meeting regularly, they share program updates, take part in demonstrations and provide feedback to and from the broader Melba community about new ways of working.

**Here's what some of our champions have said when asked about their role and what they'd like to see from Future Melba:**



**“I would like more Melba staff (please) and to be involved in more community events.”**

*John, People Supported Champion*

**“To gain insights into the exciting initiatives and solutions which will take Melba into its next phase of growth. The opportunity to provide feedback at meetings and participate in testing and surveys has been exciting and a great way to understand our organisation and get to know other people across Melba.”**

*Alana, Quality Business Partner*

**“It has been such a great opportunity to meet people from across the whole organisation; gaining an understanding of the complexities that we all share and working on ways forward that will result in awesome outcomes for people that Melba support.”**

*Carolyn, Outcomes Manager Support Coordination*

**“Being a Future Melba Champion is exciting and rewarding. It's driven by an interest in innovation and a chance to build a strong and united relationship with people we support.”**

*Antony, House Supervisor*

**“I am excited about Future Melba because it will give people the very best technology and allow them more time to do what they do best, support amazing people.”**

*Sharlene, House Supervisor*

”

# Disability Royal Commission



The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, held over four years, completed its comprehensive and independent review. The Royal Commission provided an important opportunity for the voices and experiences of people with disability, their families and their supporters to be heard.

As a human rights organisation, Melba strongly supported the Disability Royal Commission's investigation into the devastatingly high numbers of people with disability experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in Australia.

Melba encouraged and supported individuals, families and employees to tell their stories and contribute to the work of the Disability Royal Commission.

We were particularly pleased that our CEO, Hayley Dean, had the opportunity to contribute directly to the Disability Royal Commission proceedings by giving evidence at the public hearing in February 2023.

Melba joined two panels to talk about human rights and governance at the request of the Disability Royal Commission. During the first panel, Hayley answered questions about how we put human rights into practice in our operations. The second panel discussed governance and managing risk, where Hayley highlighted insidious breaches of rights that can result in abuse or violence, such as coercive control and exploiting an imbalance of power.

Hayley shared how Melba works to proactively prevent violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in our services. She outlined Melba's zero tolerance approach, our team of practice coaches who work alongside support workers and a 24/7 practice hotline available to all support workers. Hayley also spoke about our partnership with LaTrobe University on its longitudinal study into person-centred active support.

**Melba's participation in the Disability Royal Commission provided the opportunity to highlight our human rights-based approach and policies, with the goal of these being adopted across the sector.**

Melba has monitored the Disability Royal Commission throughout the past four years, with our Royal Commission Working Group discussing the public hearings and interim reports. Learnings over the four-year period have been put into action, further strengthening our approach in upholding people's rights and preventing all forms of abuse.

**Melba is always looking for new ways to prevent any form of abuse and to improve the reporting and investigation of complaints. We believe we can always do better to ensure the human rights of people with disability are upheld.**

**The Disability Royal Commission validated our stance that human rights must be the foundation for all service provision.**

The recommendations from the Royal Commission will inform the actions we take to ensure our services, operations and ways of working align to the findings and further enable our human rights approach.



## **We believe the abuse and neglect of people with disability is shameful and completely unacceptable.**

We have a responsibility to uphold the human rights of people with disability, and to speak up and act whenever we observe any infringement on a person's human rights. We have zero tolerance for abuse and other violations of a person's human rights.



## **Melba actively promotes a speaking-up culture.**

Wherever and whenever incidents are reported or uncovered, we act quickly and decisively to ensure people are safe and to investigate. We have a response service that operates 24/7, 365 days of the year.

We actively support people to speak up, providing various ways to do this including:

- Our online incident reporting system, with direct reporting to the CEO for any incidents that breach a person's rights
- Engagement of a third-party protective disclosure (whistleblower) service
- A welcoming of complaints approach; every member of the Melba community is supported in making a complaint to the person they are most comfortable, including the CEO
- Provision of independent advocacy to support a complaint.



## **September 2023 update**

The final report of the Disability Royal Commission was made available in late 2023.

Many courageous people with disability, their families and advocates shared their stories in the hope that change would follow. In the four years of the Disability Royal Commission's operation there were **32** public hearings, **1,785** private sessions, **7,944** submissions received and **222** recommendations delivered.

# Anderson Street garden makeover



People at Anderson Street were thrilled when 20 Bunnings team members showed up with plants, spades, rakes and loads of community spirit to transform the front garden.

Julie Trompf, whose son lives at Anderson Street, arranged the much-needed makeover. "My son was one of the first people to move to Anderson Street. It was the happiest day of his life. He loves his independence and feels secure. He knows support is available should he need it. The move changed his life and ours."

Julie explained that the garden was previously very bare, with no plants and very little mulch. "I thought about how best to improve the look, to make it nicer yet practical and easy to maintain."

In late 2022, Julie asked Community Housing Limited (CHL) to see if Bunnings would donate some plants. Julie then met with Jamie from CHL and Emily, Activity Organiser at Bunnings Lilydale, to discuss plans for the site.

Every Bunnings store helps their local community by providing hands-on assistance for grassroots projects such as garden makeovers and DIY support for community groups. Emily, together with the support of the tenants, took charge of the situation, organising plants, labour and contacting Lilydale council to source mulch. She even arranged a barbecue for everyone at the end of the day.

"We had 20 volunteers turn up with plants, rakes and shovels," Julie said. "I couldn't believe my eyes when so many people arrived – it was a fantastic surprise."

"Our Bunnings crew enjoyed rolling up their sleeves alongside the team from CHL and people from Anderson Street," Emily said. "It was a big team effort – lots of weeding, mulching and planting plus plenty of fun, and sausages on the barbecue."



