

The background features a light gray gradient with a white horizontal band across the middle. Abstract, overlapping shapes in shades of blue, green, yellow, and purple are scattered across the page, primarily concentrated in the top-right and bottom-left corners. Some shapes are solid circles, while others are larger, irregular blobs.

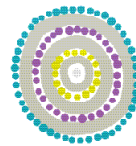
Annual Review

2021-2022

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Acknowledgement of Country

Wellways acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play and pays respect to their Elders past and present.



Our Inclusion Commitment

We are committed to inclusive communities, workplaces, policies and services for people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.



Overview

Working together and delivering our much-needed services has again been challenged by pandemic-related restrictions, and reoccurring floods.

For most of 2021–22, we were still not able to meet with most of our participants in person to deliver our services safely. However, some essential services provided service delivery in person throughout this challenging period, such as disability support. Nevertheless, together we have overcome these challenges and supported each other.

By mid-2022, we reached a new stage where we were able to gather in person again to enjoy those valuable face-to-face interactions. Simultaneously, and as a result of our significant investment in technology, we have become a more agile organisation that adapts quickly and embraces progress and new ways of doing things.

We now meet and collaborate in person and online, staying connected with thousands of kilometres between us, all while reducing our carbon footprint.

We have become better at gathering data and crunching numbers. This evidence-informed thinking is reflected throughout our decisions, actions and planning, and it also forms the foundation for developing the forthcoming Strategic Plan that will be published in early 2023.



Laura Collister, CEO, and Michael Gorton AM, Board Chair

Enjoy our Annual Review in short video format



Part 1 – An Overview



Part 2 – Advocacy & Reform



Part 3 – People & Services



Part 4 – Carer Gateway



Part 5 – Reconciliation

Our People

One milestone this year was the latest **My Voice** survey that produced a breadth of valuable data, informing our leadership team on the way our employees engage with the organisation. With this information, we celebrate the areas we do well and have established team-based action plans to work on areas for improvement.

“ Wellways is a truly great place to work ”

say 70% of all surveyed staff.

The survey has told us that over 90% of our colleagues agree that Wellways is a workplace free of discrimination and harassment and that we are an organisation that lives and breathes its values.

Nevertheless, we need to do more to retain our valuable people. Our systems need to be better, and our professional development and training improved.

“ I would like to thank all 907 Wellways employees who have filled in the My Voice survey, helping us to make Wellways an even better place to work ”

– Laura Collister, Chief Executive Officer.

We value the diversity of our workforce and understand how important it is to have our people reflect the people we work with.

My Voice provided some fascinating facts about our employees, the 1868 people that make up Wellways.

Approx. **75%** of our workforce are female,

24% are male

and over **1%** of our people identify as non-binary, transgender or other

6% of our people identify as First Nations

16% of our workforce identify with the LGBTIQ+ communities

Over **13%** live with a disability



Wellways team members Sue and Lyn at the 'Walk in Wings' Carers Week event, Sunshine Coast.

Our Services

We now deliver person-centred services at more locations than ever before. We have five new Prevention and Recovery Care services (PARCs) in Victoria, bringing the number of this specialist service to 18 across our footprint. The new PARCs include a youth-specific service and a Women's PARC, where mothers are welcome to bring their children. This brand-new facility was purpose-built in Melbourne's west and is a shining example that mental health services are heading in the right direction.

In addition to our new PARCs, we have also expanded our psychosocial support programs in Southern Queensland and parts of Victoria, and our three Youth Residential Rehabilitation programs in Victoria have grown to incorporate outreach services.

However, the most growth we have experienced as an organisation is a direct result of the Mental Health Reform in Victoria. Wellways is proud to have secured the lead role in two of the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals in Frankston as well as across Benalla, Wangaratta, and the Shire of Mansfield. We are also delivering services as part of a Local Services consortium in greater Geelong.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are one of the key flagship reforms funded by the Victorian Department of Health in response to recommendations by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The current plan by the government states that up to 60 of these Local Services will open their doors across Victoria by the end of 2026.

“ The ‘Locals’ are the lynchpin of revolution within Victoria’s Mental Health System driven by the Royal Commission. We are working together – clinical and community services, lived experience and local knowledge – to offer a safe, supported entry into the mental health system. Our service model is led by lived experience, staffed by local people, and reaches into community to support individuals wherever they are at in their journey of recovery. ”

– Nikki Wynne, Director of Service Delivery



Wellways team members Luisa and Kuini using the brand new facilities at Yanna Yanna PARC in Melbourne's west

Carer Gateway

While the Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are still being rolled out in Victoria, we are excited to confirm that Carer Gateway has now reached a milestone, with over 30,000 carers registered.

