

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

STRATEGY 2025



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Life Without Barriers Strategy 2025 is possible because of the generous insights and involvement from people we support, staff, carers, families and the many stakeholders we consider part of our Life Without Barriers community. This strategy represents our collective ambition to partner with each other so that lives can be changed for the better.



*Our Commitment to
Truth Telling and
Reconciliation and Acknowledgment
of First Nations Peoples*

Life Without Barriers acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country and their connection to land, water and community.

We extend that acknowledgement to the local Awabakal people, on which our National Office is located. We pay our respect to them, their culture and customs and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We believe that reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians.

We are committed to an ongoing journey towards truth telling and reconciliation and pay our respect to all Elders past, present, and emerging. We also recognise and value the contribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, carers, people we support and communities to our continued reconciliation journey together.



statement from the Life Without Barriers Chair & Board

Life Without Barriers was formed because there was an unmet need – people with disability were being denied access to vital quality services as well as the opportunity to fully participate in their community. We forged a response to these needs with grit, determination and courage, a way of working that continues to be the heartbeat of our organisation today. Close to 30 years later, we remain a contemporary charity, motivated by the opportunity to provide great services with generosity and a socially driven purpose. In the years ahead, our organisation will continue to partner with many people in our community who are facing barriers in their life.

As we reflect on what has made our organisation so relevant to people over our history, we believe it is the quality of our staff and foster carers and the way they embrace our values in their roles every day. It is also the people who turn to us for support and assistance. It is their willingness to embrace us and to let us into their lives that makes it possible for our staff to fulfil our vision. Good practice, the right systems and processes are all critically important, but it is the relationships we have with people that are the difference.

We recognise the year we embark on this new strategy has been historic in many ways. Before recovering from catastrophic bushfires, we were plunged into a worldwide pandemic which exposed so many people to significant risk. As we enter the next five years, our Life Without Barriers community has a strong and resilient fabric that will continue to offer support and strength to people across Australia whenever they need it. And there is no doubt, people will need charitable organisations more than ever before. What will require a different approach, however, is that we must collaborate more, we must co-design solutions with greater intensity and commitment and we must continue to challenge the status quo. This is the only way we can realise a society where there truly is greater equity of opportunity for all people.

Our hope is that this strategy inspires action for others to join us as we offer connection, independence and choice through our people and the services we provide.



FOREWORD

Claire Robbs
Chief Executive

If we are to enjoy a future where we can see the inherent value of each person genuinely witnessed throughout all aspects of life, then we must design our path to achieving this. We must work together, and we must act now.

The development of our five year strategy has been crafted in partnership with the people our organisation exists to support, their families, our carers and staff. This opportunity for consultation and engagement demonstrates the very spirit of what we do in Life Without Barriers and enables us to be courageous about what we can offer in our relationships over the next five years.

As we consider what the future might hold and the impact we need to have as a charitable organisation, we are confident in our ability to embrace the unknown. We have always been, and continue to be, a community of people unshaken by the toughest of circumstances and invigorated by working together to break down barriers.

We launch this strategy in the year 2020 – at a time when Australians have been tested in all aspects of health, wellbeing and economic security. Financial hardship and instability will continue to affect many people across Australia and inequality endured for decades has come even more sharply into focus. It is conceivable that our greatest challenges lie ahead as our economy and our society strive to recover from what we have endured. The measure of who we are, will be the way we safeguard people in our community who are the most susceptible to hardship. It will be how we choose to embrace the best of what we have learned from our experiences and navigate the future with conviction, rather than being at the mercy of it. We will do so with a determination that people experiencing hardship will not be left behind.

Whilst we recognise elements of the future are uncertain, there is an opportunity for a burning platform of hope if we invest in working collaboratively to disrupt issues that have remained at the centre of our social justice response for far too long. At its core, that is what this strategy is about. Its guiding principle is our founding purpose – to partner with people to change lives for the better and we welcome everyone who wants to join us on the journey.

