

CELEBRATING 2015/16

Annual Review



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At Ability Centre we confidently position ourselves as more than just a Disability Service Provider. We strongly believe there's no "one size fits all" and we never take a typical approach when it comes to offering services and supports; each and every person who comes in contact with Ability Centre has a unique experience and different requirements to help them achieve practical goals and realise their aspirations.

We have made ourselves at home in the hearts of West Australians, and over 65 years we have evolved into one of the state's largest organisations focussed on supporting people with disability and their families. We proudly offer the most comprehensive range of services and supports across the life-span, with a far-reaching geographical footprint.

Our services are world class and as well as in-situ solutions, we ensure all of our static sites are conveniently located for people with disability seeking therapy and health, community inclusion, employment and customised equipment. Our accessibility demonstrates our commitment to providing quality and flexible supports in the communities where individuals and families live, work and attend school.

With over 900 motivated staff striving to enrich the lives of the inspirational individuals we support, people truly are at the core of our organisation.

Chairman's Message

In his final report as Chair of the Board, Rob McDonald reflects on his three-year tenure and offers some guiding words for his successor.



I have thoroughly enjoyed my time leading the Board of Directors and extend my thanks to the Board for the confidence shown in me over the past years.

It has been a privilege to head up an organisation that has given so much to me and to my family. I began this journey more than six years ago when I was approached to become a member of the Finance Committee for the then, The Centre for Cerebral Palsy. My adult daughter has cerebral palsy (CP) and has been receiving quality care and innovative services from Ability Centre since 1994. It was an easy decision to put my hand up for election onto the Finance Committee and then nominate for the Board of Directors when asked because I felt I needed to pay back the excellent support our entire family had received.

With a career as a public servant for over 30 years, I felt the leadership, skills and expertise I could bring to the Board would assist in providing the organisation with strategic direction and leading valuable change in the sector. When it came time for my predecessor Keith Chapman to step down from his position as Chair, I put my name forward for nomination and

was delighted to be elected and work with other passionate professionals who strive every day to ensure the very best for people with disability, their families and carers.

I feel incredibly proud and grateful to have contributed during a remarkable period of transformation. I have watched our services grow and our status in the disability sector rise to the forefront. There has been significant change since Ability Centre was founded 65 years ago. Not only have we adapted to these changes, but we lead those changes through innovation and progressive service delivery whilst always ensuring we stay true to our core values and our history in providing the best for our clients, their families and carers.

As an example, leading and providing excellence in technology, service development and delivery were the driving forces behind the investment in the Early Intervention Centre which was opened by the former Minister for Mental Health; Disability Services; Child Protection, The Honourable Helen Morton at a morning tea in March this year. This event will remain as one of my highlights during my time as Chair, not only because we were able to showcase a new state-of-the-art therapy centre with world class

technology that will help our people deliver so much, but moreover because of a father of a little girl spoke publicly about the role Ability Centre has played in his daughter's journey with CP and what the new facility would mean to their family. Like me, he had been told early in his daughter's life that she may never be able to walk, and like me, thanks to Ability Centre, he was able to point to his daughter that was not only walking but running about in the playground outside where he stood. It can be as simple as one parent's perspective that can really bring home the life changing impact our services have on children, teenagers and adults.

Ability Centre has continued to make great progress during the participation in two National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) trials. The predominant effect is on the individuals with disability but there are also substantial implications for an organisation like Ability Centre. We are fortunate that through foresight and leadership, we planned accordingly and with a new CEO at the helm, we are ready to take on the challenges a new funding model brings to achieve the outcomes needed for Ability Centre to remain a successful and viable organisation well into the future.

We have learned a great deal as a new key service provider in the Lower South West, the Cockburn-Kwinana and the Hills regions. Our experienced teams worked closely with our clients and with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in these areas to ensure a smooth and supported transition process. With the experience gained over the last two years, we are feeling confident as we head towards the full WA rollout of the scheme in the near future.

With the strong position we hold in the sector, I believed it was the right time for me to step down as Chair. I was pleased to hand the reins to Deputy Chair, Justin Scanlan, who will lead the organisation well into the evolving and challenging world of the NDIS. One of the main reasons I was comfortable in resigning my Chairmanship of the Board is not because Justin holds impressive professional credentials, but

more than that, he is extremely passionate about our clients, families and carers, Ability Centre and truly cares about making a positive difference in this sector. My advice to him is just to continue upholding the same values and themes as he has done previously, and he will continue steering Ability Centre in the right direction.

