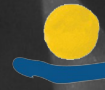




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2023 Annual  
General Report





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## Acknowledgement of Country

Greenacres acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work and provide our services, the Yuin and Tharawal/Dharawal Nations. We pay our respect to all First Nations Elders past, present and emerging for their continuing tradition, memories and protection of their culture. We also extend those respects to our First Nations participants, members of our workforce, their families and carers.

We stand with these leaders of First Nations communities in continuing connections to the water, culture, community and unceded land. We recognise the hardships our first nations people have suffered both past and present and value the strength and resilience they have engrained within their culture. At Greenacres we are committed to maintaining these respects and providing culturally safe spaces for all First Nations people in their deserved journey toward reconciliation.



# The Greenacres Difference

In reaching our 70th year, a significant and remarkable milestone, Greenacres proudly reflects on its enduring legacy. Since our inception in 1953 as a pioneering school in the Illawarra, we have continuously evolved to become a multifaceted organisation. Our steadfast commitment, unwavering throughout this seven-decade journey, remains unaltered – empowering people with disability through choice.

The founding families of Greenacres initiated a battle for inclusion, demanding that their children with intellectual disability deserved an education equal to their peers. These families collectively established one of the region’s earliest centres for employment and support for people with disability. Today, our vision is undiminished; we continue to imagine the possibilities, embracing creativity and innovation.

Our footprint has expanded, but our core mission endures. As we celebrate our 70th anniversary, Greenacres remains a family, respected as one of the leading disability service providers in the region, offering services, supports and programs throughout the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven. Weekly, we empower over 500 individuals to pursue and achieve the life they imagine.

Greenacres remains a committed advocate, championing the rights of people with disability, upholding the right to work and lead inclusive lives. Ask anyone what they cherish most about Greenacres, and they’ll mention the joy of camaraderie and the memorable events shared, such

as our annual Picnic Days, BBQs, and festive Christmas parties at the Fraternity Club. Our community involvement, including volunteer opportunities, adds another layer of fulfillment.

Our remarkable staff, whose dedication, resilience, and adaptability shine through, are instrumental in shaping Greenacres. They go above and beyond to nurture skills, boost self-esteem, support, care for and empower individuals with disability, creating a positive and inclusive environment that celebrates their unique abilities and achievements. Our generous donors and valued stakeholders have contributed significantly over the years, enabling countless opportunities and a continuing legacy that continues to transform the lives of Greenacres participants. Together, we embody the essence of Greenacres, and we are so proud to be celebrating 70 years of unwavering dedication. We look forward to continuing to achieve our purpose for many more years to come.





# Who We Are

Greenacres is one of the leading disability service providers in the Illawarra. For 70 years, we have been committed to supporting people with disability to achieve their dreams.

We are a trusted name in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven with a reputation for innovation, flexibility and quality support.

This year we provided training, employment opportunities, overnight accommodation and life and leisure programs to over 500 people with disability.

# Our Purpose

We will support people with disability to transform their ideas and goals into experiences and achievements.

# Our Vision

We imagine every person with disability creating their own positive future.



# Our Values



# Business Objective

To be a sustainable, quality focused and values driven organisation which is responsive to the needs and goals of people with disability.

# Greenacres History - 20th Century



1953

Greenacres School for Subnormal Children officially opened by A.S Hopkins at Mercury Street.



1963

Greenacres first Sheltered Workshop officially opened.

1968

Extensions to Sheltered Workshop. Greenacres gift shop selling goods made by people with disability in Globe Arcade, Wollongong.



1974

Para Meadows Public School opened. Our Rag and Paper collection provides the majority of the work at Greenacres.



1979

Greenacres opens first Group Home. Greenacres continues to expand the range of services on offer.

1991

Upon losing major clients suddenly, Mercury Footwear closes. Flametree Industries & Southern Cross Boot Company established as precursors to Greenacres Enterprises.

1988

Establishment of Greenacres Residential Services. Successful partnership with TAFE, providing further training to participants.

1987

Greenacres Individual Learning Centre commenced in Wollongong CBD. Mercury Footwear officially opened. Aid Retarded Persons (South Coast Advance Enterprises—SCAE) merged with Greenacres Association.

1985

Greenacres Vocational Centre established as an amalgamation of South Coast Advance Enterprises (SCAE) in Fairy Meadow. Smiley's Snack Bar Opened at 6 Ralph Black Drive.

1983

Greenacres Special School transfers operations to Para Meadows.

1992

Residential Service transferred to generic service. Commercial ventures struggle as work moves offshore.

1994

Illawarra Workwise opened in Dapto. Individual Training Centre opened in Greene Street Warrawang.

1995

Southern Cross Belt Company started. Flametree Industries achieved ISO9002 Accreditation. Greenacres becomes more financially viable.

1996

Community Access Service opened in Kembla Street. Neil Preston appointed as CEO. Expanded commercial sector to serve Southern-Sydney area.

1997 - 1999

Joblink Post School Options (PSO) Service opened. Greenacres Sheltered Workshops (Flametree Industries) awarded Section 10 status under the *Disability Services Act* to transition to organisation that employs people with disability. Greenacres Association won "Highly Commended" in the category of Community Service Business in the 1999 Illawarra Business Awards.

# Greenacres History - 21<sup>st</sup> Century



## Our Chairpersons

Thank you to all past & present members of the Greenacres Board of Directors. The Chairpersons (previously known as Presidents) have included:

A.S. Hoskins 1950 - 1953, C.E. Parrish 1953 - 1973, J. Pearce 1973 - 1975, W.C. Charlton 1975 - 1977, J.E. Doorn 1977 - 1986, J.D. Bilboe 1986 - 1990, F. Mattesich 1990 - 1993, D. Owen 1993 - 1995, F. Mattesich 1996 - 2006, F. McInerney 2006 - 2008, R.J. Young 2008 - 2018, T. Donaldson 2018 and G. Parrish 2019 - Current

## Our Life Members

We acknowledge all of the support that our life members have provided to Greenacres over the years. These members are:

H. Tombling, R. Hayter, D. Moir, L. Dombroski, L. Bridges, L. Shepherd, S. Shepherd, C.E. Parrish, W. Bird, J. Dombroski, F. Mattesich, J. Chie, J. Doorn, L. Marr, M. Bostock, D. Evans, W. Hamill, M. Lachlan, P. Beniuk, J. Bilboe, D. Fletcher, W. Richardson, R. J. Young, I. Bowen, N. Preston OAM, A. Shepherd, S. Burns

**2000**

Greenacres External Training Services commenced. Multipurpose Centre was opened, a precursor to the Kickstart Centre. Joblink (Adult Learning Training and Support (ATLAS)/PSO) moved to Ralph Black Drive.