**To top off a great day, after a hard-earned sausage sizzle, Bunnings donated the shiny new BBQ to Anderson Street!**

# Delivering human rights through quality services and practice

## Quality and Safeguards – Human Rights, Personal Outcome Measures/Planning and Practice

Melba's commitment to human rights was reinforced and further validated by the findings of the Disability Royal Commission.

Melba's human rights checklists continue to ensure that our practice is consistently focused on upholding people's human rights. Our teams plan with people we support to ensure their rights are translated into practice and that we support them to achieve their personal outcomes. Quarterly meetings of the Human Rights Advisory Group provide oversight of human rights and restrictive practices across supports to people at Melba.

Zero tolerance, active support and human rights training was completed by all support teams.

**A fantastic outcome of these sessions has been the development of support team agreements that outline the good practice expected by anyone providing support at their specific sites.**

Melba has Quality Practice Coaching teams that support and embed practice leadership and person-centred active support and engagement for people we support.



**Personal Outcome Measures have been completed for people in supported independent living. There have been 230 interviews since October 2022.**



# Positive Behaviour Support



**Positive  
Behaviour  
Support  
services  
increased  
by 23.5%**

Melba's Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) team grew by 50% in response to the increasing demand for quality PBS practitioners and services. Our PBS practice is trauma-informed and of the highest standard. It supports people who use behaviours of protest to communicate an unmet need or want.

We have facilitated 65 training sessions in Foundations in Trauma Informed Positive Behaviour Support for Melba's direct support teams in all regions.

We were also involved in transforming Melba's induction into a two-day Melba Practice Essentials Program facilitated by our CEO and the Practice Quality and Safeguards team.

## Quality practice

Melba further invested in our commitment to delivering quality services this year.

Our continuous improvement approach included the introduction of an Incident and Feedback Investigator role, which investigates incidents or feedback through the lens of people we support and/or their support people. This role is already providing valuable insights and understanding of people we support and their families, creating easier, more straightforward communication pathways and ongoing improvements to practice.

Our Quality Business Partners work directly with the Outcomes teams in their regions to ensure Melba continues to work towards best practice approaches, including all state and federal regulatory requirements. This is important work that contributes to streamlined and consistent work practices across regions.

Melba successfully underwent its mid-cycle audit in May 2023. A huge thank you to our fabulous support staff, who continue to work tirelessly to open up opportunities for people to live fabulous lives. This includes the behind-the-scenes quality work.

# Arthur Creative



Arthur Creative (Arthur) is based in Ballarat and offers a range of arts-based workshops for both emerging and established artists with disability. Arthur supports artists to explore their creative abilities or build a career in the arts.

The core program includes visual and performing arts, film and photography, screen printing and product development. Artists can exhibit and sell their artwork at various events, arts festivals and gallery pop-ups in the region. Arthur also hosts its own pop-up markets to showcase the Arthur Creative range.

*“Arthur Creative is a safe space for people to be able to express themselves, build confidence and be part of a community. We see people develop and grow here. They might not have done art before, but they have always been interested. It’s very satisfying to see people follow their creative pathways.”*

*April, Arthur Creative studio coordinator*

## Screen printing

The screen-printing course is always popular.



## Self-portraits

People enjoyed getting instruction on how to create self-portraits.



## Arthur Creative (continued)

### Studio art

People were busy across a range of projects, including constructing components of the Artify project for the Bridge Mall in Ballarat. Many artists learnt new techniques to create textile-based pieces for the installation of *Winter in Ballarat*. Artists also developed individual works depicting their own theme choices, which included travels to India, fairies and goblins, still life flowers and horror film characters.



### Film making

Film programs were well attended, with attendees exploring common film techniques while creating their own projects. These included green screen, stop motion animation, story generation, voiceovers and some acting.



### Liam's first solo exhibition – Landscapia

Liam held his first solo exhibition entitled *Landscapia* in the Marble Room of the Regent Theatre in December 2022. The exhibition was well received, and incorporated paintings and works on paper relating to the themes of landscapes, seascapes and gardens.

**“I had a solo exhibition at the Regent Theatre of my paintings. This was a fantastic experience for me. I had fun at Royal South Street Eisteddfod. I sang *What about Me.*” Liam**

### Holiday program offerings

As always, Arthur provided a range of holiday opportunities, including an op shop bus tour, jewellery classes, ten-pin bowling, an acting taster, art and craft day, drawing by the lake, a gallery visit, ceramics and circus skills.





## Christmas showcase a spirited success

The artists' year of hard work was put on show for the public during Arthur Creative's Christmas exhibition and showcase.

*"The showcase is a chance to show that everybody here has an ability rather than a disability."*

Jenna

## Performing arts

Arthur Performance groups, Monday Cabaret, Matchbox, Misfits and Boxhead put on an end-of-year performance.

Monday Cabaret developed an installation called *R U There*. It was a movement with ribbons simulating the connection and disconnection of friends and family throughout COVID.

Matchbox performed a group of dances and singing pieces, including a mash-up of Lady GaGa's *Born This Way*, Madonna's *Express Yourself* and a redone reggae performance of *Don't Worry Be Happy*. *Silent Night* was sung by the choir.

The Misfits performed their original favourite, *Runaway Train*, with a dance performance from Boxhead. They also performed their own mash-up of Cool and the Gang's *Celebrate* with a mix of breakdancing and disco.