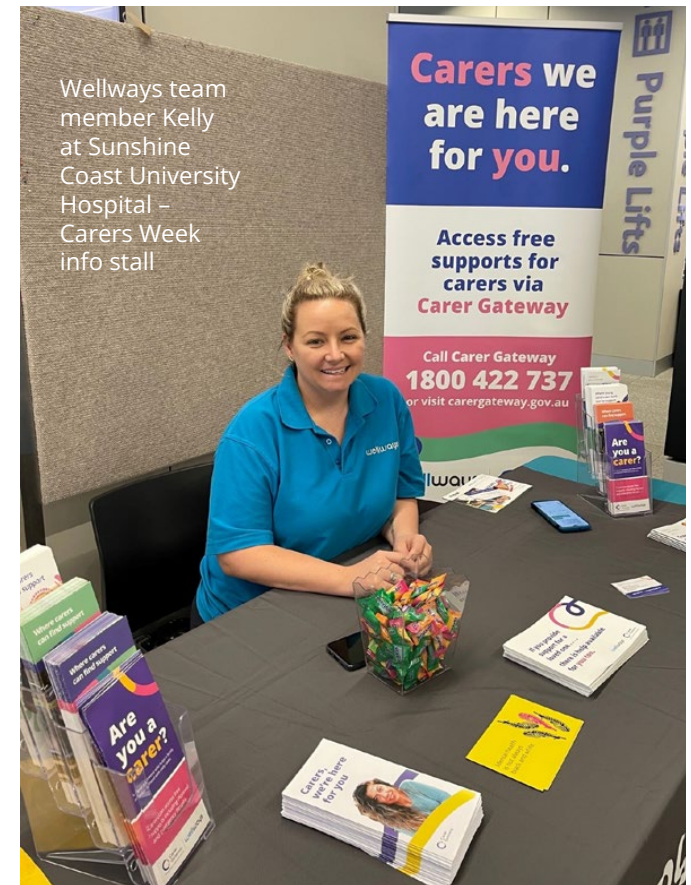
Carer Gateway is an Australian Government program providing free services and support for carers. Wellways is the Carer Gateway service provider in all of Queensland, Southwest Sydney, and the Nepean Blue Mountains.

While our two contact centres in Brisbane and Sydney have delivered shorter wait times and connected more carers with support (more than 12,000 during the first months of the new financial year alone), our customer experience continues to improve.

As with the development and delivery of other Wellways services, Carer Gateway is also based on evidence. A 2022 survey has found that Coaching, Emergency Respite and Counselling have all experienced a higher uptake while service satisfaction has surpassed 90%.

In 2022, Carer Gateway has also celebrated Carers Week like never before. Not only were dozens of events held to celebrate carers, but we also made sure that everyone knew about it, by supporting the national Carer Gateway marketing campaign and by running co-branded Wellways advertisements and promotions.

We have also focused on bringing services to hidden carers, including people who don't speak English as their first language, LGBTQIA+ carers, young carers, and First Nations carers. This includes hosting special events as well as distributing tailored marketing materials and producing content in languages other than English.





**Do you know a
young carer?**

Call us for a chat on 1800 422 737

 **Carer
Gateway**
An Australian Government Initiative

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Reconciliation

At Wellways, addressing injustice and racism continues to be our business and we acknowledge the struggles Indigenous communities are facing. Many of these challenges are linked to structural discrimination, lack of access to services – as well as disproportionate social, health and wellbeing outcomes – in comparison to the general population.

This year, we are two years in to our current Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), and we are thrilled to announce we have appointed a RAP Officer, Jamie Lalic. Jamie is responsible for monitoring and supporting the delivery of the current RAP, as well as designing and developing future RAPs. Jamie is working closely with the executive team, senior managers, and employees to strengthen our success in achieving reconciliation, across all areas of the business and in the communities we provide services in.

Jamie also co-chairs the RAP Working Group, leads the First Nations Caucus, promotes opportunities for both allies and First Nations employees to connect, share solidarity and offer support. As part of this exciting initiative, Jamie and other members of the Caucus are planning a Cultural Retreat, in which all First Nations employees will come together for the first time on country.

In addition to having a designated resource to lead this important work, reconciliation also saw all Wellways employees create Courageous Commitments within teams. This includes Acknowledgements of Country, in-depth reflections on Indigenous topics, or team activities such as visiting cultural centres and ceremonies. Each team will report on the progress of their Courageous



Jamie is a proud Bundjalung woman who lives and works on Dharawal Country, Southwest Sydney. She is Wellways' first RAP Officer.

Lived Experience and Mental Health Reform

Drawing on the lived and living experience of our people is a key success factor to help us achieve our goals and deliver on commitments. This applies to reconciliation as much as it does to delivering our services or implementing the findings of the 2021 Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

It has taken Wellways less than one year to start implementing the recommendations internally. As a direct result, we have employed an *Organisational Lead Mental Health Reform*. This central role monitors the rapid movements in the sector and keeps our leadership team, and the wider organisation, up-to-date with all the exciting developments in the mental health sector.