**2001**

Head Office Building at 2/4 Ralph Black Drive, North Wollongong was purchased. In the 2001 Illawarra Business Awards, Greenacres won in the categories of 'Community Service Business', 'Health & Education' and 'Innovation'.

**2002**

All Enterprise Operations consolidated to 5 Ralph Black Drive, North Wollongong. Joblink Service opened an off-site Training Centre at 31 Auburn Street to cater for the growth in new ATLAS/Joblink participants.

**2003**

Greenacres Retirement Options for ageing business service users opened in the Smith Street Centre. Greenacres Association launched its new logo and corporate identity at its 50th Birthday Celebrations on 29th November 2003, and produced a commemorative book.

**2004 - 2005**

A new Day Centre was established at 32 Greenacre Road. A second 'high support' Day Centre was opened in Albion Park Rail in a modified home at 10 Oak Street. The factory building at 1/4 Ralph Black Drive, next to the Head Office building, was purchased. First Enterprise Agreement covering Supported Employees and Supervisors made with Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union.

**2006**

A new Community Participation Program was established at 10 The Esplanade Oak Flats. Our first website goes live. Greenacres Association changed its name to Greenacres Disability Services.

**2015 - 2016**

Greenacres First Annual Fundraising Ball, First Mountain to Mountain (M2M) Fundraising Challenge 2015. Opening of Kemira Respite (IRT) & How you Bean Café. Greenacres establishes first Kickstart for Life program for school age students seeking employment after school hours.

**2014**

Greenacres wins 'Employer of Choice' & 'Excellence in Workplace Health and Safety' at 2014 Illawarra Business Awards. Fair Work Commission proceedings begin on Supported Wages. Greenacres takes a leading role. My Job Counts campaign established.

**2011 - 2013**

Harmony Centre - Kanahooka purchased. Every Australian Counts Campaign to establish the NDIS begins, with Greenacres playing a leading role. Neil Preston retired 2011 as CEO after serving in that role for 16 years. Steve Beard appointed as CEO - 2011 - 2013. Susan Burns appointed interim CEO - 2013. Chris Christodoulou appointed as CEO September 2013. NDIS trial begins.

**2008 - 2010**

Greenacres successfully tendered the take over of previously operated NSW Government Services (Harmony, Kanahooka and Expressway Albion Park) which provided Day Programs. This allowed Greenacres to remain viable and sustainable into the future. 'Better Days' Mental Health Support Program won the 2010 Eli Lily Major Award for the best program to improve the health and physical wellbeing of people with mental health issues.

**2007**

A Respite Options Program was established in a property purchased at Greenacre Road in Wollongong next to the existing Centre. This flexible program targets the adult children of older carers. Greenacres expanded into the Shoalhaven Region. Winner of 'Health and Community Services' in 2007 Illawarra Business Awards. Additional factory space was purchased next door to the Head Office and main factory at Unit 9, 6-8 Ralph Black Drive.

**2017 - 2018**

Preston Place - Lake Illawarra & Brewing Up a Storm Café SES opened. Kickstart Centre opened at Greenacres Head Office by newly announced life member Susan Burns. Greenacres transitions to the NDIS. Creation of Skilled and Social Programs - Cooking Classes, CEO Walk and Talk. Richard Young retired as Chair of the Board after more than 20 years of service.

**2019 - 2021**

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of people with Disability begins. Greg Parrish appointed Chair of the Board 2019. Creation of Community Connect and Outsider Arts Facility at Ralph Black Drive. Greenacres responds to COVID-19 pandemic by establishing best practices. Major infrastructure upgrade at 4 Ralph Black Drive, including Enterprises lunchroom, safety walkways, and toilet facilities. Shepherd Brothers Place opened in Oak Flats, Building 1 Ralph Black Drive named Richard Young Building. Defend NDIS campaign established.

**2022**

Greenacres implements organisational change to adjust to the new NDIS environment. Greenacres established Woolly Gong brand, which leads to the launch of the IMAGINE Homewares and Hampers. Brewing Up A Storm opened at Warrigal Care Shell Cove. Fair Work Commission hands down decision on Supported Wages which supports Greenacres approach.

**2023**

Brewing Up A Storm opened at Wollongong City Council. IMAGINE Homewares and Hampers retail store opened in Wollongong Central. Purchase of driving simulator for Kickstart Centre. Greenacres wins 'Outstanding Community Organisation' and is awarded Highly Commended - 'Illawarra Business Of The Year' for the IMB Illawarra Business Awards. Brewing Up a Storm wins in category of 'Business Partnership' in 2023 Community Service Awards. Disability Royal Commission recommendations handed down.





# Message From the Chair

Greg Parrish

On the 29th of November 1953, Greenacres officially opened a school for children with disabilities. It was after years of parent and community campaigning to have the Government of the day recognise that children with disabilities had a right to education just like every other child in NSW. Support for people with disability has come a long way in 70 years. The NDIS is now one of the biggest financial outlays for the Federal government. Our journey over the 70 years has had many challenges and I pay tribute particularly to those parents and community members who have lead the organisation in various capacities over those years.

As the Chairperson of the Board, I can say all of our Directors take their obligations very seriously because we know it's our responsibility to always act in the best interests of the people we support. I acknowledge the collective and professional work carried out by each of our Directors who all work on a voluntary basis but bring with them a high level of expertise. Sustainability for Purpose is what we strive for. To do this we must always endeavour to have staff who are committed and passionate about their roles and to run the organisation in a sustainable and effective manner. We rely on our CEO and Chief Officers to run the day-to-day operations and implement the Board's Strategic Direction. Our Executive Team and all the staff have done an excellent job in making the necessary changes to respond to the ever-changing environment of the NDIS.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate on behalf of the Board, everyone at Greenacres for their contribution in our 70th year for winning the 'Outstanding Community Organisation' at the IMB Illawarra Business Awards.