**"I enjoyed performing at the end-of-year showcase and was interviewed by the local newspaper. I was involved with helping to set up the market for Arthur's social enterprise, which I love to do. I was also interviewed by the ABC at the South Street performance, and I did a choreography to *Born this Way* by Lady Gaga."** Jenna



**"We had a barbecue and an art exhibition and Boxhead performed *Runaway Train*. I liked the performance."** Anne

# ARROW



Melba continually looks for ways to ensure people we support are front and centre in all decision-making. Members of ARROW play a critical role in this.

With membership open to anyone who uses Melba services, ARROW does more than provide advice and feedback on how we are doing. ARROW also supports people to advocate for themselves and take on different projects within Melba and the wider community.

ARROW groups function in every Melba region to ensure accessibility and representation in all areas of Melba, geographically and service specific.

ARROW members attend the Melba Board's Practice Quality and Safeguards Committee meetings.



## ARROW in 2022-23

Every **ARROW** member **improved their knowledge and skills** so they can advocate for their own and others' **rights** and others on issues important to them.

Established **new groups** in **Melba's South** and **Central Highlands and Wimmera** regions.

Ongoing and regular **involvement** in **Melba's employee induction training sessions**.

**Successfully lobbied** Baw Baw Shire Council to have **pedestrian safe crossings** included in Normanby Street, **Warragul**.

## Members and meetings



**45** **31**

meetings in total members

Central Highlands and Wimmera

**8**

members

South

**4**

members (including Peninsula)

East

**5**

members

Gippsland

**14**

members (Inner and Outer groups)



**ARROW**  
Getting to the heart of the matter

# Home and living



## Partnering to provide people with great homes

Melba continues to partner with like-minded developers, specialist disability accommodation (SDA) providers and potential tenants, new and existing, to create great homes with the right balance of support and independence.

More and more people can live in a home of their choosing, where they choose and with who.

Our partnerships with people with disability, families and developers will see more than 30 people being able to live in the homes of their choosing across Victoria over the coming months.

### SDA and SIL projects are in development in areas such as:



**Melba has been working with several people interested in our services within the Ballarat area who are looking to move from their current service provider or out of their parents' home. Through the help of our dedicated Melba team in the local area, we are supporting these people to have their home and living dreams come true. People will be moving into their new home as early as December 2023.**



## Argyle Street residences

Our Argyle Street development opened in January 2023, with four very happy tenants now settled in and enjoying their new location and lifestyle.

## Affordable supported independent living housing in Prahran, Melbourne

Melba secured the supported independent living service arrangement for an innovative social and affordable housing development in Prahran.

The site in Prahran is close to Chapel Street and tram routes into the city. The new development will provide a range of housing options including one and two-bedroom SDA units as well as an onsite overnight assistance unit.

All SDA apartments will contain modern appliances, assistive technology capability, provisions for ceiling hoists, widened doorways, intercom communication and all accessibility features to meet high physical support design standards.

The development, due for completion in early 2024, will house an artist's garden and studio space, productive garden plots and a quiet central lawn for all residents. True to the style of the location, there will also be a coffee shop downstairs.

### Snapshot – Melba's accommodation services across Victoria



# Narelle explores her artistic side



Even in some of our more remote and regional locations, opening up a world of opportunities is always possible. Narelle has been exploring new creative avenues through Melba's Function Lifestyle Day Program in the Horsham area.

The program runs each weekday and includes occasional weekend adventures.

Through a range of artistic endeavours, Narelle has been honing her talents as a budding artist and further exploring her creative energy.

Narelle experimented with process-oriented arts, which is more about the creative process and what comes up for the artist during the experience than the final artwork itself.

Narelle expressed that this was a way to convey feelings and aspirations, including emotional wellbeing, the happy and joyful, the sad, the frustrating and the upsetting.

To celebrate NAIDOC Week, Narelle created a beautiful artwork to reflect her learnings on the importance of nature in First Nations culture.

Hayley Dean, Melba CEO, and Jacqui McCowan, Central Highlands and Wimmera General Manager of Outcomes, were thrilled when Narelle invited them to visit and insisted on gifting them some of her artwork. Narelle's artwork will feature in Melba workplaces for all to enjoy. Discussions are underway about temporary exhibitions of pieces that can be directly purchased from Narelle.



## What is the Function Lifestyle Day Program?

The Function Lifestyle Day Program is a foundational part of the Melba experience for many people who may have complex support needs.

The program facilitator, No Mi Che, describes it as a comprehensive sensory program that tailors experiences for individuals including sensory techniques such as tactile, auditory and multi-sensory explorations.

No Mi explains that everyone's preferences and needs are different. The program is directed by each person's individual outcomes, designed by them for them. "We might provide essential oils and engaging tactile objects, carefully curated to one person and offer soft, beautiful threads and fabrics to someone else."



**“A highlight this year was co-creating an immersive sensory room, adorned with an array of captivating lights and playful elements like sensory ice cubes.”**

# Health at Melba

## Working to support people to experience best health

Melba's Complex Health team works hard to improve access to quality and comprehensive health care for people with disability. We know that people with disability, in particular people with an intellectual disability, can experience poorer health and wellbeing outcomes than the broader community. The recent Disability Royal Commission Report made several recommendations on improving the health care and treatment for people with disability as they interact with health systems and the health workforce.

Melba has moved beyond the 'set and forget' approach to individual health supports that is common in disability services. We have developed, and are continually refining, a clinical governance approach that is characterised by stakeholders sharing knowledge, responsibility and accountability. The framework achieves continual risk identification and mitigation within a person-centred and human rights-based approach. This leads to improved outcomes for people, each and every day, even as health support needs change over time.

