



**yooralla**  
choosequality

# Yooralla Strategic Plan

2021–2024



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## Yooralla's Purpose

To support people with disability to live the life they choose

## Our Promise

Designed by you, supported by us, and achieved together

## Our Values

**Customer-focused** in our service, creative in our solutions

**Courageous** in speaking up, determined in facing challenges

**Authentic** in our relationships, honest in our conduct

**Accountable** in our work, responsible for our actions

**Respectful** of choices, embracing of diversity

**Passionate** about our work, driven by our purpose and values

## Yooralla today

Yooralla is one of Victoria's largest and longest-standing not-for-profit disability service providers.

Over the last hundred years, we have developed the scale, experience and capability to provide a full range of high-quality services to meet our customers' diverse needs.

We support people with many different needs – from those who require round the clock disability and health supports, to people requiring only brief or occasional supports to go about their lives. Across metropolitan and regional Victoria, our workforce includes disability support workers, therapists, nurses, support coordinators, inclusion support professionals and teachers.

Yooralla upholds the rights of every person – regardless of age, gender, financial circumstances, race, ethnicity, religion, ability or other personal characteristics – to access high quality services that will allow them to achieve their goals. Our services give our customers opportunities for friendship, identity, belonging, skill development, and participation in and contribution to their communities as well as pathways to further education and employment.

Yooralla's previous strategic plan focused on preparing for the National Disability Insurance Scheme – the single largest reform of support for people living with disability in Australia's history and one that Yooralla was proud to champion. We also rebuilt our systems, processes and culture to ensure customer safety and to better detect and prevent abuse.

Our focus on human rights and our commitment to equality are fundamental to who we are. Our values sit at the core of everything we do and we work hard to embed them in our daily practice. They play a central role in the recruitment and development of our employees, so that we have a workforce that is both skilled and cares deeply for our customers and each other.

Yooralla has a community of supporters whose donations and philanthropic gifts help extend our capacity to support people living with disability. We are grateful that we have been strengthened by the generosity of donors who, through their support, bring to life the true meaning of philanthropy – love of humanity.

## Yooralla's future

In the next three years, Yooralla will extend the reach and diversity of our services to match the aspirations and goals of the community and the people we support.

We will more actively engage with our customers, their families and carers along with our workforce – to design and build contemporary, evidence-based service delivery models that support our customers to achieve their goals.

We will extend our range of leading-edge technology to improve the lives of our customers. We will invest more in

evaluation, research and development, so that we know whether and how we are making a difference. We will share what we learn, and we will learn from others.

We will continue to nurture our workforce so that their supports are safe and guided by evidence, and they find reward in changing people's lives for the better. We will work to strengthen Yooralla's financial sustainability, ensuring that we are here for our customers over the long-term.



## Unparalleled customer experience

We aim to provide world class customer experiences and will extend our range of leading-edge technology to improve the lives of our customers – who will be our partners in the design and delivery of our services.

We fiercely uphold the rights of people with disability to choose the providers and supports that best suit their needs. We aim to be their provider of choice, and to inspire our customers to recommend our services to others.

### How will we do this?



We will have improved systems in place to better identify and document customer goals, including progress towards goals.



We will hear directly from customers about what has helped them to achieve their goals, giving us greater understanding of what works and what doesn't.



We will routinely collect feedback from employees and customers and use that feedback to improve customer experience and outcomes.



We will be sharing learnings and insights with our customers, other providers and researchers, and the National Disability Insurance Agency, to build a strong evidence base and help lift the quality of services across the sector.

### How will we know we are succeeding?

- ✔ There is a high level of customer satisfaction with our services.
- ✔ Customers are achieving the goals they have identified.
- ✔ Customers are saying positive things about our services.
- ✔ Customers recommend our services to others.

### Christina walks for the first time in 30 years

Just months after starting work with a Yooralla physiotherapist towards achieving her NDIS goal of increasing strength and mobility, Christina surprised everyone by her progress when she started walking for the first time in 30 years.

Christina, who uses a wheelchair, has been supported by Julia, a Yooralla physiotherapist, to find a walker that suited her specific needs and to learn how to use it. Christina said that being able to use her new walker has enabled her to achieve her other NDIS goals of getting out into the community, increasing independence and exploring activities of interest.

“It has allowed me to feel more in control of my movements and I have enjoyed visiting my friends in the area using the walker. During lockdown my new communication device has allowed me to speak openly with people and instigate conversations, which I have never been able to achieve prior to this year,” she said.



## Commitment to safety and human rights

We respect, protect and promote the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms of our customers and promote and respect their inherent dignity. Yooralla has worked hard to improve the safety and quality of our services, and supporting our customers to tell us if they have any concerns. We do not take this progress for granted and will work every day to ensure that our customers and employees are physically and emotionally safe, and that their human rights are recognised and protected.

### How will we do this?



We will improve our support for customers to speak up and defend their own rights.



We will improve the cultural safety of our services for customers from Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds – including through partnerships with providers who support these communities.



We will develop and apply practice guidelines and training for employees in areas of known risk including communication, behaviour support, mealtime safety and medication safety.



We will celebrate the cultural diversity in our workforce, recognising strengths of diversity in supporting our customers and keeping them safe.

### How will we know we are succeeding?

- ✓ Customers give us positive feedback and are confident to share their feedback with us.
- ✓ Customers from Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds tell us they feel safe, included and respected in our services.
- ✓ There is increased customer and employee knowledge of human rights.
- ✓ Employees will continue to tell us that they feel safe to report problems and feel confident that problems get fixed.