**Greg Parrish**  
Chair of the Board



# Our Board



**Greg Parrish** – Director & Chairperson

Member of the Strategic Planning Working Group; Member of the Audit and Risk Committee; Member of the People, Culture and Governance Committee; Appointed to Greenacres Board May 2013. Chief Operations Manager for the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong; CPA, MBA & GAICD.



**Trish McClure** – Director

Member of the Strategic Planning Working Group; Chairperson of the People, Culture and Governance Committee. Appointed to Greenacres Board as an Alternate Director 8 November 2018. Appointed as a Director 14 November 2018. Former Chair Carers NSW and Director Interchange Illawarra. Former Director Transport Services and Infrastructure NSW, Career Mentor.



**Stephen Dawson** – Director

Member of the Strategic Planning Working Group; Member of the People, Culture and Governance Committee; Appointed to Greenacres Board May 2008. Legal Practitioner Accredited Property Law Specialist, Director Illawarra Diggers, Aged and Community Care Limited.



**Henry Crawford** – Director

Chairperson of the Participant and Carers Reference Group. Appointed to Greenacres Board November 2020. Currently Retired. Formally the Asset Manager Steel Treatment and Caster Services at Bluescope Steel. Long-term Co-Carer for a person with disability.



**Sonia Minutillo** – Director

Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee. Appointed to Greenacres Board June 2016. Director, Investigation and Reporting – Information and Privacy Commission NSW.



**Marcela Kohazy** – Director;

Member of the Strategic Planning Working Group; Deputy Chairperson of the Participant and Carers Reference Group. Appointed to Greenacres Board 2020. Marketing & Communications Manager - Woonona Bulli RSL Club; Professional Member AMI.



**Chris Burrows** – Director & Company Secretary

Member of the Audit and Risk Committee; Member of the People, Culture and Governance Committee. Appointed to Greenacres Board as an Alternate Director June 2016. Appointed as a Director in February 2018. Head of Strategic Project Delivery CEnet; Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**Carol Brain** – Director

Chairperson of the Strategic Planning Working Group; Member of the Audit and Risk Committee. Appointed to Greenacres Board as an Alternate Director in November 2020. Appointed as a Director November 2021. Semi-retired Legal Practitioner; Former Locum Generalist Solicitor Illawarra Legal Centre; previously the NDIS Appeals Coordinator Illawarra Advocacy 2017-2019.



# From the CEO

Chris Christodoulou

Greenacres celebrated turning 70 in 2023 and it culminated in a year of celebration and achievement.

Our annual Greenacres Ball celebrated our 70th anniversary with a record attendance of 350 people, and remains one of our major fundraising initiatives. We opened our 3<sup>rd</sup> Brewing Up a Storm café at Wollongong City Council. We continued to build our IMAGINE Homewares and Hampers brand by opening a permanent retail space in Wollongong Central. These new initiatives are creating wonderful supported mainstream employment opportunities.

During the year we also launched our innovative Imagine online booking platform for our Leisure and Skills program, making it easier for participants to book their next supported adventure or activity. We also introduced a new Your Employment Pathways (YEP) program, providing vocational education linked with work experience and supported employment positions.

Our Outsider Art Exhibition was complimented this year by Wollongong City Council commissioning our art to be placed on their planter boxes in the Performing Art precinct. The planter boxes look great and is a tribute to the work of all our artists.

Exciting things have been happening all over Greenacres and some other highlights include our Local Heros program and our 'This is Me' Choir.

All of this positive work comes on the back of some major threats, where the Disability Royal Commission who want to see an end to congregate employment models or Australian Disability Enterprises. Greenacres will continue to champion the rights of people with disability to work in places where they feel safe and secure. In this regard we took a number of supported employees to Canberra to speak to a number of Ministers. Many thanks go to Amie, Andrew and Sharon.

The financial year has proven to be a successful year relative to the disruption of 21/22.



Culturally we now have a Leadership group feeling more aligned, more included, and more empowered than in previous years. This is a reflection of the role that our Chief Officers are playing by consulting more broadly.

This year we embarked upon a very different process to create our new Strategic Plan. The consultation process evolved over more than 8 months and involved consultations and surveys with participants and staff, two different SWOT analysis, focus groups, and deep conversations and workshops involving our Leadership Team, Executive Team, and Directors.

As part of this process, we refined our Values which have been revised to Fairness, Inclusion, Respect, Excellence and Safeguarding. These Values underpin what our organisation strives for with respect to its culture and the way we provide support and work with each other. Achieving our objectives as set out in our new 3-year Strategic Plan will be our priority.

Finally, can I thank all of our staff, our Leadership Team and the Directors of Greenacres all of whom have played a vital role in what can only be described as a very successful year.

**Chris Christodoulou**

CEO

# Greenacres 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball



The Greenacres Ball this year witnessed an unprecedented turnout, with more than 350 attendees joining the celebration. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, management team, generous sponsors, Board Members, the Greenacres 'This is Me' Choir, and the talented band X Parté. Special mention goes to the mesmerising performance by Fung from the Black Tie Magicians, which added an extra layer of magic to the night.

The Wollongong University Hall served as our lively venue, where the dance floor remained vibrant throughout the evening, echoing with laughter and pure joy. We appreciate the enthusiastic participation of all, including our valued

VIP guests. Congratulations to the deserving prize winners and successful auction bidders who contributed to making this event unforgettable.

Here's to more cherished moments together!



# People and Culture

In the ever-evolving landscape of the NDIS, the cornerstone of Greenacres' quality support is our people. As we look back on the past year, we are delighted to share the journey we've undertaken in cultivating a professional and friendly culture, promoting our dedicated team members, expanding our workforce, and elevating our commitment to quality staff training. Greenacres welcomed 11 new supported employees, 104 new staff and promoted three staff members into Team Leader roles.

We have an ongoing commitment to providing high-quality and relevant training to our staff as we know well-trained

staff improve outcomes for our participants. 2023 saw the establishment of a new Learning and Development team that began the implementation of our new learning management system. The new online learning library was developed in partnership with NDS, the leading peak body of non-government disability services. Every module in the Library is mapped to NDIS practice standards. This will ensure our courses are up to date with best practices in the industry. We provided 2,500 hours of paid training to our staff during the financial year.