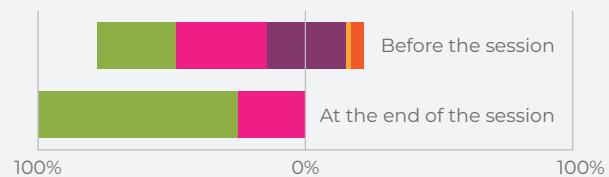
The Complex Health team collaborated with the Learning and Development team to develop easy-access health e-learning for all support workers. Building on this base knowledge, support workers

then undergo skills coaching and competency assessments as well as person-specific training for those providing high-intensity health supports.

As part of improvements to Melba's Practice Essentials induction program, Complex Health developed and delivered health skills labs where new starters could get hands-on, practical experience in our most frequently required health supports. Findings from initial sessions showed remarkable results, with 100% of participants reporting that after completing the training they felt somewhat to very comfortable in delivering health supports.

### How comfortable were you at delivering health support?

- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable



## Effective measures keep COVID in check

This year, COVID-19 moved from being an intensified area of focus to being part of business as usual. Melba's transmission risk reduction strategies remained in place, the most noticeable of which was wearing masks while working with people we support.

Our established risk mitigation strategies and COVID-19 Committee ensured we maintained an effective level of preparation and were able to provide responsive support to people who tested positive for COVID-19.



# Diversity and inclusion

We are continually working to make Melba a more diverse and inclusive environment for everyone.

Melba is committed to successfully and meaningfully employing more people with disability. A new Diversity Policy has been endorsed by the Board and the inaugural Disability Employment Strategy and Diversity Action Plan have been developed. We advertise available jobs on diverse talent recruitment platforms including The Field – an accessible and inclusive employment site set up by disability advocate Dylan Alcott.

Our social media accounts were even more colourful this year thanks to our loud and proud support for the LGBTQI+ community on occasions such as Pride Month and IDAHOBIT Day.

To celebrate Pride Month, we collaborated with our employee group, Rainbow Melba, to host Rainbow Melba Morning Teas at our Ballarat and Lilydale offices. In addition to the rainbow-themed refreshments provided by local Pride-

## Reconciliation Action Plan update

After receiving official endorsement for our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) from Reconciliation Australia in 2022, Melba embarked on a year of active First Nations support.

Melba attended Reconciliation Victoria's breakfast for National Reconciliation Week, hearing moving first-hand accounts of the importance of reconciliation in modern-day Australia.

Melba hosted National Reconciliation Week events in Scoresby and Ballarat featuring Welcome to Country openings by local First Nations people and First Nations-owned catering. The Ballarat event included a traditional smoking ceremony, which was a first for many people.

We celebrated First Nations culture and achievements in NAIDOC Week, attending events and encouraging all of our Melba community to do the same to raise awareness across the organisation.

We also promoted Melba's support for the Voice to Parliament proposed in the referendum.

owned catering companies, the Melba community including people we support and employees showed their support by dressing up and making an assortment of rainbow foods. We were honoured to hear why Pride celebrations were important from members of the LGBTQI+ community.



## Reconciliation Action Plan Committee

- > **David Glazebrook** – GM Marketing, CALD and Environmental Sustainability (Chair)
- > **Penny Harris** – General Counsel
- > **Kate Taylor** – Disability and Inclusion Project Officer
- > **Kerrie White** – General Manager Outcomes – Gippsland
- > **Timothy White** – House Supervisor
- > **Nicole Findlay** – Reconciliation Victoria representative
- > **Natasha Ludowyk** – Melba Board representative

# Individualised support arrangements

Individualised support arrangements (ISA) provide people with support to access their communities to do the things they love, or to receive the support required at home, or a combination of both.

Melba services are flexible and tailored to individual needs. Support could be for household tasks, paying bills, using public transport, shopping, pursuing employment and education and even going to the gym and the footy. Individualised support means just what it says – people choose the individual services, or a combination, that best suit their needs.

**ISA supports provided in 2022–23 included activities such as:**

- > art exhibitions
- > concerts
- > movie festivals
- > family reunions
- > weddings
- > social outings
- > community festivals
- > holidays
- > football games
- > house-hunting (including budgeting, house visits and completing applications)
- > assistance to develop and publish a children's book.



# Support Coordination

A person's goals are unique to them – achieving one person's goals may be straightforward, while another may be more complex and require a real team effort.

Melba's Support Coordination team connects people with the right support services, enabling people up to the age of 65 to achieve their identified NDIS goals.

Melba Support Coordinators review plans and provide appropriate evidence to the NDIS to initiate any required changes. With a focus on minimising risk and prioritising safety and wellbeing, people are supported in living fabulous lives with an NDIS plan that meets their individual needs.

In January 2023, Melba appointed a Horsham-based Support Coordinator after identifying a service gap for people accessing support coordination. This role combines skilled support with local knowledge for people living in the area.

Our support coordination function has expanded to include Disability Support for Older Australians, a program that enables older people with a disability to access specialist services and supports where they are not eligible for the NDIS. A key area of focus for our team is to support these people to continue living independently in the home of their choosing.



## 13,517

Hours of support coordination provided

**Michael moved out of an aged care facility to more appropriate supported accommodation. He now chooses his own team to support him and next on his list is to find paid employment.**

**Sean moved out of his family home with the support of his family and a large support team. He is connecting with his housemates and is more actively involved at his day service.**

**Tom, who is known for preferring his own company, travelled by plane to visit his daughter interstate and has recently joined a social group.**

**Jamie achieved her long-term goal to move out of the family home. She is loving life and her increased independence in her new home.**

# Learning and development

Melba believes in the importance and value of continual learning and development opportunities for our team. We are always seeking the best possible learning practices and frameworks to improve what we do.