We have also taken our commitment to embed lived experience in the Wellways DNA further by creating the Lived Experience Leadership team that reports to a member of the executive team. This team will not only guide us on necessary steps toward placing lived experience at the centre of everything we do but it will also inform our services and communications with our people, our participants, and their support network.

We have also continued to put lived experience at the centre of our recruitment strategy to employ leaders with a lived experience, an example being our new *National Manager for Advocacy, Research and Policy*, Claire Conlon.



UrHere launched in April 2022 as a digital space for young people to talk about their mental health.

Supported by all senior leaders, Claire has already started to ensure that Wellways participates in and influences bureaucratic processes and government decisions. On a public stage, this reformed team will focus on increasing people's understanding and acceptance of disadvantage and vulnerability, thereby challenging attitudes and practices that form barriers to inclusion.

Due to the post-pandemic relaxation of restrictions, our regional teams have become active again, outside of the digital space. We have participated in marches, sponsored local sports teams and even major events, such as the Our Reform conference in Melbourne.

While we now have a dedicated advocacy team with lived experience that focuses on influencing the way mental health challenges are perceived and discussed in society, we have also increasingly focused on the local level in the past year.

Our regional teams have run sausage sizzles that bring people together and provide us with the opportunity to promote mental wellbeing, train up community leaders to recognise signs of distress to prevent suicide, collectively completed over 5,000 km for the *Break the Cycle* bike ride challenge, and celebrated our carers with a never-before-seen range of events.

In May 2022, Wellways revived the Woodcock Public Lecture after a Covid-hiatus in previous years. It was exciting for all our people, partners, and participants to finally exchange learnings and ideas again, in-person and online.



Grassroots to Governance panel discussing lived experience at the 2022 Woodcock Lecture

'Grassroots to Governance; Mental health lived experience in leadership' was this year's topic and, with our guests and visitors, we explored what transformation needs to occur in governance structures and boards to encourage participants with lived experience to take the lead and have their say at the decision-making table.

While Debbie Hamilton's keynote address still resonates with us months on, we are proud to confirm that the Woodcock Lecture will also take place again at the Wheeler Centre in May 2023.

" I sit on Boards where there is one of me and eight others. I sit on another committee, where there is one of me and there are thirty other people. "

Keynote speaker and Systemic Mental Health System Advocate Debbie Hamilton

Partnerships

Most of our achievements, such as the Woodcock Lecture, would not have been possible without our partners and friends in the wider mental health, carer, and disability support sector.

Our new facilities, offices, and services, such as the PARCs, Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, as well as outreach programs and our service delivery of Carer Gateway would not be possible without strong partnerships with government and consortium partners.

Working together is not only part of our identity but also a lesson learned from the Royal Commission into Mental Health that we wholeheartedly embrace to deliver the best services and outcomes possible to all our clients, consumers, carers, and participants.



Strong partnerships have led to great outcomes including the opening of Yanna Yanna PARC in Melbourne's West.

Finances

Wellways has experienced steady growth throughout the year. Our revenue has grown accordingly, increasing by 8.6% to a new record level of \$159 million.

Simultaneously, we have made substantial investments in our in-house ICT and software systems, future-proofing the organisation and creating new platforms that will make Wellways a more efficient and effective employer and service provider.

We have also continued to rectify self-reported historical underpayments to employees, and we have experienced a minor net loss on revaluation of our financial assets due to post-covid market trends.

A combination of these one-off expenditures has led to a reduction in our operating surplus, creating a deficit of \$2.6 million. However, with significant growth occurring as a result of the Mental Health Reform in Victoria, we expect Wellways to remain in a strong financial position in the coming years.

About Us

Wellways is a leading not-for-profit mental health, disability support and carer services organisation operating across Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and Tasmania. Our services span mental health, carer support, disability and community care, and reach thousands of people each year. We connect people, strengthen families and transform communities. We work with individuals of all ages experiencing disabilities or challenges to their social and emotional wellbeing. We work with people and their families to create a home, secure jobs, and build meaningful relationships.

Our vision: An inclusive community where everyone can imagine and achieve their hopes and potential.

Our purpose: We connect people, strengthen families and transform communities for individuals of all ages experiencing disabilities or challenges to their social and emotional wellbeing.

Please contact communications@wellways.org if you have any questions about this publication or would like support to access it.



Where carers can find support



1300 364 277
www.raq.org.au

Counselling, Mediation,
Education & Support for

Supporting the LGBTIQ+ community

Free support for carers

Embodiment Movement Workshop

Connection to the Rainbow Community and Rainbow Carers

Where carers can find support

Where carers can find support

Supporting the LGBTIQ+ community

Wellways team members Sue, Kelly and Amber at the 'I'm Still Standing' event held by LGBTIQ+ Community Ageing Network, Sunshine Coast.

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wellways.org | 1300 111 400



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 and present. We are committed to inclusive communities.