## Greenacres Snapshot

### Staff Stats

Full Time	43
Part Time	145
Casual	69

Total 257



181



76

### Supported Employee Stats

Full Time	20
Part Time	181
Casual	5

Total 206



78



128

### Years of Service

We take immense pleasure in honouring the remarkable individuals who are part of the Greenacres team, especially those who have reached significant milestones in their long service with us. Just as in years past, we continue the tradition of presenting these well-deserved awards during our annual end-of-year Christmas BBQ celebration.

- 5 years – 19 staff
- 10 years – 14 staff
- 20 years – 9 staff
- 25 years – 6 staff

### Participant Stats

The majority of our Enterprises (ENT) and ASK participants engage in both programs and are represented in both figures.

ENT 214

ASK 267

CLL 393

# Excellence in Quality and Assurance: A Year in Review

During the 2022-2023 year, Greenacres successfully completed two mandatory external audits associated with our ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems) and AS5377 (e-Waste) accreditations. We were not required to undergo an external audit relating to our registered NDIS provider certification (which was due for renewal in September 2022) because the NDIS were still assessing our renewal application, which was submitted in June 2022.

## AS/NZS 5377



In March 2023, we were audited on all applicable requirements of AS/NZS 5377 (Australian and International Standards) relating to the collection, storage, transport and treatment of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment. We met the objectives of the assessment, with no major non-conformances and only one minor non-conformance identified. The minor non-conformance issue related to a lack of evidence of two WHS operation controls, both of which were rectified within three months of receiving the auditor's report.

## ISO 9001:2016



In May 2023, we were audited on specific requirements of AS/NZS ISO 9001:2016 (Australian and International Standards) relating to Quality Management Systems. The auditor did not identify any non-conformances (either minor or major) nor did they make any observations or offer any suggestions for improvement opportunities. In addition, the auditor was able to close out the two observations that remained open from the previous year.



The AS5377 auditor did not provide any general feedback about the organisation, but here is a noteworthy comment from the ISO9001 auditor's report:

*"Much work has been undertaken in the last reporting period to stabilise the organisation and enhance the internal processes whilst looking innovatively to service delivery, since the restructure of the organisation in May 2022. The innovative product offering of the organisation has enhanced the choice for NDIS participants working in the enterprise and will further enable the organisation to seek more stability in return on investment in time, profits and enhanced capability of the organisation's workforce."*

Our ability to successfully meet the oversight of external auditors is a direct result of the hard work, dedication, integrity and professionalism of every single member of the Greenacres team, together with the implementation of our robust processes and practices and the quality of support we provide to our participants. We really want to congratulate everyone involved with our great organisation.



# Award Winners

We are thrilled to receive acknowledgement for our outstanding achievements by being awarded the following:

2023 IMB Bank Illawarra Business Awards:

- **Winner** – Outstanding Community Organisation
- **Highly Commended** – Illawarra Business Of The Year
- **Finalist** – Outstanding Employee (Jade Stewart)
- **Highly Commended** – Outstanding Business Leader (Chris Christodoulou)

This was the first time in 29 years that the Illawarra Business of the Year award had to announce a highly commended category because Greenacres fell just short of winning. In the Community Industry Group's Community Service Awards:



- **Winner** – Business Partnership (Greenacres & SES Wollongong - Brewing up a Storm Café)
- **Finalist** – A Brilliant Idea Team (Harmony Choir, led by Kellie Harradine)
- **Finalist** – Above & Beyond (Shaun Ferguson)

“All of these are remarkable achievements and everyone at Greenacres should be proud. Without all of the hard work from everyone, this wouldn't be possible. Everybody contributes with one goal in mind – supporting our participants to live their best lives.” - Chris Christodoulou.

We are all so very proud!

## Changes to the Supported Employment Services Award

In December 2022, the Fair Work Commission handed down its Decision on the best way to determine wages for supported employees. For Greenacres, this was a culmination of 8 years of work in the Fair Work Commission and leading the My Job Counts campaign. Following this Decision, the Award changed (effective June 2023).

These changes include:

- Adding two new wage classifications (Grades A and B) to the Award, sitting below the existing classifications of Grades 1-7.
- Removing all wage assessment tools available under the Award, with the exception of the Supported Wage System (SWS) with modifications.
- All supported employees will need to have a SWS Assessment completed by June 2026.

Greenacres has been working through the requirements to grade each supported employee under the new classification structure; collecting internal

productivity data for the purposes of the SWS assessments; and consulting with employees, families and carers on these changes to ensure that people understand how their employment classification and the way we assess employee wages will change.

## The Disability Royal Commission Findings

The Decision regarding the SES award was generally a good result, however, the recommendations from The Disability Royal Commission (DRC) may affect this Decision if the Federal Government agrees with the DRC to phase in full award wages. Greenacres began lobbying the Federal Government this year in anticipation of the DRC recommendations and took a delegation to Parliament House to meet Minister Rishworth and others. We will continue to defend the rights of people with disability to have a job they choose. We are not opposed to full award wages so long as the Government can achieve this without job losses and people losing their Disability Support Pension benefits.

# Greenacres Enterprises: Growing in the right direction

## *Body Safe* Body Bags



Our *Body Safe* Body Bags enterprise is a great example of an inclusive workforce, with qualified sewing machinists working alongside our supported employees. Throughout the year we have liaised closely with the team at Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District to design a new bag, specifically for them, being our Adult Double Zipper bag. This showcases our innovative versatility in designing custom requirements and is a testament to our wonderful sewing team.



## Packing, Assembly, Labelling and Shrink Wrapping

In the field of packaging and labelling, many businesses have shifted to offshore providers for cost competitiveness. The past year has seen us review our pricing strategy, resulting in increased pricing to our key accounts following Fair Work wage increases and the new SES Award wage changes, along with increases in costs such as utilities, transport, and raw materials. We are pleased to have successfully negotiated ongoing work with almost all of our key accounts and secured a new partner, enabling additional consistent work.