We invest in our employees with a range of professional development opportunities and support our employees to attend by recognising and valuing their time. Melba pays employees for their time and any associated costs. This approach encourages and enables people to actively engage in their learning.

In 2022–23, Melba provided more than 1600 learning opportunities for employees with a completion rate of 93.5%. This high engagement rate is reflective of the continued organisation-wide commitment to our learning and development program.

Melba's commitment to delivering best practice in relation to learning and development was recognised by the Senior Practitioner, Behaviour Support Practice Quality Division, at the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Melba was commended for its commitment to exceeding legislative requirements through implementing a range of strategies to help reduce the incidences of choking and improve our incidents in responding to people experiencing swallowing difficulties.

Given the risk associated with meal-time assistance, Melba wanted to ensure best practice. We went above the sector standards, working in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney to deliver a full, eight-hour, level two meal-time assistance training program to all employees working with a person who has a meal-time assistance plan. This is over and above the level one training that all employees have completed.



# Jamie gears up for a new challenge

Jamie Kelly, a former Olympian from Melba's South region, is not one to shy away from a challenge. He is preparing to ride in the 2023 Bass Coast Cycle Challenge.

He will be joined by Rob Crowe as chaperone rider for the gruelling 100km gravel ride. Rob is a dual Australian Road Race Championship winner and fellow Olympian. Both Jamie and Rob are well-known in cycling circles, with Jamie gaining a name as one of the fastest road sprinters in Australia in the 1990s.

Jamie had a serious cycling crash in 2016, followed by a paralysing stroke a year later. This didn't stop Jamie, whose determination and good humour helped him get back on the bike as a recumbent tri-cyclist.

"I'm keen to tackle gravel ride challenges around Australia," Jamie said. "There is more skill and tenacity involved with off-road events.

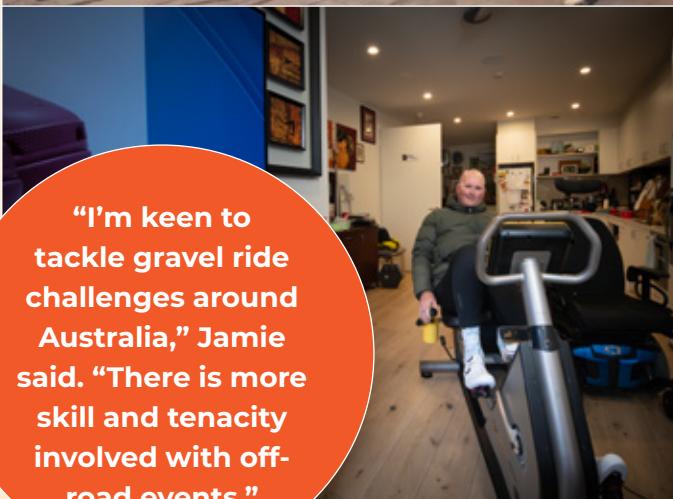
**"There's no such thing as failing. There are only two possible outcomes - winning or learning."**

*Jamie Kelly 2023*

"I'm looking forward to seeing new roads and the views from the gravel ride route looking out to sea. And being around lovely coastal townships – Rob and I are both very fond of the area."

So what's next? Jamie plans to keep developing his ability with plans to ride in challenge events such as Amy's Gran Fondo and the 140km Dirty Warrny in 2024.

He has also set himself the goal of tackling a one-legged fundraiser challenge up Mount Buffalo on the recumbent in 2024. Called the Stroke of Luck, this fundraiser will support the Stroke Foundation in Victoria, raising people's awareness of stroke.



**"I'm keen to tackle gravel ride challenges around Australia," Jamie said. "There is more skill and tenacity involved with off-road events."**



# 2022 Awards



## Congratulations to our 2022 Rebecca Britt Award and Stevenson Award winners

Everyone at Melba does a fantastic job, and some do outstanding work. To recognise their achievement and enthusiasm, Melba offers three annual awards. For people we support there is the Rebecca Britt Award and for employees there is an individual and a team Stevenson Award.

### History of the Rebecca Britt Award

Rebecca Britt was a vibrant member of the Melba Mount Evelyn community, particularly Community Connections and ARROW. Rebecca passed away in 2010 and is still greatly missed. A donation to Melba from her grandmother, Mollie Quinton, was put towards establishing an award in Rebecca's honour. This award recognises attributes such as kindness, humour, generosity, an ability to encourage and take care of others, and advocating for other people with a disability.



### History of the Stevenson Award

The Stevenson Award was established as part of Melba's culture of continuous improvement and as a lasting reminder of the vision and achievements of Nan Stevenson and her family, who are founding members of Melba. In 1975, when the Stevenson family established Rosine Nursing Home (later to become Melba Residential Services), Nan was quoted in the press as stating that she envisioned the day when such services would be replaced by normal houses in the community. To win this award, either as an individual or as a team, employees need to perform their role to the best of their ability, helping to raise the quality of the services Melba provides.

