

2018-19

ANNUAL REPORT

mercy
connect *together
we grow*



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CHAIRPERSON REPORT

MICHAEL O'CALLAGHAN



Firstly, I thank my fellow Directors for their counsel and commitment to Mercy Connect, our Chief Executive Officer Trent Dean, and our excellent staff for their dedication and professionalism over the past year.

During this year, Mercy Connect, against a backdrop of NDIS procedure and systems, clarified our Vision in a concise statement, which defines our existence:

"Through the Mercy tradition to recognise the rights of adults, children and older people with a disability to assist each person to achieve their life's ambitions in a connected and meaningful way".

This Annual Report reflects the work, achievements and stories over the year of which we all might reflect and can feel proud. If

I might highlight a few:

- Managed 18 group homes, providing services to 150+ participants with a team of 260+ employees.
- Successfully completed our first Certification under the new NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission with an excellent result.
- Proved ourselves sustainable once again in our new NDIS environment with a surplus result for the 2018-2019 financial year.
- Undertook a review of policies and procedures within our organisation to strengthen business models and to provide staff with clear guidelines and information.

Mercy Connect accepts the challenges of NDIS and will proactively seek partnerships with similar valued based sector leaders wanting to build their capacity, initiate innovative programs and/or scale up proven approaches.

Lastly, it is with enormous gratitude that Mercy Connect bids farewell to Sister Helen Monkitch who will leave the Board at the end of 2019. Sister Helen has been a strong advocate for those within our community with disabilities and the importance of building strong supports and systems within our organisation to achieve our Strategic Vision.

Sister Helen's wealth of knowledge and her insight into the issues affecting our broad family have served Mercy Connect extremely well over the past four years. Further, her quiet and unassuming manner while diligently working to get things done has gained her the respect and admiration of her fellow Board members and the staff of Mercy Connect. Her mentoring role has been a substantial one and she will be greatly missed by all.

The Board and I thank Sister Helen for her contribution and wish her well in retirement.

Michael O'Callaghan
Chair - Mercy Connect Board

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

TRENT DEAN



My first few months have been very special. I could not have asked for, nor expected, a more warm, generous and caring welcoming from participants and staff into this amazing organisation. As a work of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, Mercy Connect carries on the great Ministry whilst drawing inspiration from the Venerable Sr Catherine McAuley who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831.

Catherine recognised the needs of those who were marginalised and oppressed by unjust social attitudes and practices of the day. She responded by establishing a House of Mercy in Dublin which provided educational, religious and social services for women and children who were at risk of homelessness through exploitation and entrenched poverty. It is essential that all Mercy Connect staff, both long-service and new, understand this legacy; that is 'who we are', 'what we stand for' and 'what we are trying to do'.

Our organisation continues to proudly carry on a rich legacy of Mercy-led service, ensuring those we support live a connected and meaningful life. With its wide range of values-driven and participant-centred programs, Mercy Connect remains an industry leader within the disability sector. Our good work is only possible because of the passionate and caring staff who, each day, bring uplift to the participants we support; either through frontline care or back-office functions.

However, as every diligent gardener does at springtime, we need to look deeply into our own backyard and see what preparation are required for the changing seasons ahead.

Which crops are producing a good yield, and will they continue to do so? Where are the areas of most sunlight to support the growth of a specific crop? What does the soil need to improve its resilience and ability to sustain our crops?

Essentially, how can our garden be revitalised?

Yet revitalisation is not about razing the earth and starting over again. It is a disciplined and conscientious approach requiring each of us to critically analyse which areas are working well, whilst also identifying those areas which may require improvement, in order for Mercy Connect to continue well into the future. I believe the concept of continual improvement is well summarised by Sr Catherine McAuley "We can never say. 'it is enough'".

As such, the Mercy Connect Board and Executive Team have commenced working directly with our participants and staff to ensure we revitalise Mercy Connect in a sustainable and Mission-focused way. I would like to acknowledge and thank our Board Directors and Executive team for their continued support and wise counsel as I begin my service to the Mercy Connect family. We are all very blessed to have such high calibre people leading our organisation.

This is an exciting time for Mercy Connect, with our passionate teams, volunteers and external partners committed to serving our participants, their families, friends and carers, to ensure each person we support lives a connected and meaningful life. I believe we are in a period of revitalisation; one where we must look inwardly, and outwardly, to ensure our organisation is ready to meet any future opportunities and challenges, whilst maintaining our reputation as a high-quality provider that ensures participants maintain their choice and control.

Together we grow.