As this Enterprise area is still our largest employer of supported employees, these outcomes are important in fulfilling our purpose while we continue to innovate. Many of our participants enjoy the social aspects of working in a team, as well as having a sense of purpose in their day-to-day lives.





## Sand Bags

Greenacres prepares two types of sandbags, clear and green which are utilised by a wide range of businesses from government departments to independent builder and landscape gardeners. Sandbagging provides regular work for our supported employees and includes using the forklift to load trucks, a job they enjoy.



## Metal Sheering



Greenacres has been cutting metal test panels for Bluescope since May 2016. We estimate that since this time, our supported employees have cut 5,000 packs of 100 panels.

Usually, there are two supported employees undertaking the job, although at busy times additional people are engaged. Those who regularly carry out the work, say they like the job due to its requirement to be precise and repetitive with high quality.

Recently our supervisor has trained the team to set up and adjust the guillotine for various size cuts which he supports them with through checking and assisting as required. This has given them more ownership of the job and their production. Their supervisor notes 'Rhys would live on the guillotine if allowed, as he loves operating it and becomes a machine when in full run. He likes the accuracy and setup skills involved, which match his personality.' The wrapping of the completed panel packs has developed into an art form, as Bradley has shown exceptional talent in wrapping, considering the difficulty of working with the waxed paper wrapping. His supervisor says, 'he would be a great person to have around when wrapping Christmas presents (he is that good)!'



## Brewing Up A Storm Cafés & Catering

This year, we opened our third café at Wollongong City Council, emphasising our commitment to providing job opportunities with support in mainstream settings. We've also reduced our cost of goods by preparing most menu items in-house, which has led to us actively working on establishing a new commercial kitchen in the months ahead. Our catering services have taken off with regular orders from businesses loving our range of grazing boxes for meetings, training sessions, and events.

Our supported employees have been updating their food safety qualifications and many participants have been undertaking a Certificate II in Hospitality, as well as gaining valuable work experience and paid job opportunities within our cafes and catering areas.



## Labour Hire Crews

We continue to be proud of our supported mainstream employment opportunities and our wonderful partnership with KJ Scaffolding who employ a crew of supported employees led by our experienced Supervisor. Together they handle returned scaffolding equipment, where they dismantle, sort and check components ready for reuse. The team attend daily toolbox meetings and have opportunities to join in with the wider KJ team for additional safety discussions, creating an inclusive work environment. We are now preparing to set up a second KJs crew at their Unanderra site.

A new Cleaning Crew commenced in Nowra this year, in partnership with a large local business. Our Shoalhaven supported employees are all doing really well and enjoying their positions.

We are now working towards the addition of some new labour-hire crews for next year, including a Property Maintenance Crew with training to be commenced soon in an Intro To Trades course, and a Garden Maintenance Crew who will complete a custom-designed course we are running in collaboration with a local RTO.



# IMAGINE

HOMEWARES AND HAMPERS

Over the past year, we've embarked on a transformative journey, creating a brand that not only produces luxury hand-crafted products but also empowers people with disability. Our brand, proudly made in Australia (right here in Wollongong), signifies more than just products; it symbolises our vision to enable those we support to craft their own bright futures.

Our range includes:

- Hand-Poured Scented Soy Candles
- Hand-Blended Botanical Bath Salts
- Lavender-Scented Wheat Heat Packs
- Hand-Poured Reed Diffusers and Room Sprays
- Deluxe Eye Masks and Eye Pillows
- Gift Hampers

Through this endeavor, our supported employees have had the chance to showcase their creative talents and produce products that have captured the hearts of the public. One of our supported employees, after pouring candles, expressed, "I love making candles so much! I want to do it for the rest of my life."

Our products are available at various locations, including Greenacres Head Office, our Wollongong Central retail store, the UOW UniShop, and our online shop.



Our vision extends beyond these spaces, as we plan to distribute our creations to a diverse range of retailers, from boutique gift shops to pharmacies and allied health professionals. Our upcoming participation in the Gift & Homewares Trade Fair in February 2024 holds the promise of new opportunities.

Our luxury gift hampers and gift sets offer a unique corporate gift-giving solution, resonating with organisations seeking meaningful and impactful gestures.

As we move forward, innovation remains at our core, and we're already hard at work on exciting new product releases to further elevate our brand. This journey is not just about products; it's about dreams realised, lives empowered, and futures transformed.



# Safety In Service

## Awareness and Training

The dedication to work health and safety by our Senior Management Team, Leaders and Employees is an integral part of Greenacres overall success and commitment to the disability service we provide. WHS achievements collectively reflect Greenacres' commitment to creating a safer work environment, protecting employees, and ensuring regulatory compliance.

This year our core focus has been on:

- Hazard and incident reporting, investigation and injury management system: our robust incident reporting system, allows immediate response to hazards and resolution of workplace safety concerns
- WHS Training Programs: Etrainu modules provide a comprehensive safety training program, to ensure employees are well-informed about safe work procedures and hazards
- Effective Risk Assessments: Conducted regular risk assessments and hazard identification, resulting in the proactive mitigation of potential workplace dangers
- Increased recognition and knowledge of psychosocial hazards that can cause psychological or physical harm such as bullying and harassment, mental stress, workplace violence, and aggression. Providing work environments that are free from physical and psychological harm
- Systematic compliance to:
  - SafeWork NSW legislative requirements and Safe Work Procedures
  - Fire equipment legislative requirements and emergency response planning

- Electrical testing and tagging
- Contractor management; life cycle approach to sourcing, onboarding and ensuring the safe work practices of contractors performing work for Greenacres
- Driver safety when operating forklifts
- Safety around participant activities, prior to and during activities
- Wellbeing:
  - R U OK Day – 2nd Thursday in September
  - Steptember 2022 was well participated by staff and supported employees who each aimed to walk 10,000 steps per day for Cerebral Palsy Alliance. Greenacres raised \$1,048.

## COVID in 2023

At the time of this report, there was:

- For the year, 225 known participants and employees reported they had COVID to Greenacres with their safe return to work assessed. Each case was risk reviewed for potential close contacts and individuals identified were contacted for follow up testing and monitoring of symptoms.
- 30 Leadership Team meetings held to review public health order requirements and implement Greenacres specific COVID safe practices.
- Over 800 RAT test kits provided free of charge to employees and participants (generously donated by Illawarra Area Health). This resource was invaluable as it resulted in the increase of employee and participants close contact testing, often resulting in the early identification of non-symptomatic COVID cases.