### Recognising excellence across all corners of our organisation

**This was the first year Melba held awards in all four of our regions. We were proud to announce four Rebecca Britt Award winners and eight Stevenson Award winners.**



# And the 2022 winners were...

South
Rebecca Britt Award: <b>Ray Pettit</b>
Stevenson Award (individual): <b>Shoret McLennan</b>
Stevenson Award (team): <b>Green Island Team</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Kim Baines</li><li>&gt; Dorothy Malleon</li><li>&gt; Jessica Bloor</li><li>&gt; Lindsey Moncur</li><li>&gt; Kelly Cutting</li><li>&gt; Nyachom Muon</li><li>&gt; Iva Divakidai</li><li>&gt; Joel Pelly</li><li>&gt; Jane Ebdon</li><li>&gt; Amy Reynolds</li><li>&gt; Erin George</li><li>&gt; Pamela Travena</li><li>&gt; Betty Johnson</li><li>&gt; Michael Wanjira</li><li>&gt; Fredrick Maina</li></ul>

East
Rebecca Britt Award: <b>Scott Finerty</b>
Stevenson Award (individual): <b>Fiona Bak</b>
Stevenson Award (team): <b>Reilly Team</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Ahmad Alhamid</li><li>&gt; Sharon Maina</li><li>&gt; Bryden Cole</li><li>&gt; Esperanza March</li><li>&gt; Marita Cooper</li><li>&gt; Brenda Meyers</li><li>&gt; Tahlesha Corso</li><li>&gt; Peter Mungai</li><li>&gt; Istvan Feher</li><li>&gt; Rebekah Oleskowski</li><li>&gt; Lisa Foster</li><li>&gt; Rachel Peel</li><li>&gt; Margaret Hennessy</li><li>&gt; Christine Reed</li><li>&gt; TiaSheree Hume</li><li>&gt; Navin Sapkot</li><li>&gt; Lynn Kiptoo</li></ul>
Gippsland
Rebecca Britt Award: <b>Hannah Carte</b>
Stevenson Award (individual): <b>Nellie Bottrell</b>
Stevenson Award (team): <b>Burnside Team</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Philomena Conte</li><li>&gt; Glenn Oram</li><li>&gt; Dylan Crookston</li><li>&gt; Jessica Quirk</li><li>&gt; Janet Hedt</li><li>&gt; Peter Robertson</li><li>&gt; Tammie Kofoed</li><li>&gt; Michelle Smith</li><li>&gt; Alan Lancaster</li><li>&gt; Jade Thompson</li><li>&gt; Brooke McKay</li><li>&gt; Thomas Wolf</li></ul>
Central Highlands and Wimmera
Rebecca Britt Award: <b>Owen Parkinson</b>
Stevenson Award (individual): <b>Lisa Munday</b>
Stevenson Award (team): <b>Hunts Team</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Antony Dunn</li><li>&gt; Joanne Powell</li><li>&gt; Jenny Giampaolo</li><li>&gt; Emma Russell</li><li>&gt; Sunil Kumar</li><li>&gt; Neil Turner</li><li>&gt; Helen Leslie</li><li>&gt; Audrey Warren</li></ul>

# Community Connections



Community Connections was one area of Melba where the longer-range impacts of COVID-19 were particularly evident. As we made our way through the pandemic, lockdowns and a new way of operating, many of the partners we worked with on Community Connections activities struggled and weren't able to continue.

Community Connections continues to focus on introducing new programs and activities for people this year.

## Music appreciation

This new music appreciation class is led by Thomas Tuena, a music teacher who draws on a lifetime of musical learning to lead this program. The program creates opportunities for people to be a part of and enjoy music. The program is performance-based and integrates songwriting, movement and instrumental instruction.

## Our Connection with Art display

So many people love creating art. Our artists come together to share their Connection with Art and their chosen subject matter for their annual art installation was pirates!

Each artist learned new skills as they worked towards creating a pirate's treasure trove, including treasure maps, swords, daggers and shields. The group members worked on inventing their artistic styles and problem-solving creative issues. Artists focused on learning how to create different textures to make items look old, such as rum barrels and a pirate ship, or glamorous, such as treasure chests and bottles. They also worked with papier mâché to create characters that might be found near a pirate's treasure trove, such as crocodiles and dolphins.



Each artist learned how to work together as a team and there was a great dynamic coming into the art room and working towards their end goal.

As a fitting tribute to these artists' skill and Connection with Art, their pirates art installation took pride of place at the entrance to Melba's Lilydale office. The installation has received overwhelmingly positive and supportive feedback, encouraging these artists to continue their work. Their goal is to display more of their work outside Melba alongside other artists within the community.



### Thank you to artists:

**Sally Cassidy**

**Fiona Dick**

**Belinda Ehrhardt**

**Lily Hynes**

**John McQuie**

**Robyn Evans**

**Alex McDine Smith**

**Sally Stephens**

**Monique Webb**

Yarra Valley ECOSS (Ecological and Social Sustainability) is a not-for-profit community organisation based on a 7.4-hectare permaculture-designed farm at Wesburn. On this beautiful property, ECOSS demonstrates sustainable living solutions for the community of the Yarra Valley and beyond.

The ECOSS vision is to promote local food production, food security, earth education and multicultural living, while building work skills and developing a vibrant, resilient, inclusive and sustainable community.

Our team of ECOSS volunteers head out to the Wesburn farm to assist the local ECOSS team in their work on sustainable food production.



## Mini social enterprises / micro-businesses

Our mini social enterprises and micro-businesses are all about building genuine relationships, understanding what matters most to a person and how that can be turned into a valued and purposeful role. Since COVID-19 we have been back working with many of our partners to establish and re-establish these opportunities.

### Eggs on Legs

Launched in 2019, the Eggs on Legs program has remained a popular enterprise. The program sources and sells free-range eggs to members of Melba's Lilydale community. It also provides social connection and valued roles within our local community.



### Yarra Ranges in a Box

Yarra Ranges in a Box sources and sells fresh produce from the Yarra Valley to homes and business in the Lilydale area. Being on the doorstep of the Yarra Ranges opens up the full 'harvest to market' experience, including heading out to farms and markets for the produce, taking orders and payment, sorting and packing orders and then delivering to happy customers.