Trent Dean
Chief Executive Officer

OUR VALUES

Compassion

In taking the time to listen to and understand each story.

Hospitality

In our friendly, caring and non-judgmental support.

Respect

For individual decisions and choices.

Innovation

In finding better ways to meet needs.

Teamwork

To provide consistent high quality support.

Accountability

Being responsible for our actions, behaviours and quality of work.



OUR VISION

Mercy Connect, through our actions, will become the preferred service provider to people with a disability and our operational practice will be the Gold Standard for service providers serving people with complex needs. We will create and deliver innovative services and supports that empower participants to reach their full potential.

OUR MISSION

Through the Mercy tradition to recognise the rights of adults, children and older people with a disability to assist each person to achieve their life's ambitions in a connected and meaningful way.

STRATEGIC GOALS



Promotion and Development of the Mission of the Sisters of Mercy

- To ensure all components of the operations of Mercy Connect are operated in a manner that reflects and enriches the Mission of the Sisters of Mercy.
- To ensure all staff, volunteers and associated service providers support and understand the Mission of Mercy Connect.

Skilled, Compassionate, Responsive Workforce

- To be the employer of choice with a happy, safe, engaged workforce with the necessary skills and abilities to achieve organisational objectives.
- To plan the development of a self-directed workforce.

Growth

- We seek to grow our services in a manner which supports our mission and vision to focus on the vulnerable and the marginalized.
- The organisation is to be developed and expanded to ensure it is robust and sustainable and therefore a reliable service provider over time to our participants.
- We seek to build a culture that is compassionate yet recognises the value of being commercially effective together with business development and capacity to position for growth.

Fulfilled Participants

- The needs and aspirations of participants are fully understood, support planning is individually developed and implemented to ensure the achievement of these requirements.
- Our community-based service options meet the needs of participants where and how they wish to receive this support.

Quality

- A commitment to participant-centred supports which ensures the required outcomes for each participant - as defined by the participant.
- Mercy Connect gains a reputation amongst its participant base and other service partners and competitors as the 'service of choice' for people across age spectrum with a disability.
- Mercy Connect is judged by participants and external providers to be governed and operated by optimum business practices.
- We will advocate for positive outcomes for people with disabilities at every opportunity.



BOARD



Michael O'Callaghan
Chair



Sr Helen Monkivitch rsm AO
Director



Matthew Clancy
Director



Sr Lorraine Phelan rsm
Director



Judith Doughty
Director



Des Powell AM
Director



David Hicks
Director



Marguerite Ryan
Director



Anthony McFarlane
Director

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Mercy Connect Board of Directors



Trent Dean
Chief Executive Officer



Caroline Cummins
*Executive Leader
Clinical Services*

- Customer Service Team
- Support Coordination
- Behaviour Support



Jessie Arney
*Executive Leader
People & Culture*

- People & Culture
- Quality & Compliance
- Learning & Development
- Marketing & Communications
- Rostering
- Accommodation
- Day Program
- Outreach
- Disability Support Workers



Dianne Flashman
*Executive Leader
Business & Finance*

- Finance
- Payroll & Accounts
- Business Analysis
- Property & Assets

CLINICAL SERVICES REPORT

This year has been an exciting and challenging year for our clinical services. The introduction of the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission on 1 July 2018 brought about a welcome focus on quality and safeguarding for the individuals we support; however, resulted in significant changes in practice in areas such as reportable incidents, behaviour support and restrictive practices. The team has done a commendable job of adapting to these changes over the past 12 months and we look forward to further streamlining and improving our processes to ensure our services continue to be participant centred, evidence-based and outcomes focused.

Our Customer Service and Support Coordination teams have both continued to work very hard at achieving excellent outcomes for our participants, resulting in more support being received to achieve their goals and lead a more connected and meaningful life.

Key Highlights

- Successfully completed our first Certification under the new NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission with an excellent result.
- Demand for Support Coordination continued with the addition of a third Support Coordinator.
- Commencement of our Consultant Psychiatry clinics with Dr Peter Wurth- a well-known and respected specialist in the field of intellectual disability and mental health. Quarterly consultations with Mercy Connect and external participants. No similar service like this in the region.
- Support of three final year student placements - two physiotherapy and one social work.
- Review of authorisation and monitoring processes for Restrictive Practices to ensure alignment with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission requirements.



