



wellways

making  
a difference

annual review **19**

Cover image: Reconnecting to culture through skills development in the Murrumbidgee region.

# governance

## Board Members

Paul Montgomery (President)  
Kevin Abrahamson (Vice President)  
Dr Julian Freidin  
Scott Hartley  
Kay Toshach  
Julie Babineau  
Reba Meagher  
Dr Peter Langkamp

## Co-opted Independent Committee Members

Deborah Hamilton  
Iain Yuile  
Mark Jackson  
June Marks

## Clinical Governance Committee

Dr Julian Freidin (Chair)  
Reba Meagher  
Deborah Hamilton  
Mark Jackson  
June Marks

## Finance, Audit and Resource Management Committee

Scott Hartley (Chair)  
Julie Babineau  
Iain Yuile

## Appointments and Governance Committee

Kevin Abrahamson (Chair)  
Paul Montgomery  
Kay Toshach



## Creating inclusive communities

Wellways is committed to promoting and helping give voice to people experiencing mental health issues along with their families, friends and carers.

Significant government inquiries as well as a federal and state election, have provided myriad opportunities to do this throughout the last year.

During the Victorian and New South Wales elections we pushed politicians to “give mental health the same priority as physical health”.

We fronted Victoria’s Royal Commission into Mental Health, highlighting the stories of numerous Victorians with a lived experience of mental health issues.

This evidence was collected in consultation workshops, co-run with Mind Australia.

Our federal election campaign called on the major parties and candidates to commit to making sure all government policy and activity is inclusive of people with mental health issues and disabilities. We successfully mobilised more than 2000 supporters to email their local candidates asking them to confirm their parties’ position.

The inequality between the treatment of people with physical health issues compared to mental health issues is something we have also reported to the Productivity Commission’s Mental Health inquiry, which will report its findings next year.

# leading the way

**Wellways is reaching more people in more places.** More Australians than ever before living with mental health issues and disabilities are making the choice to choose different, to choose Wellways.

This speaks volumes about the quality of our services and celebrates the achievements we have had in supporting the thousands of Australians taking control of their care and asking Wellways to support them.

From suicide prevention, to working with people with a disability, to running Australia's only mental health Helpline staffed by people with lived experience - our more than 1800 staff, supported by volunteers, provide a broad range of services which tackle people's mental and physical health and wellbeing

Over the last year the number of people accessing Wellways' myriad programs has grown 20 percent.

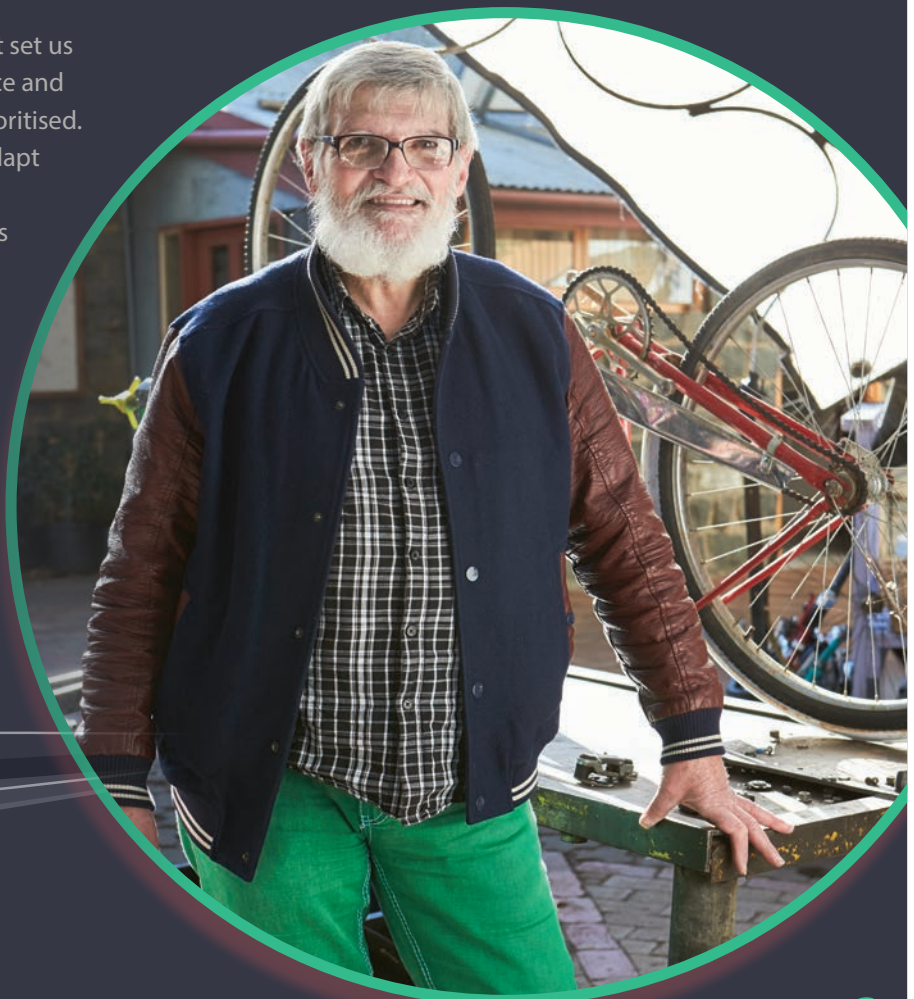
Our evidence-based practice principles are what set us apart. We work to ensure that people have choice and control - what's important to an individual is prioritised. Our focus is on our participants' goals and we adapt our evidence-based program materials to be culturally appropriate to strengthen connections with each participant's community and culture.