I would like to thank Justin, my fellow Board members, Suzi Cowcher our CEO and Ability Centre Executive for their support over the past year. Further, I would like to thank our amazing people who continue to make such life changing differences to our service users.



Robert McDonald
Director (Chairperson)

Chief Executive Officer's report

A conversation with Suzi Cowcher



What attracted you to the role of CEO for Ability Centre?

The purpose of Ability Centre really resonated with me; particularly the wonderful legacy of its forbears and the way the organisation has been able to gain such momentum and respect over 65 years! The opportunity to lead such a great organisation through the significant change presented by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a privilege and one that I don't take lightly.

Have there been any really defining moments in the past 12 months?

Well, every day presents moments which define me and strengthen our organisation. When I see staff go the extra mile to support a service user, and that happens a lot, is a moment when I feel so proud. To hear how children are able to learn and grow with the abilities they have, is so heart-warming. Business wise, the defining moments have come from being brave and making tough but necessary changes needed to ensure a thriving future-ready organisation. This has taken plenty of energy and a real team effort; an effort of which I am immensely proud.

What do you consider to be your key achievements to date?

Building a great leadership team; the Executive have been working as one to guide our organisation forward to embrace an exciting future. A Leadership Forum has been established with all of our leaders across the organisation coming together on a regular basis to co-create our future.

Establishing an Innovation Hub means we can transform service delivery models using consumer co-design principles to make truly great improvements in service provision. It is really exciting to see what is possible.

As the new Hillroyd development starts to come to life, it's wonderful to think about the new memories that will be created for everyone who will call the state-of-the-art new villas home.

Is the role of CEO with Ability Centre what you expected? Any surprises?

I expected it to be busy. I expected that we would need some adjustment in the way we went about our work to really prosper in a changed funding environment.

However, I underestimated the busy-ness and I underestimated the tight deadlines! What is fantastic is, that every day the capability and capacity of the whole team to adapt and rise to any challenge is reaffirmed.

What I didn't expect is how much of a family we all are; staff, service users and families and to that matter, government and other partner agencies. Relationships and connections are a big part of the DNA of the disability sector. It is delightful and a great thing to be part of.

What are the challenges that Ability Centre faces as it transitions into a new funding model?

Our main challenge is to get the balance right. The balance between keeping all of the wonderful things that is at the heart of 65 years of Ability Centre, whilst enhancing these to better position us in a very different world shaped by NDIS.

I would say our top three hurdles are:

Making sure we have the right mix and flexibility in our workforce. Culture is also critical and establishing a point of difference in the way we do things around here.

Customer Experience is also key and we are working really hard at providing seamless and consumer driven services throughout a person's journey with us.

I feel incredibly optimistic about the future. Our foundations are strong, we have a great team and faced with real opportunity, how can we go wrong?

The life of a CEO is very demanding. How do you maintain the right work/life balance?

I believe that to expect it from others, you need to demonstrate balance in yourself. Having good work life balance means giving it all when and where it counts; I work really hard when I'm at

work and when I'm at home I need to focus on different aspects of my life, such as spending quality time with family and friends.

I love travel and holidaying and I particularly like getting down to my home town of Dunsborough, where I find regular visits restore my energy levels. Last but certainly not least are my two West Highland White Terriers, LuLu and Finlay, who well and truly keep me and those around me on our toes. They make for a great excuse to get out for a walk every day, making sure I take the time to reflect and be grateful for everything I have.



Suzi Cowcher
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

Being a member of a Board of Directors is a significant commitment and comes with substantial responsibility. Here, the members of our governing body offer some personal insight on what really matters to them and on life outside the boardroom.



Robert McDonald BBus CPA MAICD

Outgoing Chair

Rob has a distinguished career as a consultant, with multiple executive positions. Rob has decided to step down as Chair but with a firm connection to our organisation, he remains as a member of the board. Rob recalls his most defining memory during his tenure. "At the opening of Minderoo Rise, a parent stood and said 'In my entire child's life (about 45 years) we've always been worried about what would happen to her when we go. But now we can go knowing that she is well looked after, and you have no idea what that means to my wife and I.'"