45+

Participants accessed
Behaviour Support



65+

Participants accessed
Support Coordination



33

Participants accessed
Dr Wurth clinics

Caroline Cummins
Executive Leader - Clinical Services

BUSINESS & FINANCE REPORT

- Mercy Connect demonstrated sustainability in our new NDIS environment with surplus result for the 2018-2019 financial year.
- Continuous improvements on our systems including Carelink development.
- Commencement of an ICT Project and progression with expert consultants reviewing business needs and assessing ICT maturity and gap analysis.
- Asset replacement program implemented to ensure hardware devices are current.
- Capital projects including continuation of major renovations to facilities to increase the quality of accommodation provided to our participants.
- Internal restructure at St John's office to align workflow and team requirements.
- Implementation of new phone system to utilise our internet capacity and reduce communication costs.
- Introduction of new asset system to assist in maintenance and works management across the organisation.

Key Facts

- 161 participants.
- 103 male participants.
- 58 female participants.
- 91 participants receiving Community Inclusion/Day Program services.
- 49 participants receiving Improved Relationships (BSP) services.
- 5 participants receiving Continuity of Support (>65yo).



29

Vehicles
in fleet



63

Participants receiving
Supported
Independent Living
(SIL)



57

Participants receiving
Specialist Disability
Accommodation funding
(SDA)

PEOPLE & CULTURE REPORT

2018-2019 was an action packed year and saw many new and exciting opportunities for our teams. In early 2019, the People & Culture Team and Operational Teams temporarily merged creating a greater collaboration when working towards common goals.

Mercy Connect conducted our first staff survey in 2018 to gain insight into how staff perceive their day to day work, the quality of services we provide and the organisation in general. With a 57% response rate, feedback received from the staff survey enabled us to determine priorities for action and work together to deliver on these including those listed below.

Key Highlights

- Launch of Mercy Connect's first Staff Satisfaction Survey.
- Consultation with staff regarding Mercy Connect's values.
- Review of corporate policies and procedures to provide staff with clear guidelines and information.
- Launch of the Mercy Connect App, which enables staff to access relevant information more quickly.
- Recruited over 50 new employees, including five of our participants under a Supported Wage Scheme.



260+

Employees



75%

Staff
satisfaction



2000+

Hours of staff
training delivered
(excl. induction)

Jessie Arney
Executive Leader - People & Culture

WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Mercy Connect recognises that, as part of its aspiration to be a leader in our sector, we must exemplify good Work, Health and Safety (WHS) practices. In 2018-2019, Mercy Connect is supported by the WHS committee of ten staff, including the Chief Executive Officer and newly appointed HR Manager, Jeanie Keeton.

Mercy Connect has a further two Health and Safety Representatives who have played a pivotal role in gathering information on WHS issues for their work group and assist in resolving issues in consultation with the Committee, managers and staff.

Results of Work, Health and Safety initiatives for 2018-2019 include:

- Improved, and increase, the frequency of manual handling training.
- Increased medication training.
- Improved Infection Control guidelines and policy, providing tighter controls in the workplace when infectious outbreaks occurs.
- Research and innovative program - in collaboration with Charles Sturt University, students who participated in the placement program developed an extensive manual handling strategy and framework, which has been implemented by our Disability Support Workers (DSW) to support our practices and participants.
- Strategic review of WorkCover claims to support our staff and mitigate risks.



REGIONAL REPORT

Orange

Key Highlights

- Restructure of Team Leader roles.
- Renovation of bathroom and painting of common areas at one of our group homes.
- Implementation of new programs in Day Program, with measured outcomes.
- Assisted participant to obtain Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding and subsequent transition into Mercy Connect group home.
- Continued partnership with Rahamim creating new garden beds, compost and plan future garden developments.
- Assisted participants to secure increased NDIS funding.
- Supported a number of participants to go on holidays.



12

Participants living in
Group Homes



16

Participants accessed
Day Program



29

Employees

Narrabri

Key Highlights

- Change in Management.
- Improved fleet management.
- Recruitment of new staff.
- Increased profile and community engagement and participation including regional events.



6

Participants living in
Group Homes



1

Participant accessed
Outreach Services



12

Employees

Mark Peacock
Regional Manager - Orange and Narrabri

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS



VICTORY LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Four students visited the Learning Centre on a weekly basis as part of their work placement. They created a range of activities for participants.



WALLA POOL

Provided access to our participants from Catherine's Corner when required.



PERSONNEL GROUP

Five participants employed under a supported wages program.



COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Runs 'To Cool for School' program, aimed at supporting our supported wages participants to learn financial literacy skills.



WODONGA TAFE

Thirteen participants undertake Certificate I Transition to Work and Certificate I Transition to Employment.