Wellways spearheads programs to enable participants exit programs sustainably and for the long-term. For example, the Doorway housing program helps people with a lived experience of mental health issues experiencing homelessness find a home. Program evaluation showed that 93 percent of participants experienced

significant and rapid improvements in housing security as well as in symptoms and behaviour, and there was significant reduction in hospital admissions (with a net saving per individual of over \$3000 per year). More than 30 participants also secured work.

Wellways is also instrumental in shaping sector reform and service design where and when it can, dedicating resources to advocacy to ensure systems are responsible and equitable, and society is inclusive.

As an employer of choice, Wellways is committed to developing and strengthening a respected, valued and skilled workforce, which is currently made up of more than 60 percent of people with lived experience.





# president's message

**This year, as always, has involved balancing consolidation with development growth, whilst also maintaining quality.** The outcomes and performance illustrated in this report are a fitting testimony to the qualities of our staff and their ability to successfully manage these competing demands.

Last year the Board was focused on laying the foundations of our organisation, so we are set up to deliver our services effectively and efficiently in line with the release of our five-year plan (2017-2022). Throughout year two of this strategic plan we have embraced innovation in the way Wellways works with the people we serve while exploring new and related markets for our current services.

The Board is acutely aware that the commissioning landscape across the various Commonwealth, State and Territory health, mental health and social services systems, as well as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, is extremely challenging. Our strong reputation for development and innovation in practices and solutions, along with our track record of building partnerships, has helped us to maintain our role as an integral partner to commissioning agencies.

Exciting new projects such as designing the Commonwealth Government's Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS) and our successful bid to become a Carer Gateway Service Provider across Queensland and the New South Wales region of South West Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains are great examples of innovation in action. This, coupled with a will and drive to turn ideas into working initiatives, is making a real difference across Wellways.

It is important to note the turnaround in our profitability. Last year saw a deficit of \$5.205 million, a result of a number of factors we reported on last year. This year we have turned a profit of \$1.084 million and expect this trend to continue.

This surplus is the result of strong growth in block-funded services, investment in the development of systems and processes to support a retail-style business (including automation), the transformation of the workforce and a unified company structure trading under a single name.

Sadly, 2019 was identified by our CEO, Elizabeth Crowther, to be her final year with Wellways. On behalf of the Board, I thank Elizabeth for her enormous contribution, leadership and guidance for the better part of 24 years. Elizabeth has been a driving factor for the growth and stability of Wellways from an organisation with an annual turnover of \$1 million in 1996 to the Wellways of today, with a turnover of over \$125 million. Elizabeth's contribution to the mental health sector has been revolutionary and her personal commitment to improving the lives of Australians with mental health issues and disabilities has led to system-wide changes.

After a very extensive external and internal search, in July the Board announced the appointment of Laura Collister as the next CEO, to take up the role in December 2019. The Board believes Laura's appointment is in the best interests of Wellways and the people we support. I look forward to working with Laura in the foreseeable future.

I would like to thank my fellow Directors and Co-opted Independent Committee members for their support and attention to detail as we have worked together throughout the year. Next year offers the opportunity for board renewal and I thank all members for their past commitment. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the management team and all staff at Wellways for their continued dedication to our mission and to achieving our vision of an inclusive community where everyone can imagine and achieve their hopes and potential.