# Living Life Your Way

Greenacres Community Life and Leisure services comprise of day programs stretching from Corrimal in the Northern Illawarra suburbs to Bomaderry in the Shoalhaven. With fifteen sites and over 300 people with disability supported each week, the division is the largest in the organisation. Day program supports are mainly group based with centres operating between 9am to 3pm Monday to Fridays as their core hours with early and late supports (plus weekends) also provided as participants and families require. Transport supports are also included as part of this service option.

## Zumba – Healthy Exercise While Having a Ball

How do you inspire over 40 people to participate in some form of exercise each week, as well as to have a lot of fun along the way?

Answer, include great music and dancing and just like that our participants are moving to the beat and getting a great workout at the same time!

Zumba, is a high and low intensity Latin-inspired dance workout that our instructors say is primarily an aerobic workout but is also about having fun, tons of it!

Indeed, Greenacres' Zumba program has become a Community Life and Leisure favourite each Wednesday morning, being held at the local Koonawarra Community Hall, to give everyone the space they need to 'burn the floor'. With up to ten centres involved, including Greenacre Road, Harmony, Kemira, Sheps, Esperance, Ord Place, Preston, High St and Oak Street, it is safe to say it is one of Greenacres' most popular programs. The only downside is we have to limit numbers to safely support our participants of varying needs as well as ensuring everyone gets a red hot go. So let's Cha-cha-cha to the beat of ABBA...Ole!

## Greenacres Welcomes New Shoalhaven Social Enterprises

Greenacres has never had an employment service in the Shoalhaven but all that changed in March 2023 when we started our first social enterprise based at Global Defence Solutions in Nowra. The enterprise consists of two crews of two supported employees each plus a supervisor/support worker. Each team provides cleaning services to three buildings 2-days per week.

Global Defence Solutions have been thrilled with the work provided by the crews and hope to expand on the service in 2024. We also think it's a great partnership in synergy with both organisations having the same GDS anachronism. Clearly it was meant to be!

Not stopping there, our Area Coordinator and team have recently started a second enterprise with a third work crew established to provide lawn mowing, gardening and vehicle cleaning services, known as the Maintenance Crew! The small team consists of three participants and a supervisor/support worker, who work each Friday at a different Shoalhaven CLL centre doing their lawns, washing the centre vehicles and other maintenance tasks that involve teaching the supported employees new skills and also see them earning a supported wage each week. Not only does this provide meaningful work and skills but it gives the supported employees a sense of pride from their contribution to community.





## This is Me Choir - Bringing Joy to Wollongong

If you drop by the Harmony Centre in Kanahooka on a Thursday morning, the singing will be so joyful and enthusiastic you are guaranteed to leave with a smile. After a disrupted time during COVID, the This is Me Choir is back in full swing (or should that be sing) with weekly lessons led by Southern Lights Vocal Academy teacher. The eclectic group is made up of participants and staff who love to sing and come from a number of Greenacres Disability Services' Day Programs across the Illawarra. Each week they assemble at the Harmony Centre for their practice, which has been their base for the past few years.



After stealing the show at their first ever concert last December in Kiama, the vocal ensemble had the audience in awe with their renditions of 'Love is in the Air', followed by the magnificent 'Hallelujah' by Leonard Cohen, a rousing rendition of the classic Bourke's Backyard and ended with the jubilant 'This is Me' from the Greatest Showman, which has now become their anthem and choir name.

The group literally stole the show and propelled them to being featured on Nick Rheinberger's ABC Illawarra morning show, giving interviews from the participants and singing some of their favourite songs. Not to end there, the group performed at the Greenacres 70th Anniversary Ball in August this year, with an enthusiastic audience of 350 people cheering them on! The This is Me Choir was the brilliant idea of the team from Harmony Centre led by their Area Coordinator, Team Leaders, staff and the magnificent participants who are the real stars of the show. We all give you a bow!





## Outsider Arts Returns for a Rockin' Exhibition

Our 2023 Outsider Arts Exhibition went off without a hitch. The Exhibition commenced with a grand opening on the 14th of September and ran until the 1st of October. The launch of the exhibition was overwhelmingly well-received, drawing a significant number of art enthusiasts and buyers. On the very first day, sales figures were impressive, with art pieces being sold for a cumulative value of over \$3,000. What makes this exhibition even more special is its commitment to the artists, with 70% of the sale price of each artwork going directly back to the individual artist responsible for its creation. By the end, the exhibition had sold over \$7,500 worth of artworks.

When asked, Art Therapist Victoria Veloza described the program by saying, "Art is a powerful practice for people with disability. It provides a channel to share feelings and life experiences while at the same time giving the artists a sense of pride and empowerment. Outsider Arts is more than just a weekly class; it is a creative community where the artists are supported to explore different artistic mediums and develop their own distinctive styles. The result is an exhibition, which is as unique and inspiring as the artists themselves." Indeed, the artworks on display were both many and varied with colour, whimsy and power, all demonstrated throughout the gallery space.

This year's theme was Elvis, and everyone had a great time learning more about the King of Rock and Roll and creating the paintings!

Throughout the year, our artists have also worked on creating pieces to auction off at the Greenacres Ball, painted garden planters for Wollongong City Council, and traffic control boxes. We look forward to all of the amazing artwork to come from these talented creatives!



# Say YEP to Kickstart!

The Greenacres Your Employment Pathways program (YEP) was officially launched in May 2023 with a strategic focus on offering vocational skills and qualifications that align with the job opportunities available within our Enterprises. This initiative represents a significant milestone in our commitment to training with a clear purpose.



We have witnessed significant engagement with the YEP program. A total of 32 enthusiastic participants have taken advantage of our training and work experience opportunities. These participants represent a diverse group of individuals eager to enhance their vocational expertise and employability prospects.

The Greenacres YEP program remains committed to its mission of empowering individuals with the skills and qualifications needed to succeed in the workforce. We are excited about the positive impact this program has already had on our participants and look forward to continued growth and success in the coming years. This commitment to training and development underscores our dedication to fostering a skilled, diverse, and capable workforce, ultimately driving the success of Greenacres, and contributing to the broader community.