Claire Robbs



Our Values



Relationships



Courage



Imagination



Responsiveness



Respect

We are an organisation that partners with people to change lives for the better. It is this purpose that continues to burn within us and is at the forefront of everything we do. It is reflected in our values, portrayed by our vision, and intertwined within our culture.

Strategy framework

Our strategy charts the five-year vision for **Life Without Barriers** from 2020 to 2025.

Our framework focuses on three core areas which together tell the story of who we are, what we are committed to achieving in the coming five years and the organisation we need to be in the future, to have the greatest impact. Our strategy is designed to ignite thinking and ask the questions we can solve together. Our organisation planning process will be used to set key performance indicators on the strategic goals in this strategy.



WHO WE ARE

Who we are

Life Without Barriers has a strong and proud history which defines us and gives us focus and determination for the future. As we look ahead, we draw on the strength of our history and the courage of our foundational purpose– to partner with people to change lives for the better. We are a movement of people with a strong legacy of commitment to the human rights of people we support, while striving to deliver great services.



THE IMPACT
WE WANT
TO HAVE

The impact we want to have

Our legitimacy as an organisation is demonstrated by our impact for the people we support and the communities we serve. It is our reason for being. Our strategy for the next five years is to maximise the impact we have by being clear and focussed on our goals:

- Providing great services
- Influencing systemic barriers
- Impacting future generations



THE
ORGANISATION
WE WANT
TO BE

The organisation we want to be

Over the past three decades we have developed core strengths including a resilience which enables us to offer stability in our relationships with people, families, carers and our networks. We are ready to give the best of what we offer into the future with an agile and generous spirit.

The organisation we want to be in the future recognises:

- We are guided by the people we support
- Our people and values are the difference
- We partner with purpose
- We are impactful through innovation
- We embrace the benefits of technology
- We are accountable and measure our impact

WHO WE ARE





Who
we are

We partner with people to change lives for the better

We believe what unites us are the rights we have and should all enjoy as human beings. We all expect to have the freedom to pursue what we want from our lives without having to relentlessly fight for it. Yet the opportunity to live freely, without significant barriers, is not afforded to all Australians. This reality drives us - a collective of diverse people - to tackle, disrupt and dismantle the barriers which stand in the way of far too many members of our community.

For 25 years we have challenged the traditional ways of doing things, something forged by our founders— courageous families not willing to accept that any person should be denied opportunity. Today, we are the imaginers - curious and relentless in our pursuit for equal opportunity for all. With imagination, respect, courage and responsiveness as our compass in all relationships, we never forget the value of trust placed in us to provide reliable supports that exceed expectations. We will continue to be guided by our values long into the future.

We are unshaken by what lies ahead because our purpose is clear - we strive to contribute to a world where each person can live a life free of barriers that prevent them from realising their rights and opportunities. We know we can't do this single handedly. People experiencing obstacles have a right to expect our collective intelligence and thoughtfulness as a community so they can experience a sense of fulfilment and never-ending potential. We believe our role as an experienced and welcoming organisation is to create the platform for positive relationships to thrive, with individuals in need of support services, with families, carers communities, government and the corporate sector.

We are Life Without Barriers

THE IMPACT
WE WANT
TO HAVE





The impact we want to have

Our focus is with people who may, through barriers posed by society and social systems, experience challenges to inclusion and participating in society. The communities in which we offer services, are the same communities in which our staff live and belong to. This connection to community gives us depth of understanding and connection to each other.

We recognise our experience as members of communities and as a quality service provider offering services for many people who may face barriers now or in the future including;

-  Children, young people and their families who are in the child protection system
-  People with disability
-  Older Australians in need of in-home support
-  People experiencing mental health issues
-  People seeking refugee status and asylum in Australia.

We particularly identify the distressing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who, as our country's first peoples, are continuing to face systemic barriers. Our focus is working in partnership with Aboriginal led organisations, community, Elders and emerging leaders to constantly review our own practices and provide culturally respectful support that contributes to equality, reconciliation and healing.