*This year we  
have turned a profit  
of \$1.084 million  
and expect this trend  
to continue.*

Paul Montgomery,  
President

# chief executive officer's message



**Wellways has had an extraordinary year.** We've had time to reflect on our mission and commence new plans for the future of our organisation that is now over 40 years old. We continue to be innovative and responsive to the needs of Australians with a lived experience of mental health issues and disabilities.

A key feature of 2019 has been the sheer number of inquiries that have been established by State and Federal governments. Wellways has used the establishment of the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health and the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Mental Health as opportunities to open up constructive dialogue about complex issues such as the inequality between mental health and physical health, the differing of responses to housing reform and homelessness, and the needs to increase the peer workforce across the length and breadth of our sector.

That governments recognise the need for these inquiries is a public demonstration that the system is broken and that there are people in great need of assistance, support and care. The Victorian Government has stated on the record that they will implement all the recommendations of the Royal Commission. As an organisation committed to advocating on the issues affecting people with a lived experience of mental health issues, Wellways will work to keep the government to account on their promise.

We have been working with those who make the policies to affect real change. This year we saw two State government elections and a Federal election, and asked Ministers, Members of Parliament and candidates to give mental health the same priority as physical health.

Our advocacy activities are not limited to government. This year we commenced work on our own public mental health awareness campaign, #StampedeStigma, to tackle the issues of mental health stigma and discrimination.

Involving blow-up zebras, colour and movement #StampedeStigma uses humour to communicate the message that no one should have to fear being treated differently because of issues with their mental health. The campaign formally commenced in October 2019 and will continue to be sustained year on year.

2018 has also seen Wellways successfully awarded tenders across our regions, including the Commonwealth Government's initial five-year Carer Gateway Service Provider contract. As a Carer Gateway Provider Wellways will now deliver a range of new and innovative supports designed by carers for carers across Queensland and South West Sydney, including in-person counselling, in-person coaching, and in-person peer support to over 650,000 carers. Successfully winning this one tender will see a substantial increase of our footprint in Queensland.

After 24 years as CEO, I believe now is the right time to step down. With the Board's appointment of Laura Collister as CEO, I know I leave Wellways in good hands. I want to take this opportunity to personally say a big thank you to our Board, staff, volunteers and supporters. I feel blessed to have worked with an extraordinary team and to have seen Wellways grow from an organisation based in Victoria to one that stretches from North Queensland to Tasmania.



*I feel blessed to have worked with an extraordinary team and to have seen Wellways grow from an organisation based in Victoria to one that stretches from North Queensland to Tasmania.*



**Elizabeth Crowther,  
Chief Executive Officer**

# what we do

Over the last financial year we worked with more than 1000 young people who experience mental health issues or who support or care for a person in their family or community.

Our focus is to work with young people within their community and homes to develop positive self-identity and self-esteem, build and strengthen family and friendship networks, develop life skills and provide support to engage in education and work.

In New South Wales, Wellways Youth Community Living Support Services exceeded expectations, supporting 32 percent more young people experiencing multiple and complex needs than originally anticipated by the Ministry of Health, with exceptional results. More than 8,500 client-related hours helped young people find their own place, save money and develop self-belief in their ability to grow and learn.


Young people help us build our programs so that what we do works.

Through coproduction workshops, people who have stayed at our Youth Residential Rehabilitation helped develop a more interactive and creative version of our peer education program My Recovery.



working with  
young  
people

Incorporating sensory techniques, including weighted blankets side-by-side with shared, streamed digital music playlists so that all participants can express their individuality and support each other's recovery through music. A Wellways innovation, a "choose-your-own adventure" mobile phone game helps people explore choices that support wellbeing.



***A couple of years ago I lost hope for recovery. I was fighting an uphill battle against my anxiety, OCD and depression and dropped out of university.***

*During an 18-month journey with Wellways, I was supported through the process of developing coping strategies, forming a solid support network, and recognising my own strength and resilience.*

*Wellways gave me sensible, practical resources to achieve my short and long term goals. Each step we took was bite-sized and achievable. For example, my hesitance at leaving the safety of my own home was challenged by short visits into the community and, eventually, I was re-integrating with society.*

*I am now in the second year of my occupational therapy degree, and I am beyond excited about all of the opportunities that await me in helping and supporting others.*

*If Wellways had not provided me with the practical and essential skills to managing my own life and wellbeing, I wouldn't have recognised my full potential, or realised my calling in helping others.*

**Emily, 24 years old**

# what we do

Staff across 12 regions worked with more than 6000 adults last financial year in community, participants' homes, and residential settings.