Justin Scanlan BBA MSc(Hons) MAICD

Chair

A former rugby player from Ireland, Justin played 85 games of amateur AFL after moving to Perth. Recently appointed as Head of Consultancy with PwC, Justin hopes to keep kicking goals as he takes on the role of Chair. His aim is to continue to push the organisation to new heights, building on the great history and expertise, keeping people at the heart of everything we do.



Daniel Butler BA BCom LLB

Deputy Chair

Working his way through Uni as a DJ paid off for Dan who is now an experienced Senior Associate with Lavan Legal, a firm that has been closely associated with Ability Centre since its inception. Dan has been elected as Deputy Chair and his broad skill set and commitment are a huge benefit to the organisation, although he is yet to return to the decks and spin some tunes for a good cause!



Mino Intini BBus

Treasurer

Having held a number of senior financial positions across the State Public Sector, Mino is well suited to his position as Treasurer. Mino has been lending his financial and strategic planning expertise to Ability Centre for six years and feels that the contribution he makes goes beyond managing the purse strings to make a real and very positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities and their families.



Priya Cooper OAM BSc

As a person with cerebral palsy and a son who has also been diagnosed, Priya offers a unique perspective into the world of disability support. Committed to curry, which she eats 3-4 times a week, Paralympian Priya is also deeply dedicated to improving the lives of people with disability. Her business acumen and personal experiences are invaluable at Board level.



Kellie Hasluck BEd

As a communications professional and Director of Clarity Communications, and corporate coach and mentor, Kellie certainly has the ear of her Board colleagues. With over 20 years' experience, Kellie's advice is respected as the organisation navigates its way through significant change in the sector. Kellie loves spending time in the kitchen where she swaps communicating for culinary coaching, teaching her children how to whip up a three course meal!



Maria Mansour LLB (Hons)

A self-professed pink loving princess, Maria has literally grown up with Ability Centre. She attended playgroup back in the 80's and has been receiving support ever since. Maria practiced five years in private law but has found her niche as a Senior Project Officer focussing on disability justice with the DSC. Maria's passion and desire to make a difference are helping shape a bright future for Ability Centre.



Janelle Marr BA MBA GAICD

As founder and MD of a boutique consultancy StepBeyond, Janelle always steps it up when it comes to Ability Centre. With broad experience across the not-for-profit, corporate and government sectors, Janelle brings excellent insight and well-rounded advice to the Board table, as well as the occasional top movie pick when she dons her other hat as Chair of ScreenWest.



Gary McGrath BSc MBA ACMA GAICD FLWA.

With over 20 years' experience in the Global Financial Services Industry, Gary he has a wealth of insight and knowledge to bring to the Board. Holding a senior role with the CBA, Gary knows great organisations need to look for innovative ways to improve service delivery; he counts the opening of our new South Hub and Early Intervention Centre as examples of how Ability Centre delivers on this.



Glenn Mitchell

A chance introduction to Ability Centre at a fundraising breakfast about four years ago compelled Glenn to harness his passion to make a difference and join the Board. A well respected and much loved ABC sports broadcaster for over 20 years, Glenn also generously donates his professional kudos, regularly MC'ing at events and coercing the crowd during charity auctions.



Ken Nylander BSc

Ken first engaged with Ability Centre over 25 years ago as a parent of a child with disability. With his son set to take up residence at the new state-of-the-art Hillroyd residences, Ken is excited to see this development taking shape. Now retired and enjoying travel, more family and fishing time, Ken's commitment to Ability Centre has certainly stood the test of time.

Executive Team

If I wasn't an Executive at Ability Centre I would be...



Suzi Cowcher RN MBA FLWA

Chief Executive Officer

If Suzi wasn't the CEO she'd be a travel guide for pet-friendly, luxury escapes!

Suzi leads Ability Centre as CEO and is the key conduit between the Board and the organisation.



Wendy Cox RN BA(Psychology)

General Manager of Community Services

If Wendy wasn't the General Manager of Community Services she would pass her time travelling the world or driving cars at very fast speeds!

Wendy leads a large portfolio of services including shared living, community inclusion, respite and self-directed services.



Darren Cutri BBus CPA MAICD

Chief Financial Officer

If Darren wasn't the Chief Financial Officer he dreams of being a full forward for the Fremantle Dockers!

Darren leads Finance, Property, Fleet and Information and Communication Technology.

