

President's Report 2021-2022

2021-22 has been a particularly challenging time for HOPES.

Changes in Board membership and staffing, the impact of COVID on community activities, and the transition to individualised service provision under the NDIS have all presented distractions that we have survived, and we have attempted to remain vigilant in providing and developing a cooperative living community for our residents.

Some of the important features of the year are presented below.

Board membership

Although changes in Board membership over the last 12 months have been a difficult challenge, the Board has remained focused on providing sufficient organisational resources to ensure a safe and secure environment for residents.

Following the 2021 decision by HOPES not to proceed with a merger with a larger organisation the AGM saw the retirement of four Board members including the President, Alison Jacob who had served HOPES as a board member for eight years.

Sue Hodgson agreed to take on the role of President for a transitional period while Harun Abdullah and Tammy McCance (Vice-President) remained as board members.

Five new board members were nominated and elected at the last AGM – Liz Coleman, Georgina Doughty, Ellen Johnson (Secretary), Mark Lamont, and Ruchita Redkar (Treasurer).

Ruchita Redkar resigned as Treasurer in April and as a Board member in June 2022 due to other commitments and Ellen Johnson was nominated and elected as Treasurer.

In July 2022 Sue Hodgson stood down as President of HOPES and Mark Lamont was nominated and elected President.

In September 2022 Tammy McCance advised that she would be stepping down from the Board due to ill health.

In September Linda Seaborn was nominated and welcomed to HOPES as a new Board member.

At this AGM we see the retirement of Sue Hodgson and Ellen Johnson.

All board members are thanked for their hard work during a very challenging period of change for HOPES. A big thank you to continuing board members Harun Abdullah, Liz Coleman, Georgina Doughty, and Linda Seaborn. Particular thanks are given to Ruchita Redkar, Tammy McCance and Ellen Johnson who each held positions on the Executive.

And a very special thank you is given to Sue Hodgson. I think we can rightly call her the Mother of HOPES (!) and we honour her for her tireless time and devotion to residents and

the organisation since its inception. For those of us who are continuing we know that her dedication, commitment and hard work will be greatly missed.

Staffing

Significant staffing changes have occurred in the last 12 months. This has meant an increased workload for staff during transition periods and in assisting in the recruitment and orientation process.

We have farewelled Chris Oriel as Coordinator and welcomed Chloe Olsen as our new Coordinator, later to be appointed Executive Officer. We thank Chloe for her hard work particularly in helping us to bring our NDIS billing processes up to date, working to update our policies and procedures, and in the recruitment and orientation of new staff.

Eliza White, our Finance Officer, resigned during the year and is to be thanked for her years of service to HOPES. We welcome Dev Patel as our newly appointed Finance Officer.

Also welcomed on board to work closely with residents and service providers has been Julie Ling in the role Support Coordinator. Karen Fall, our Client Services Officer, has managed to continue her administrative workload while providing a degree of stability given all of these changes, and has assisted in welcoming and helping new staff find their bearings.

COVID

HOPES responded quickly and responsibly to incidents of COVID infection, resulting in minimal disruption for most residents. However, good practice to reduce the spread of infection also meant that some community activities were cancelled and the continuity of other activities disrupted. Residents are thanked for their compliance with procedures introduced and their patience in adjusting to the disruptions.

NDIS

HOPES has continued to provide support to residents largely through the NDIS funding of services for *Lead Tenant* and *Coordinator of Support*. There remains some confusion by stakeholders regarding the terms *lead tenancy*, *assistance in shared living arrangements*, *social participation*, *advocacy*, and *skill development*. To remove some of this confusion HOPES will review and modify service plans over the next twelve months to incorporate NDIS terminology and to ensure these supports continue to be provided in a sustainable way.

While the focus of NDIS funding tends to be towards individualised programs it will be important to ensure that programs continue to be delivered in a manner that recognises and adopts the mutually beneficial values of cooperative community-focused living.

Strategic planning

In light of the 2021 decision by HOPES not to proceed with a merger with a larger organisation the Board assigned a full day in October to review and focus its mission and strategy for HOPES.

For HOPES to remain viable and sustain funding it must meet the needs of its residents in a way that another larger organisation can't. NDIS provides a mechanism to provide services to address individual needs of residents. But while NDIS focuses on individualised service it is important that the benefits of living cooperatively within a community are not lost. HOPES provides a unique environment in which to deliver these services. The mission of HOPES is to ***provide and enhance a safe and secure cooperative living community for people with acquired brain injury to optimise their independence.*** This mission statement remains consistent with HOPES' roots and is robust in a changing environment of service delivery. The Board is committed to see the accomplishment of this mission and to provide a best-practice alternative for its residents.

Mark Lamont

President

November 2022