We in-reach into institutions (e.g. psychiatric inpatient units, correctional facilities) to help people engage with community-based services.

Wellways' short-stay Step Up Step Down programs are rated among the top-performing in the country. Our skilled staff and proven processes enable us to routinely accept participants presenting with higher acuity than most other facilities. In Victoria, our service approach to bed flow and rapid response is highly effective – our participants are confident to leave Alfred and Peninsula PARC over two days earlier than the metropolitan area average (more than 10 percent) and almost a day faster at St Vincent's than the metropolitan average. This results in more people being able to access the support they need.

Participant feedback is extremely positive, with an overwhelming percentage (96 percent) of exit survey respondents saying the service had a positive effect on their overall wellbeing.



Wellways was at the forefront of the NDIS and our experience as an NDIS provider across both mental health and disability has made us a service provider of choice. We support and understand participants physical and emotional needs. More than 2,200 people last year chose Wellways to help them focus on achieving their goals, and imagine and achieve the best life that they want.



*Thank goodness there is a place that is caring, compassionate, non-judgemental, educational and respectful for those of us who are not travelling so well! I have gained my 'self' back again, with gentle support and encouragement from staff and clients, to face transition to home life. Learned excellent coping strategies, mindfulness and meditation to help me on in my next chapter of life. The sensory room is AWESOME!*



*If only everyone was as passionate about mental health clients as you, the world would be a better place!*



*Support from workers to achieve goals to get a job, healthier eating. Stable accommodation during tough times. To achieve future goals.*

*Everyone is really kind, supportive, helped me through my hard times and supported me with my future goals.*



*The best part about the service was knowing you could speak with someone at any time.*



*Gave understanding and helped me to live in my situation. Not fight it. I felt empowered.*



*You've kept me alive, preventing suicide.*



what  
we do

# working to dismantle discrimination



## Reconciliation Action Plan

Wellways is dedicated to building authentic relationships, increasing respect through knowledge and learning, and creating beneficial opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Staff have embraced our first Reconciliation Action Plan while the organisation continues to build relationships and partnerships with our regional communities.

Funded by Western Queensland PHN, Wellways worked with the Goondir Health Services and local community in St George to build community belonging through producing a short film highlighting the significance of the Mani tribes Aboriginal Art Gallery through stories of community, inclusion and healing through culture.

In Victoria's Yarra Ranges region, Wellways partnered with the Wayapa Wuurrk Aboriginal Wellness Foundation to run a Bush Therapy and peer support program for young people. This program is being evaluated for further rollout across other schools and areas in Melbourne.

Across the Murrumbidgee region of New South Wales, Wellways worked with local Aboriginal organisations and community members to hold a two-day strengthening connections event. More than 170 people reflected, learnt and took part in cultural practices.

On Victoria's Great South Coast, we shared office space and trainings with local indigenous-led Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly & Community Health Service, leading to several joint tenders and grant applications.

## Well Proud

**Wellways works with LGBTIQ+ people to create welcoming and inclusive spaces within our organisation, our programs and our community spaces. In the past year, we have:**

Delivered the *Out Together* service for NDIS participants who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, intersex and queer. Out Together trains LGBTIQ+ peer workers to support people with wellbeing, identity and community connections.

Developed and delivered LGBTIQ+ peer education program *My Recovery* and *My Recovery snapshot* which is facilitated by people who identify as LGBTIQ+ who provide up-to-date information about mental health and recovery, and support participants in developing new ways to improve social and emotional wellbeing.

Supported LGBTIQ+ staff, volunteers and participants to connect through our Well Proud network. This includes a Well Proud Facebook group to share resources, plan events and create joint playlists – including one co-developed by participants of the Youth LGBTIQ+ *My Recovery* program.



# our people

42 volunteers



1300 111 400

Australia's only Helpline  
staffed with people  
with lived experience...

7,583 calls



*Wellways volunteer-run Helpline reaches out to people who are feeling socially isolated, seeking information about mental health or services, or who are wanting a chat. Everyone who works on Helpline has a lived experience of mental health issues, whether personal, or as someone who cares for a family member or friend.*

3,494 volunteer hours



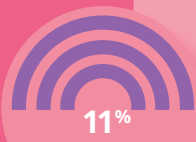
1838 Staff

64% staff with lived experience

97 offices



11% LGBTIQ+



5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

17% Culturally and linguistically diverse



180 volunteers



158 PEER SUPPORT WORKERS



89% feel job has a positive impact on people's lives



7159 PARTICIPANTS

+20% INCREASE ON LAST YEAR



41 AVERAGE AGE



who we work with...