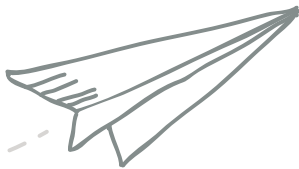


Catherine Greenway BASc(OT) GradDipEd(Primary) GradCertHSM FLWA

General Manager, Therapy and Health Services

If Catherine wasn't the General Manager of Therapy and Health Services she can see herself running a mobile Occupational Therapy service out of a funky bus, travelling into the regional areas of Western Australia with her husband as her sidekick!

Catherine leads Therapy, Health and Equipment Services including regional and remote consulting services.



Greg Davies BSc

Acting General Manager, Employment Services

If Greg wasn't the Acting General Manager of Employment Services he would be running a little hardware store a few days a week in the shadows of the Stirling Range National Park!

Greg leads Employment Services including our Australian Disability Enterprise Goodwill Engineering and open employment service Create Employment.



Benjamin Jardine BSc(Hons) GradCert(Tech Commercialisation) MBA(Dist)

Chief Innovation and Development Officer

If Benjamin wasn't the Chief Innovation and Development Officer he would keep fit by dragging his family to increasingly exotic Mountain Biking holidays!

Benjamin leads marketing, brand, fundraising, business development and our Innovation Hub, which includes service redesign and consumer engagement.



Phil Simich BBus Post GradDip Bus

General Manager, Strategic Workforce Services

If Phil wasn't the General Manager of Strategic Workforce Services he fancies himself as a guitar roadie for Dave Grohl!

Phil leads Human Resources and Learning and Development, including industrial relations, payroll and Occupational Health and Safety.

Highlights

YEARS OF SUPPORT

65

94.7%
rate of employee
retention

&
20%
of the workforce have
a tenure of 10 years or
more

Delivered



58,258
hours
of therapy

Trending



16.5%
year on year
increase in people
accessing our
services

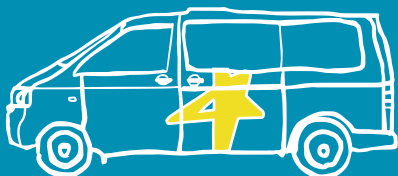
Thanks to our
generous supporters
we raised



\$1.1 million



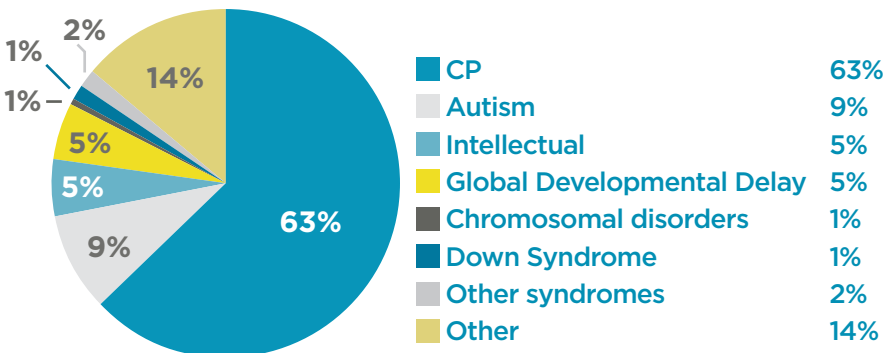
Getting around



1,397 transport
trips per week

67,056 transport
trips per year

Diagnostic profile



1.5 million
hours of care
provided to people
in shared living
accommodation



On the road in
remote WA



36 days

Hours spent enabling community access



139,988



5,200

Volunteering
hours



8,000



hours spent
customising
equipment

At Goodwill Engineering,
our Australian Disability
Enterprise,

72%

of the workforce are
supported employees
with disability

Our valued corporate
supporters have
contributed

\$147k





Research

Our highly skilled professionals engage in a diverse range of research efforts locally, nationally and internationally.

In 2015/16 we: investigated respiratory illness and were published in the journal of Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology; attended the International Seating Symposium in Vancouver, conducting a workshop in early powered mobility and had three teams present ground-breaking research findings at the 2016 Australasian Academy of Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine.

Australian first

A joint initiative of Ability Centre, Curtin University and Princess Margaret Hospital, the Xcelerate running project was aimed at teaching children with CP to run, with a particular focus on enabling them to join in more school, community and recreational activities, especially sports. By the end of the 12 week program, participants in the award-winning study showed significant improvement not only physically but confidence levels also increased. With such success and high demand to take part from keen young sportspeople, this research project has now being translated into a permanent service provision by Ability Centre.