Provide great services

Over the next five years, Life Without Barriers will deliver great services that exceed people's expectations. This is the first and most important commitment we make to the people trusting us to provide their supports. Great service means truly knowing and appreciating each person we have a relationship with, acting with integrity and honouring our commitments.

We will achieve this by recognising that each person is an expert in their own lives, regardless of their circumstances. We will enable person-centred support that provides meaningful choice and self-determination for people and communities.

Quality relationships that are reliable and built on integrity are the critical foundation we need as human beings to reach out into the world. This is true for us all. The difference we offer is in the values held in the hearts and minds of our people, which we pour into every relationship. The heartbeat of our culture is our values – beyond good systems and models of services, this is what we offer to people we support.

Our people will provide services that enhance people's wellbeing and opportunities to participate in the community and society.

We will continue to learn from successful national and international models of support, underpinned by listening to, and learning from, each individual and the important people in their life.

As a contemporary organisation we will be transparent in reporting our outcomes so we can continue to improve and share our learnings with others. We will use this transparency to encourage us all to strive to do better for each other and enact the change we know is needed.





We partner with people
to change lives for
the better.

Influence systemic barriers

We know the people we support face barriers and challenges created by our society, policies and systems. These are complex, long-standing challenges that no one individual, organisation or group can solve. Real and lasting change requires trusted partnerships, collaboration and a purpose that unifies people to a collective ambition.

Over the next 5 years we will give generously of ourselves, our resources and experience to all our relationships. We will engage in positive and constructive advocacy to improve social policies that impact people across a range of circumstances and communities in which we live and work.

We will invest in service designs that are co-authored with our stakeholders and work in partnership with local, state and federal Government to improve outcomes for people. We will develop a shared commitment with our partners to create lasting change within our communities by;

Increasing the number of children who can remain safely with families with particular attention to First Nations children, and reducing the need for child protection services

Invigorating living choices for people with disability that facilitate meaningful connections

Revitalising education and enhancing learning outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care

Reimagining residential care for young people in out-of-home care

Improving employment opportunities for people with disability

Impact for future generations

Finding new
approaches is
not an impossible
dream

The future should not be left to chance. We should all reap the benefits of a society that is progressing and evolving. In the five years ahead, we will challenge ourselves on the issues that impact the future generation by being responsive, imaginative and resilient. The future may be unknown, however we can rely on purposeful partnerships and courageous thinking to harness evidence, engage with the dynamic forces of technology, and artificial intelligence and address the impact of climate change.

Finding new approaches is not an impossible dream.
We are asking ourselves and our partners:

What will the world and the environment be like for the people we support 10, 20 or 30 years from now?

How will we create greater equity in the health and wellbeing of people facing systemic barriers?

What more can we do today to make a difference for tomorrow?

Where do we find more ideas to change the future for the people we support?

We will look for emerging opportunities where we can contribute and have a positive impact by being generous and share our knowledge, resources and ideas wherever they are needed. We are hopeful about creating collaborative spaces where ideas can emerge, and that together, we can build a more inclusive, equitable, and environmentally responsible future for all.

THE
ORGANISATION
WE WANT
TO BE





The organisation we want to be

Our roots are embedded in our steadfast belief that all people are entitled to self-determination, to feel valued and respected, to have support if they need it – and above all to be hopeful for their future. We will always act with integrity and honesty. Who we are as a collective, both now and into the future, is built on six fundamental principles;

-  **We are guided by the people we support**
-  **Our people and values are the difference**
-  **We partner with purpose**
-  **We are impactful through innovation**
-  **We embrace the benefits of technology**
-  **We are accountable and measure our impact**



We are
guided
by the people
we support

People are experts in their own lives and have a right to make decisions about the supports they receive. We will be guided by the experiences, insights and choices of the people we support, their families and carers. In all we do, we will recognise the human rights of each and every person we support.