# Moving to a new home, Ben's dream coming true



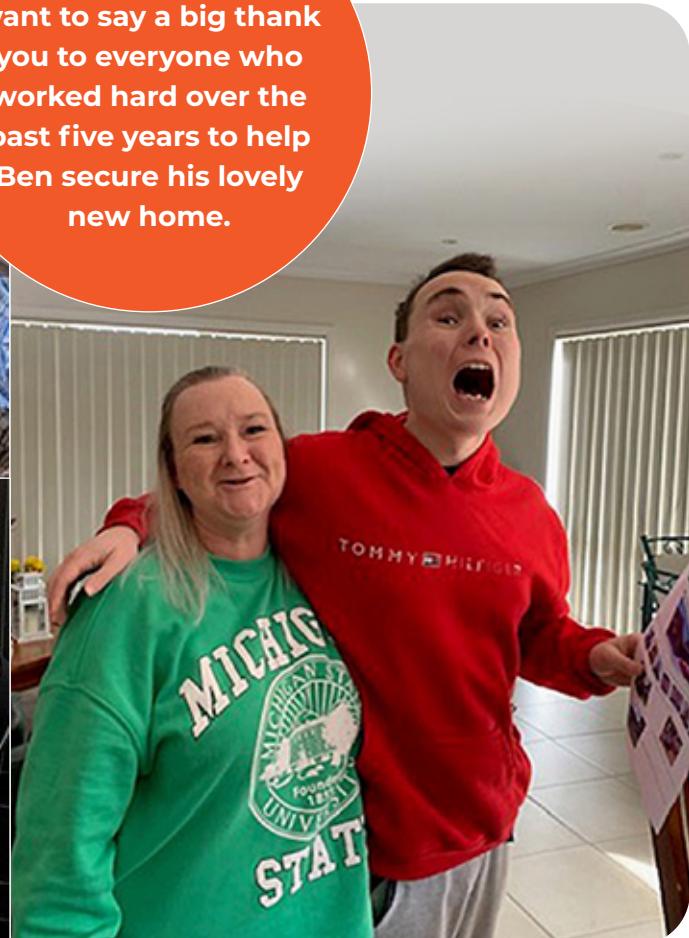
After five years living in temporary accommodation that never quite met Ben's needs, his dream of finding a home of his own has now come true. Thanks to support from Melba and Homes Victoria, Ben's new home is purpose-built just for him. The bathroom and shower are Ben's favourite things as he has so much space to move around.

The outdoor area enables Ben to enjoy time outside whenever he likes, and in any weather thanks to a lovely pergola.

His mum, Katrina, is overjoyed that Ben finally has a home he loves. "Having Ben in temporary accommodation was always a worry for me. Now I feel more at ease and so happy for my boy."

Ben was very excited when his mum told him he'd be moving into his own home. On the day, Kym and Robin (Ben's support team) drove Ben to his mum's house so she could tell him in person. It was an emotional moment for everyone.

**Ben and Katrina  
want to say a big thank  
you to everyone who  
worked hard over the  
past five years to help  
Ben secure his lovely  
new home.**



# Where Melba went

Our Leisure and Recreation Program offers supported local, national and international holidays. We pride ourselves on working with people to make sure every trip is a memorable one.

To ensure we can cater for individual needs and provide safe experiences, we have developed holiday ratios to provide the appropriate level of support.

1:5 Ratio	1:4 Ratio	1:3 Ratio	1:2 Ratio	1:1 Ratio
For travellers who are primarily independent and comfortable with limited supervision.	For travellers who are primarily independent in all areas of personal care and who have appropriate social skills when out in the community.	For travellers who are fairly independent, can manage a full day of activities with minimal prompting in daily living areas such as toileting, showering and brushing teeth. Possible assistance with managing money and/or medication.	For travellers requiring immediate and prompt assistance with personal care and meals. Those that use mobility aids or enjoy slower-paced travel as well as needing close supervision.	For travellers who require full assistance with personal care and meals and require strict supervision in the community. This also includes travellers in manual or electric wheelchairs.

As COVID-19-related travel restrictions lifted, it was pleasing to see travel activity increase as people started packing their bags again and escaping the everyday, heading off to interstate destinations such as Mt Gambier, Canberra and Albury/Wodonga, to more local destinations such as Phillip Island, Warrnambool and the Geelong 'Having a Say' conference, and even as far afield as San Francisco, California.