Reach

In early 2016, our Canning Vale hub was fully operational, complementing our original base at Coolbinia and the 2014 opening of Currambine; our decision to move into the community to support our service users closer to their homes, school and workplaces is proving popular with the numbers of people accessing services on the increase.

Our new Early Intervention Centre was officially opened in March with nearly 200 children and their families now benefitting from a more fit for purpose facility.

Our Country Resource Program continues to mature, with a therapy team now located in the Lower South West.

The sky's the limit

This year we have helped people to jump out of planes, take up surfing, complete TAFE courses, meet sporting heroes, volunteer in the retail and education sectors; and that's only a small glimpse into an action packed year at Ability Centre. With our Community Inclusion service expanding, our service users are encouraged and empowered to participate in activities that are meaningful and personally selected by them.



Conquering China

Ability Centre reached new heights and crossed international borders, sending a team of adventure-seeking fundraisers to trek the Great Wall of China. This new charity challenge proved an exciting and effective way to raise funds, build community awareness and inspire lifelong advocacy. The trek was led by an Ability Centre Ambassador with CP who was supported to conquer this bucket list venture by his therapy team who provided customised orthotics designed to fit into durable hiking boots, as well as consultation and good wishes.

Comprehensive

With a new name accurately reflecting the broad range of disabilities we service, we have continued to expand our service user profile. Whilst our specialisation in CP remains true, we have implemented new services that are complementary to our core business model and that are responsive to the changing needs of people with disability and their families in Western Australia.





A life journey

Karen Anderson

“If there’s ever a problem, I come to Ability Centre, I trust them and they have supported me throughout my whole life”.

Karen Anderson was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at two and a half years old and her mother was told to put her in a home and forget about her. That was never an option and when Karen came to Perth from England with her family at five years old she began her journey at Ability Centre attending school at Sir James Mitchell Spastic Centre in Mount Lawley. From those early days, receiving her first walking stick to her current chair over 50 years later, Karen has always had Ability Centre as her support service and ‘go-to people’.

As well as general schooling, therapy and health support services, in her teenage years, Karen was encouraged to attend training sessions with athletic coaches. Right from her first session, Karen realised how much she loved sport.

“You see, I was 18 and I’d never done any sport before, so trying all these new things was really wonderful for me. I did javelin, shot put and discus; I was like a child in a toy shop. I was like ‘oh I’ll try that! And that!’”

With Ability Centre always there to support her if she needed it, Karen went on to complete business college and started a career in banking; she also continued to train and practice sport as her passion.

In 1988, changes were made to the entry criteria of the Paralympic Games. Athletes with cerebral palsy were now able to compete, giving Karen the opportunity to qualify and represent Australia in Javelin.

Karen returned from Seoul with a silver medal and the love of her life, Ted, who still stands strong beside her 28-years later.

Karen is always striving for more and with Ability Centre equipment and therapy and health services alongside her, she is always pushing herself to achieve professionally, personally and certainly in her sporting life.

“I do water-skiing. It took me 18 months to get up on a ski but I’ve been doing it for over 25 years now and hold the world record for jumps because no one else will do it!”

Karen doesn’t consider what she does as remarkable or inspiring, “It’s not amazing, it’s just normal”.

Ability Centre been there for her journey so far and we beg to differ.



Our Family

Olive & Gabin

“They gave us counselling and asked if we were happy for our baby to have Down Syndrome or cerebral palsy, and we said no worries, that’s fine”.

When Olive and Gabin’s fifth child, Gabin Junior, was born only five months into the pregnancy and weighing a mere 480grams, he wasn’t expected to survive the night.

Gabin Junior is now five years old and has global development delay, speech delay, vision impairment and chronic lung disease but despite some challenges, he is happy and wears the same infectious smile as his father.

When Olive and Gabin were faced with the decision of selecting a disability service provider, the choice was simple. Gabin had been part of Ability Centre’s community as an employee in the Finance Team for the past 7 years.

Together, a team of Ability Centre highly skilled therapists, Gabin and Olive developed a holistic plan, taking all Gabin Junior’s practical needs into consideration, as well as their aspirations for his future.

With goals firmly set and milestones monitored, Gabin Junior is on his way to communicating more effectively and is working towards pre-handwriting skills. Much to his parent’s delight, Gabin Junior has achieved two of his major goals, toilet training and forming his very first sentence; breakthroughs that won’t soon be forgotten by his parents.