502 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

414 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people

under 24 yrs old 1098 People



we're having a huge impact!

# Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 30 June 2019

|                                      | 2019 \$           | 2018 \$           |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                        |                   |                   |
| <i>Current assets</i>                |                   |                   |
| Cash at Bank, deposit and on hand    | 11,199,304        | 8,811,420         |
| Receivables                          | 7,306,977         | 3,945,112         |
| Prepayments                          | 724,677           | 1,416,985         |
| <b>Total current assets</b>          | <b>19,230,958</b> | <b>14,173,517</b> |
| <i>Non current assets</i>            |                   |                   |
| Fixed assets                         | 5,462,077         | 6,755,601         |
| Intangible assets                    | 25,753            | 41,798            |
| <b>Total non current assets</b>      | <b>5,487,830</b>  | <b>6,797,399</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                  | <b>24,718,788</b> | <b>20,970,916</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>                   |                   |                   |
| <i>Current liabilities</i>           |                   |                   |
| Creditors & Accruals                 | 5,050,545         | 4,364,990         |
| Provisions                           | 3,455,925         | 2,983,713         |
| Grants and funding in advance        | 5,051,267         | 3,743,990         |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>     | <b>13,557,737</b> | <b>11,092,693</b> |
| <i>Non current liabilities</i>       |                   |                   |
| Provisions                           | 438,887           | 240,351           |
| <b>Total non current liabilities</b> | <b>438,887</b>    | <b>240,351</b>    |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>             | <b>13,996,624</b> | <b>11,333,044</b> |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b>                    | <b>10,722,164</b> | <b>9,637,872</b>  |
| <i>Equity</i>                        |                   |                   |
| Reserves                             | -                 | -                 |
| Accumulated surplus                  | 10,722,164        | 9,637,872         |
| <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>                  | <b>10,722,164</b> | <b>9,637,872</b>  |

# Consolidated Statement of Profit and Loss

For the year ended 30 June 2019

|   | 2019 \$          | 2018 \$            |
|---|------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>                              |                  |                    |
| Contract Services Income                    | 93,903,044       | 77,746,975         |
| Fundraising                                 | 354,276          | 573,206            |
| Other Income                                | 1,178,899        | 1,616,175          |
| <b>Expenses</b>                             |                  |                    |
| Employee expenses                           | (78,739,611)     | (66,775,997)       |
| Impairment expenses                         | 0                | (3,848,883)        |
| Occupancy expenses                          | (2,429,799)      | (2,151,546)        |
| Office expenses                             | (3,196,998)      | (3,975,310)        |
| Other operating expenses                    | (8,692,698)      | (6,947,063)        |
| Depreciation & amortisation expenses        | (1,292,821)      | (1,442,350)        |
| <b>(DEFICIT) FROM CONTINUING OPERATIONS</b> | <b>1,084,292</b> | <b>(5,204,793)</b> |

## Understanding our financial outcomes

Wellways has materially grown its service offering through several successful tenders.

The surplus for the year is the result of the following:

- strong growth in government funded services,
- investment in the development of systems and processes to support a retail-like business (including automation),
- the transformation of the workforce, the establishment of “one Wellways” and right-sizing the organisation, and
- the effective management of costs.

# Support **Wellways** today

## **Full participation in the community is a human right.**

Wellways needs you to help build a society in which people experiencing mental health issues and psychosocial disability, as well as their families, friends and carers, are understood, accepted and provided the same opportunities as everyone else.

Together, we can challenge social and systemic barriers, such as stigma, discrimination and social exclusion.

To support our advocacy work  
visit [wellways.org](http://wellways.org)

## **Become a Wellways Supporter:**

join our movement and help achieve our vision of an inclusive community free from stigma and discrimination.

## **Make a donation:**

all donations to Wellways are tax deductible and your funds go directly to our policy and advocacy work. Make a donation on our website.

## **Follow us online:**

follow Wellways on Twitter and Facebook and join the conversation.

 @wellwaysau

 /wellwaysau

# wellways

*Wellways acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we live, work and play and pays respect to their Elders past, present and future.*

**WELLWAYS AUSTRALIA LIMITED**

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