We express our gratitude to all stakeholders who have supported the YEP program and anticipate even greater achievements in the future.

The overarching objective of the YEP program was multi-fold. Firstly, it aimed to elevate the skill set of our existing supported employee workforce, thereby enhancing their career prospects within our organisation. Secondly, it sought to facilitate the seamless onboarding of new participants, fostering their personal and professional growth. Lastly, the program was designed to provide invaluable work experience opportunities that held the potential to lead to gainful employment for our current School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) participants.

We are proud to report substantial progress since the inception of the YEP program. Through strategic partnerships with local Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), we have successfully delivered comprehensive training in key sectors. Specifically, we have offered a Certificate II in Hospitality, a Certificate II in Retail, and a Statement of Attainment in Forklift Operations. These certifications are strategically aligned with the skill demands of our Enterprises and the broader job market.





## Our Driving Simulator & Imagine Booking Website – Launching an Exciting Future using Technology

The 16th of May 2023 saw our Leisure and Skilled Supports program launch our new Driver Training Program for our learners to experience everything that driving requires, without the high stress and risks associated with it. Each program runs up to 10 weeks and consists of in-classroom training as well as the practical element featuring our state-of-the-art driving simulator, designed to replicate the real conditions and feeling of driving on authentic looking roads. Everything from driving in city and suburban traffic, to country roads or highways and even snow covered curves along the Alpine Way. We look forward to all of the success stories that will come from the unique program and technology.



Combined with the start of the driver-sim program was the launch of a new booking platform called Greenacres Imagine. The purpose of the platform is to provide easy online access to all of Greenacres social, leisure and skills programs to not only existing participants of Greenacres but also new customers with disability that have an NDIS Plan. It is hoped and expected that participants and their families can plan their leisure and skilled supports months ahead to help maximise the most out their plan funding and have great experiences and skill development along the way.

Participants or their carer can sign up to the driver training program or other exciting activities through our Imagine booking website. [Greenacresimagine.au](https://www.greenacresimagine.au)

## Work Skills

Our Kickstart for Life group have made significant progress from a wide range of skills-based training incorporated into the program, including IT training, hospitality training, interviewing skills and many other transferable workplace skills. They have gained knowledge and confidence in areas such as social skills, traveling independently and handling money. Greenacres support staff accompany participants on industry tours, community outings and work experience to apply learnings from classroom sessions in practical hands-on real-world settings.

## Home and Away – ASK and you will Receive

If there is that one event that generates a huge buzz in the Greenacres ASK program it 's the news that a Home and Away tour is being planned. So it was the 2023 edition that again packed out the vans to see the mythical Summer Bay!

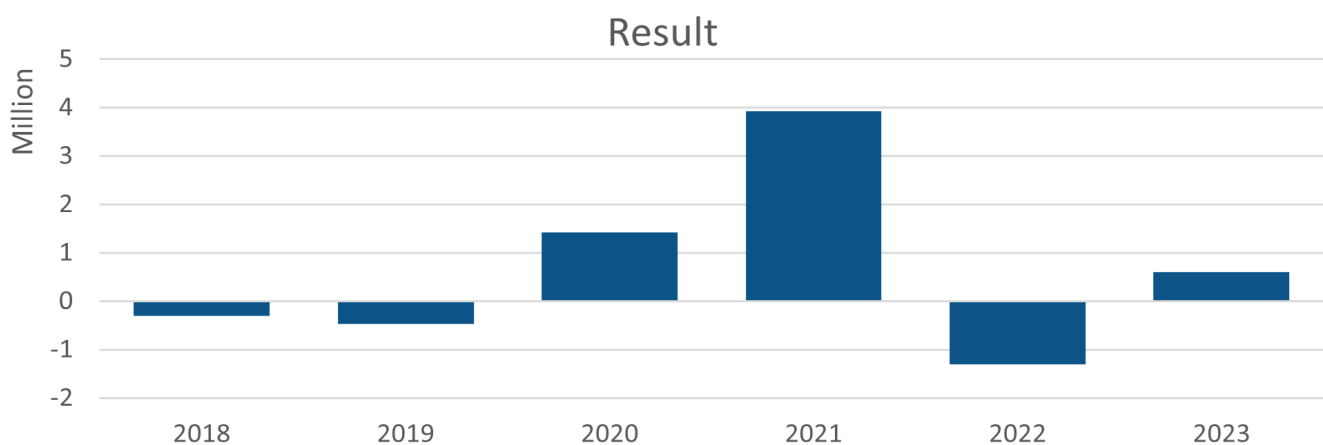
A huge group of 28 participants plus support staff set off on the journey 'up-north' to see the local landmarks from the iconic TV show including the local surf-club café, Summer Bay beach that is used for filming of the outdoor scenes, as well as to meet some of the Home and Away actors and production crew, including fan favourite Ethan Browne for those special selfies and group shots. Our group even filmed their own virtual tour of the day to inspire everyone unable to make it to be the first to book in for the next one. So it was 'Stone the Flamin' Crows' and 'strewths' all round, along with plenty of cheers for a massive day for our 2023 Home and Away adventurers!



# Financial Performance at a Glance

The 2023 year was a positive one for Greenacres. It was the first in around three years where services were not significantly impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns or service interruptions from COVID cases. Our final result was a surplus of \$603,730 showing the value of the programs we deliver and the resilience of our staff to support returning participants with opportunities to work and access programs to achieve their goals.

The return to near normal services in 2022 and the implementation of an organisational restructure, supported our financial sustainability with a significant swing to surplus from our deficit of \$1.3 million in 2022. Although we had reported surpluses in 2021 and 2020 during the initial stages of COVID, our results were substantially underpinned by Government stimulus payments. This included \$1.5 million in 2020, \$3.4 million in 2021 and \$1.3 million in 2022. Without these payments Greenacres would have reported an operational loss for each of our prior three years.