We will co-design the services we offer to be built on the importance of deeply listening to what people share with us of their experiences and what needs to change and evolve to better meet their needs. We will share our knowledge and experience to support people to increase choice and opportunity.

*Our People and
Values
are the difference*

Our people are the soul of what we offer to people choosing our services. Through an inclusive culture, underpinned by our values, we will recognise and value the diversity of each member of our team. We will cultivate a diverse workforce at all levels of our organisation. We will provide a platform in employment where our people thrive, bringing the whole of who they are to our workplace. We will harness the collective intelligence and insights of our foster carers and frontline staff whose strong relationships with people play a crucial role in helping us be true in our strategic goals.

Our leaders will be resilient and embrace change. They will be known for the energy they bring to their relationships and effective at bringing the best out of the people they work with. We will build a culture where power and decision-making is decentralised, to sustain an adaptable and nimble organisation. In doing so we will empower our teams to innovate and constantly improve to meet changing needs.

We partner
with purpose

Real solutions to complex social issues require a collective and collaborative response. We will nurture an organisational spirit that deeply values the trust placed in us by the people we support, their families, our sector, government and corporate Australia.

We will be a connector,
sharing relationships
that can advance
improvements in peoples
life experiences

We will give generously of ourselves, our skills, resources and ideas because we can be more impactful if we are open in what we offer. We will enhance our policies and practices to improve the life experiences of people accessing our services and supports. We will be a connector, sharing relationships that can advance improvements in people's life experiences. We will collectively contribute to social policy conversations to advance human rights and individual wellbeing so together we can witness the rights of all people being respected, realised and protected.



We partner with people
to change lives for
the better.



We are
impactful
through
innovation

Courageous imagination requires a deeply embedded organisational ethos where ideas that forge new ways of working are welcomed. **We will channel the collective knowledge, wisdom and experience of our staff, carers, families and people we support towards common goals that can have a lasting impact.**

We will achieve this by developing rapid, practical pathways for imaginative and innovative solutions to be scoped, tested and considered. Our preparedness to innovate will be strengthened by recognising the best of what technology can offer including artificial intelligence and virtual engagement designed for safety, and without losing our humanity. Our knowledge of the latest research and evidence, along with out-of-the-box thinking, will inform the design of what we offer to people.

We embrace
the benefits
of technology

Digital transformation is offering new ways of connecting and delivering services that are bold and bring an abundance of opportunity. Digital inclusion means we will provide choice for people we support to embrace digital tools that are truly relevant and accessible, enrich their lives, and offer independence and social connection. We will innovate with technology in a way that is diligent and respectful of people's privacy and consent.

We will build our digital literacy and capacity to enable staff to connect with their Life Without Barriers community, wherever they are, in order for the services we provide to be richer and deeper.

We will offer a workplace of the future that is more responsive and contemporary. We will develop a secure technology and systems infrastructure to redesign our systems, increase our effectiveness and measure our impact with people and communities.

We are
accountable
and measure
our
impact

Honouring the trust placed in us by the people we support means being accountable, transparent and demonstrating our impact in the work we do.

We will measure and report on people's experiences with us and the outcomes we achieve together so that we continuously improve the way we work, the services we provide and the needs of people in our communities.

We will achieve this by developing a robust outcomes and client experience measurement framework to evaluate the way we offer support. We will seek to improve wellbeing equity. Reporting openly and publicly about our impact, we will continuously improve the way we work. Recognising and reducing our impact on the environment, our initiatives will contribute positively to environmental wellbeing in Australia.



We will contribute
positively to environmental
health in Australia



Life Without Barriers offers connection, self-determination and choice through our people and the services we provide. Our hope is that this strategy inspires action for others to join us, because collective intelligence and diversity makes us stronger and more impactful.

We would love to hear from you.

We welcome enquiries about our strategy and how we can work together for the future.