MERCY PLACE

Participants and staff visit residents at Mercy Place on a weekly basis to catch up and make a positive impact on their lives.



ALBURY WODONGA HEALTH

Participants volunteer for Meals on Wheels, delivering meals to the elderly in the Albury region, three days a week.



QUEST WODONGA

Contracting our Supported Wage participants to conduct garden and pool maintenance.



LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

Contracting our Supported Wage participants to conduct garden maintenance.



WILD CHOIR

External musicians and volunteers join our participants for Wild Choir. The group have performed at a number of events throughout the year.



BETHANGA SPORTS GROUND

Grounds staff leave wood for our participants to use during winter, and provide access to their grounds.



MEAT TALK URANA ROAD

One participant completed work experience at the butchery. Local butcher providing meat for BBQs at Catherine's Corner.

Case Study: Foodshare

In early 2018, Bottlebrush Cafe began collaborating with Foodshare to provide meals for those in need.

Every Thursday, participants visit the Foodshare Warehouse to collect ingredients for their kitchen, where they prepare and cook the meal in bulk.

With a wide range of ingredients available at the warehouse, participants have the opportunity to create innovative recipes.

The meals are frozen, and the following Tuesday, a fellow participant delivers the home cooked meal to all the Mercy Connect Outreach participants.

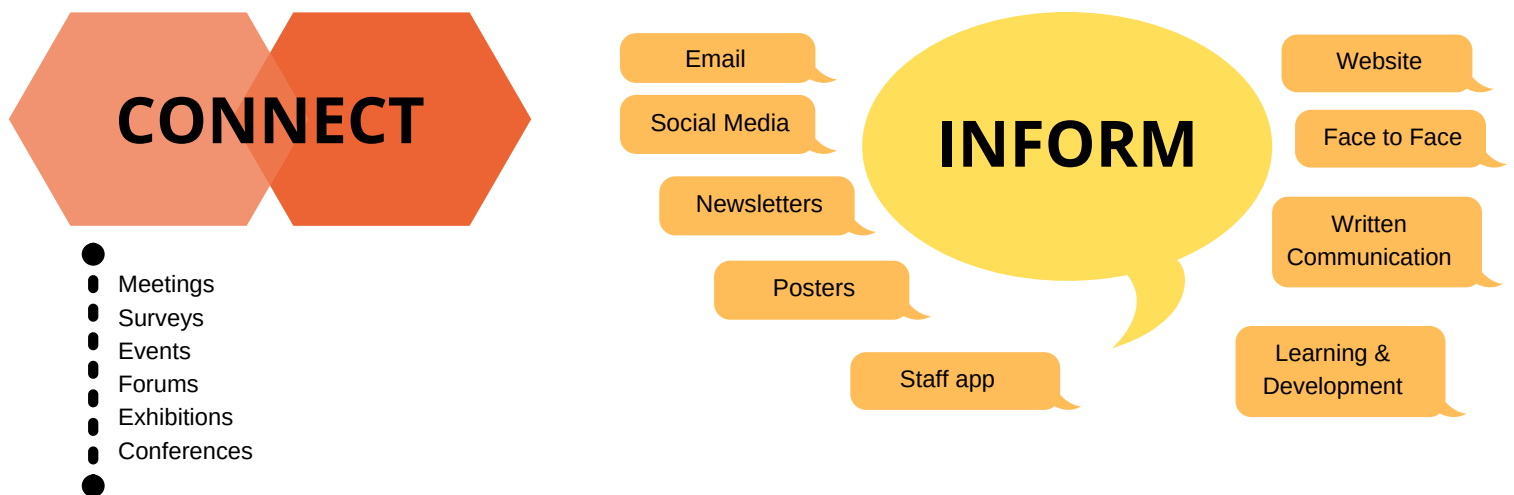
Bottlebrush Cafe coordinator, Jessica, explained that the collaboration is "just fun to participate in. Food isn't getting wasted, it's always fresh food and our Outreach participants are receiving a nice home cooked meal each week."

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

The Communication and Engagement team continues to develop its approach when engaging with our stakeholders.

Our team has worked hard when identifying each stakeholder and their unique requirements. In 2018-2019, we also further developed our social media plan and increased internal communications.

Looking forward, our team will continue to improve and further develop our communication plan and engagement strategy.