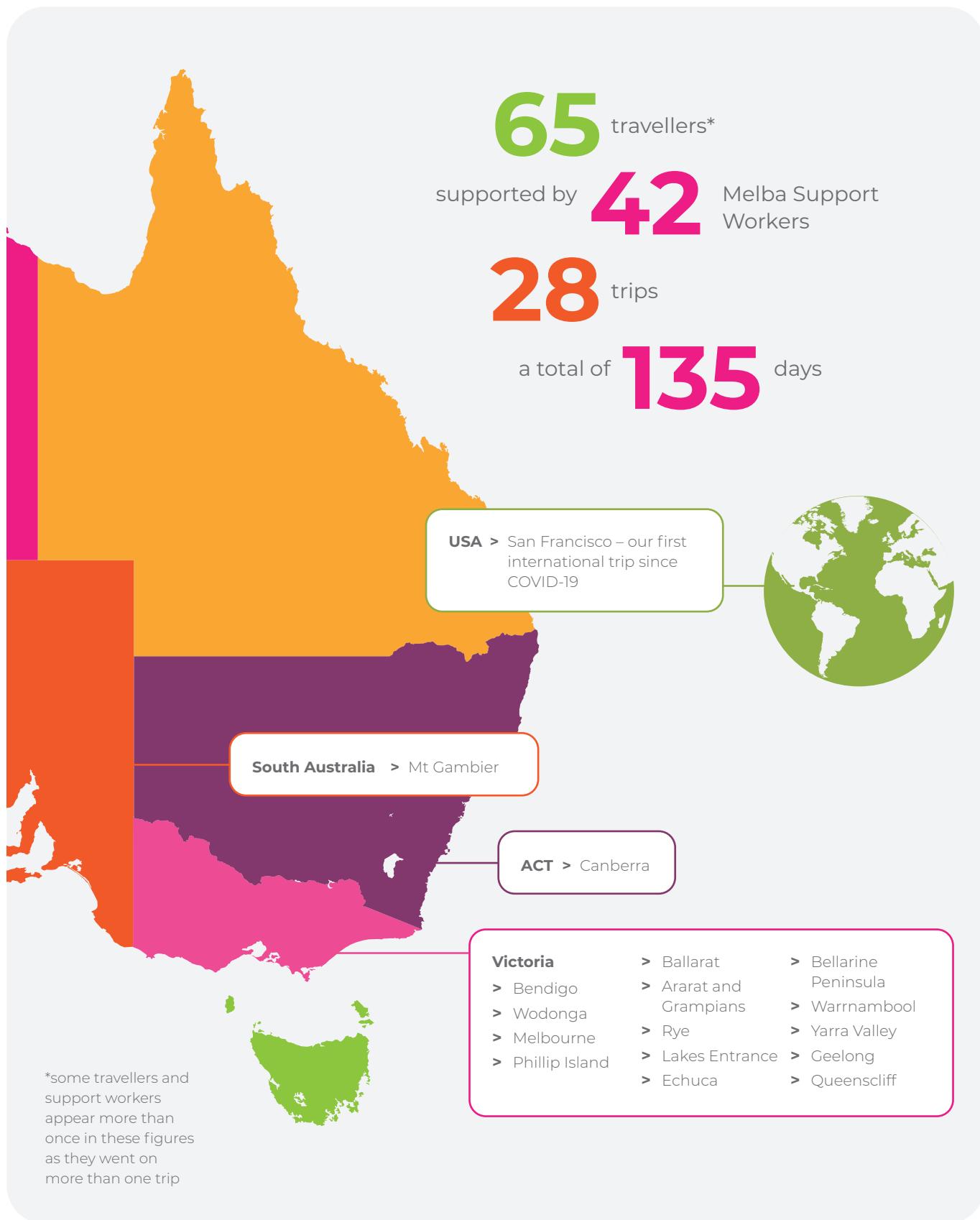
## What some of our travellers said:

**"Melba holidays are excellent! They mean I can have a break. The people are good company. The holidays go to places with good scenery."**

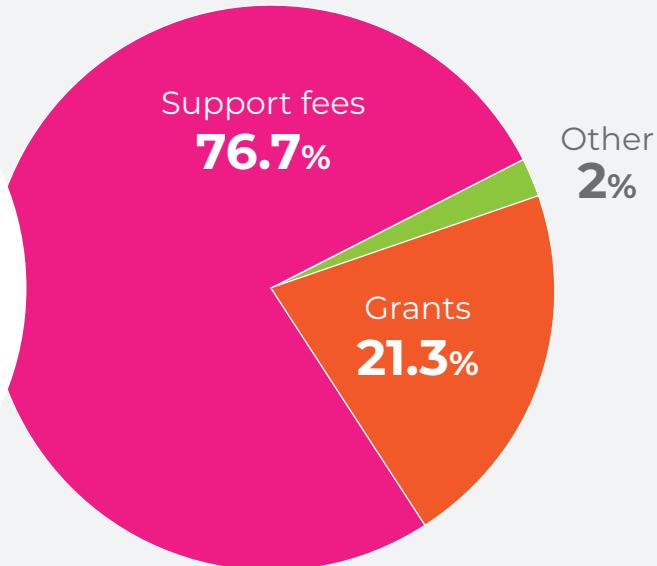


**"The holiday was a highlight in my life. It was great and interesting. The holidays give me a break from the routine, I can recommend them!"**

## Where Melba went (continued)

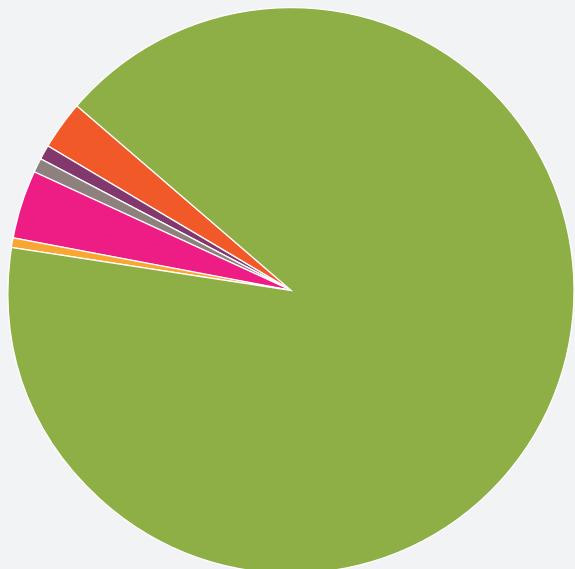


# Financials



## Expenses

- Employees – **91.2%**
- Maintenance - **0.6%**
- Office – **4%**
- Occupancy – **0.7%**
- Depreciation – **0.9%**
- Other – **2.6%**



Melba continues to be financially secure and well-managed. We manage the money we receive carefully, ensuring we provide for our future and can continue to fulfill our purpose of opening up a world of opportunities for people to live a fabulous life. Details can be seen on the ACNC website.

**Roger Chao, Treasurer, 2023**



Melba Support Services acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