In 2023 we benefited from a one-off payment of \$434,779 received from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and interest rate rises on our funds, increasing interest income by \$251,571 from the 2022 year. During a strong year, we took the opportunity to review our service needs and made an intentional investment of around \$139,000 in projects to enhance services for participants and administrative work processes for staff. These projects included:

- We focused on undertaking enhanced maintenance at a number of our centres, replacing flooring, refreshing with a few coats of paint and generally completing repairs and updating furniture and equipment on site.
- We reviewed administrative processes and required documentation and invested in staff time to refine documentation while delivering training on more efficient use of our systems.
- We reviewed the devices that both frontline staff and supervisors use to access and update participant records. We surveyed staff and defined the best device type for each sites needs and provided new mobile phones, tablets and laptops to reduce administrative workload and bottlenecks to support safe and participant focused programs.

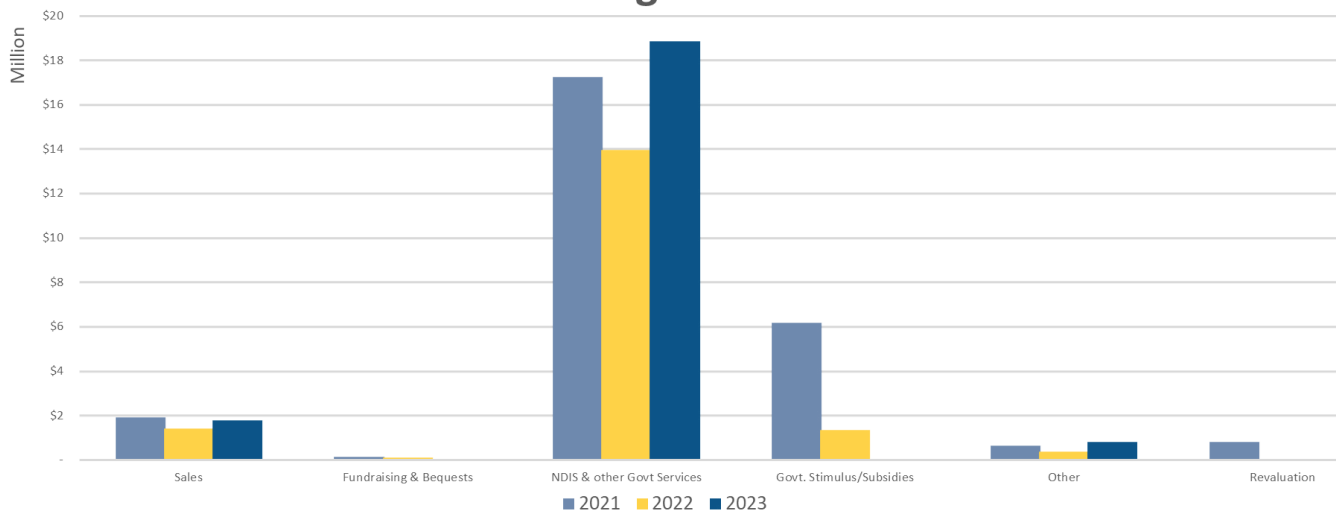
While these projects were a one off cost, it will position Greenacres for the longer term to deliver the best opportunities and support for our participants.

# Revenue

The 2023 year was the first in the past three that saw little impact from strict COVID-19 lockdowns or major service interruptions with our income from NDIS supports increasing 36% from 2022 to 2023 recognising our return to near normal service levels. Sales income also increased 26% but is yet to reach pre COVID levels.

Income from new business ventures has supplemented the more gradual return of work within our packaging and assembly business. Income from Government stimulus payments reduced our income over the three years with payments received reducing from \$6.2 million in 2021 to \$1.3 million in 2022 to zero in 2023.

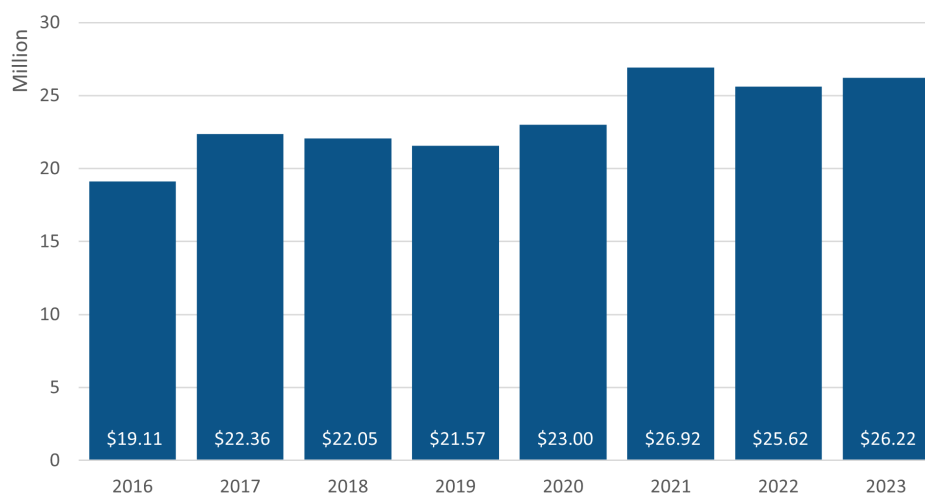
## Revenue Changes 2021 to 2023



# Financial Strength

The 2023 year saw our financial position strengthen with Equity increasing to \$26.22 million with cash increasing to \$10.03 million. Greenacres long history has seen us build a solid foundation that supported us through the challenges of the past three years. While the ongoing NDIS price tightening and the impact of the Royal Commission's decisions relating to employment for people with disability will create uncertainty, we know our financial strength and the dedicated and committed staff of Greenacres will ensure our continuing success.

## Net Assets/Equity \$ million



# Thank You

Since our beginning in 1953, Greenacres has depended on the generosity and kindness of our community. We are very fortunate to have such wonderful support from our sponsors, partners and generous donors. Together with funding from community and government grants we are able to provide:

- Supported employees with the satisfaction of rewarding work
- Young people with disability options to transition from school to work life
- Innovative training and development programs
- Assistance and support for people with disability to gain open employment
- Leading lifestyle and leisure programs
- Boutique hotel style overnight stays to provide that much needed break to relax and recharge

We welcome donations from individuals and partners, all donations over \$2 are tax deductible. If you wish to donate, please email [info@greenacres.net.au](mailto:info@greenacres.net.au)







Contact Greenacres today!

**1800 IMAGINE or 1800 462 446**

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