Key Facts

- 50+ team meetings.
- 57% staff surveys completed.
- 23 staff newsletters.
- 3 external newsletters.
- 13 media stories.
- 15+ community engagements.
- 12,429 engagements on social media.
- 417 posts on social media.
- 39,840 total reach on social media.
- 536 followers on social media.
- 88,104 page views by 7,592 users on Mercy Connect website.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

CATHERINE'S CORNER



18

Participants per day



10

Programs per week



10

Staff per day



Highlight of the year:

Breakthrough Crew
winning awards for
their artwork at the
Culcairn Show

ST JOHN'S



20

Participants per day



9

Programs per week



8

Staff per day



Highlight of the year:

Development of the
Supported Wage
Program

LEARNING CENTRE



15

Participants per day



15

Programs per week



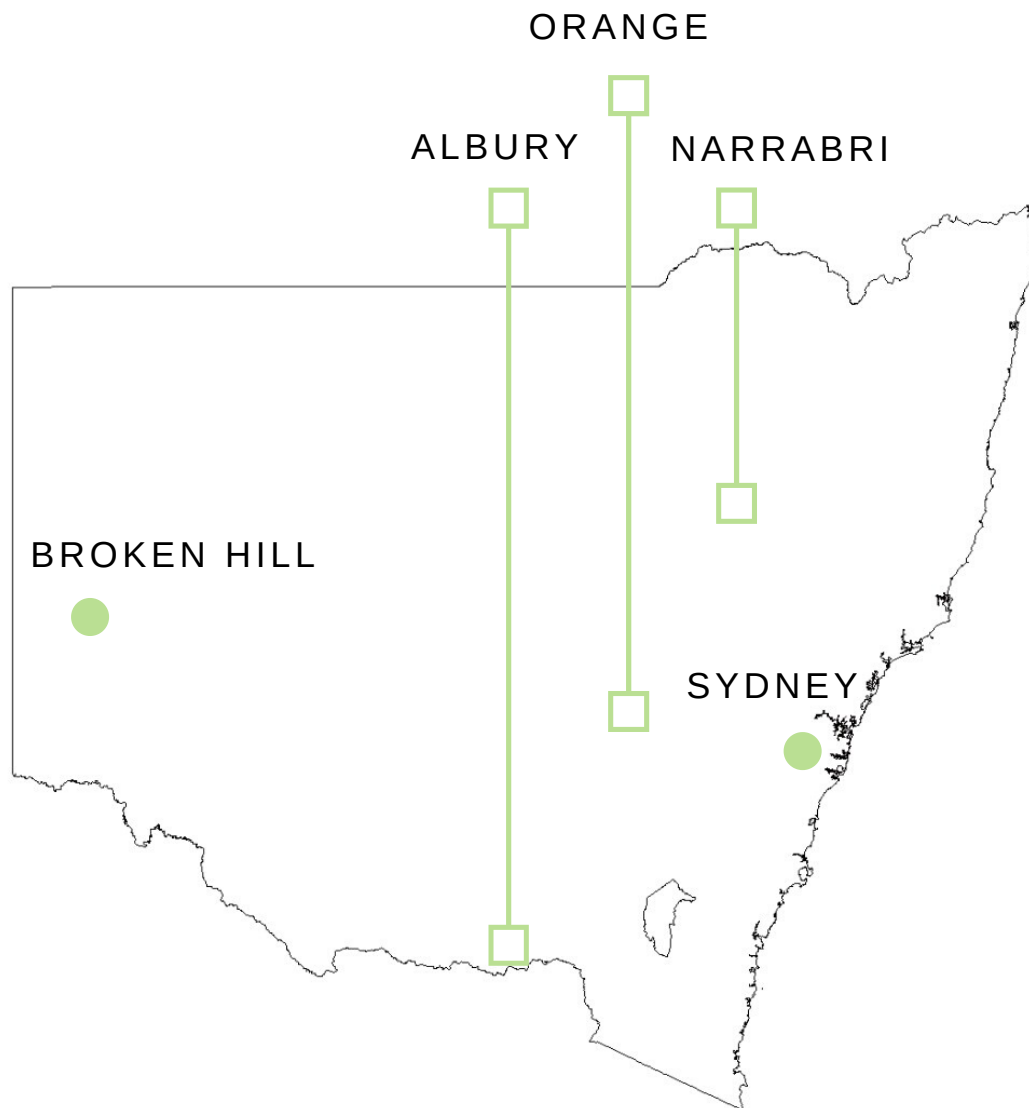
8

Staff per day



Highlight of the year:

Introduction of the
Dance and Fitness
program - getting our
participants moving



ALBURY

30 BOTTLEBRUSH ST
THURGOONA
NSW 2641
P: 02 6043 3500

ORANGE

10 ILLAMATTA WAY
ORANGE
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NARRABRI

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NARRABRI
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