“Gabin Junior turned to me and even though he can’t speak properly, he said Dad, I want to go toilet. This was his first sentence EVER!”

With Gabin Junior successfully achieving his objectives, Gabin and Olive have set themselves a goal too – taking a break. For any parent leaving their child, even if for only a few hours can be difficult, but by accessing Ability Centre’s respite services, Olive and Gabin are able to rest easy knowing that Gabin Junior is safe and capable hands.

The opportunity to access the most comprehensive range of services of all WA disability service providers makes life much easier and more convenient for hundreds of individuals and families. Highly skilled staff, who understand that everyone is unique and has equally unique requirements are committed to ensuring the best outcome for everyone.





Thanking our Partners

Australian Paralympic Committee

Act, Belong, Commit

Department for Communities

Department of Child Protection and Family Support

Department of Education

Department of Health

Department of Social Services

Department of Sports and Recreation

Disability Services Commission

Lotterywest

McCusker Charitable Foundation

Minderoo Foundation

NDS WA

Perpetual Trustees

Princess Margaret Hospital

Stan Perron Charitable Foundation

Telethon

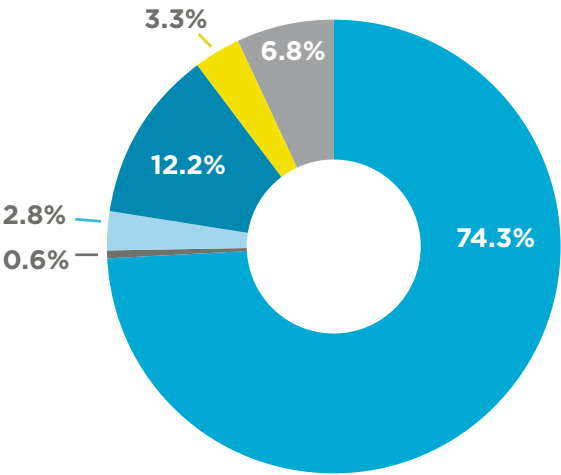
Telethon Kids Institute

Key Corporate Partners



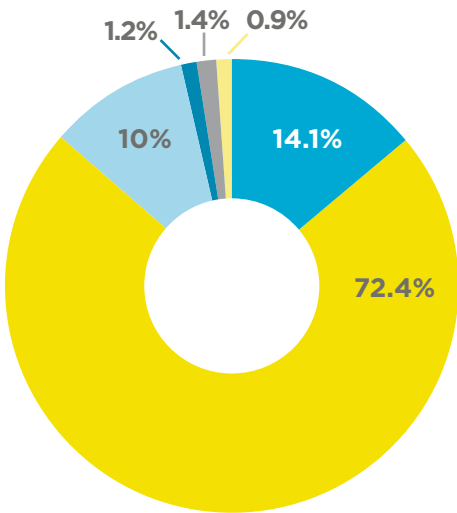


Financials



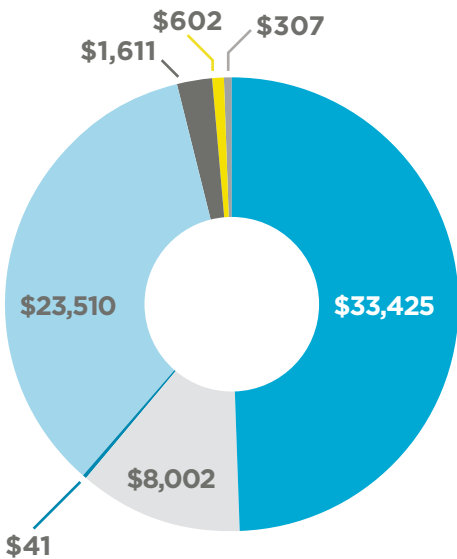
What we spent

Employee entitlement	74.3%
Operating Lease	0.6%
Maintenance	2.8%
Other operating Expense	12.2%
Depreciation	3.3%
Cost of Sales	6.8%



What we earned

Sales Revenue	14.1%
Operational Grants	72.4%
Capital Grants	10%
Fundraising	1.2%
Other Income	1.4%
Interest	0.9%



What we own (\$'000)

Land and buildings	\$33,425
Plant & equipment	\$8,002
Investments	\$41
Cash and deposits	\$23,510
Receivables	\$1,611
Inventory	\$602
Other	\$307

Total \$67,498





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