## Supporting the rights of our LGBTIQ+ customers

As part of Yooralla and Inclusion Melbourne's 'My Identity, My Choice' program, the Customer Rights and Empowerment team are working to educate the Yooralla workforce and support LGBTIQ+ customers.

A key goal of the program is to educate and develop the skills of the Yooralla workforce when supporting customers who may be LGBTIQ+ or who may be questioning their identities to ensure that rights, diversity and equality are achieved.

During the program, participants had the following to say when asked how they want to be supported:

"We want the people who support us and people in the community to treat us well and respect our human rights."

"Do not make judgements about our sexual orientation or gender identity for us. Support us to explore it on our own if we want to."



We will grow our reach and meet increasing demand for disability services of all kinds – improving our current services and developing innovative new solutions. We will better support underserved communities, target unmet needs, and build partnerships with other providers. We will also learn from the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

## Service innovation and growth

### How will we do this?



We will support customers to live with the housemates they choose – this will mean over time reducing the number of people living in large group homes.



We will have increased affordable housing options for customers, including through partnerships with other Specialist Disability Accommodation and housing providers.



Our employment services will be embedded in pathways for training and development of customers and extend to support for open employment.

### How will we know we are succeeding?

- ✓ Customers are telling us how we can do better, and we are acting on their advice.
- ✓ There is a measurable increase in the diversity of living arrangements.
- ✓ Customers are using our customer portal and reporting satisfaction with it.
- ✓ More customers are using our systems to report on their outcomes and experience.
- ✓ More customers are supported to get the skills they need to obtain and sustain paid work in a range of employment settings.

## Staying connected

The challenges of COVID-19 have driven many new ways of working. For Yooralla, the vulnerability of many of our customers and the risks of isolation created unique challenges. Through innovations like Together@Yooralla, we have been able to bring customers together online and keep them connected.

Customers at the Leongatha Community Hub have been enjoying a variety of online programs, such as numeracy/literacy, a social group, music and singing, hospitality and an animal group – designed in partnership with customers, their families and employees.

Ezra says the online program has also allowed him to increase his friendship group. “I’ve been hanging out with other Learning Hub students who live in Anglesea and Glen Iris – something that I couldn’t really do before,” he says.

“The programs have received very positive feedback from customers and their families. Our Yooralla staff source programs and content and deliver it in a fun, interactive environment,” says Vanessa Holness, Community Development Manager at the Hub.



## The best people, in strong teams

A strong, skilled and committed workforce is critical to our success – as are volunteers who make an invaluable contribution in supporting and enhancing our many programs and activities. We aim to attract the best people to work with and for our customers. We will ensure that employee engagement and experience is strong. We will improve how we recruit and train our employees.

Yooralla's supported employees are a vital part of our team. We will continue to innovate our supported employment programs to ensure they reflect the changing market conditions and also support those who wish to transition into mainstream employment.

### How will we do this?



We will expand our range of new supports in place to protect the health of our workforce – including mental health promotion and mental health first-aid training.



We will streamline our recruitment practices to improve our recruitment outcomes.



We will partner with education providers and other community organisations so that employees can obtain the qualifications they need to grow and succeed while they work.



We will extend our disability employment program, to build visible leadership of people with lived experience in our service and the sector.

### How will we know we are succeeding?

- ✔ More employees have or are working toward formal qualifications.
- ✔ More employees are reporting high standards of workplace health and safety.
- ✔ Turnover among employees is reduced, with more employees saying that they see themselves continuing to work in Yooralla in the future.
- ✔ More volunteers and employees at all levels of the organisation identify as having lived experience of disability.
- ✔ Increased rates of employment for people with disability in open and supported employment.

## A day in the life of a Yooralla Occupational Therapist (OT)

Kate Hill is an OT with more than 20 years' experience. Working mainly with children with disability between the ages of 0–18, no day for Kate looks the same.

“For very young children and babies, it is a lot about monitoring the child to see if they are meeting their developmental milestones. To support this, we provide activities and ideas to support the family to promote development.

“What we do then changes as the child gets older, for instance for pre-school aged children, we would make sure they have the foundational skills to succeed at school, like toilet training or getting dressed. Then as they get older and become young adults, that support might change to include preparing simple meals, managing time and public transport training,” she says.

“The role of an OT is very holistic, we look at the life of the person with disability and what interventions they need so they can complete their daily activities independently and fulfil their roles, like being a student or friend.”



As the NDIS continues to change, so must we. To secure our services for the next hundred years, we must continue to adapt to the changing community and market needs – diversifying our services, reducing waste and red tape. We will ensure the valuable financial support from our philanthropic partners is dedicated to helping us achieve our mission and purpose.

## Sustainability

### How will we do this?



We will ensure that our services are well utilised and downtime is reduced.



We will benchmark our services against other providers, and learn from them what works best to get value for our customers.



We will work with customers, housing providers and others to refresh and improve our customers' homes.



We will have a cohesive fundraising and philanthropy program, with activities that maximise opportunities from all levels and types of philanthropic giving and donations.

### How will we know we are succeeding?

- ✓ Our customer base is growing to reflect the quality and range of our services.
- ✓ Our brand recognition is stronger.
- ✓ We have an engaged community of supporters who contribute donations, gifts and funding to help advance equality for people with disability.

## Yooralla's new purpose-built home in Benalla

Yooralla worked in partnership with BeyondHousing to construct a new purpose-built, accessible home for people with disability in Benalla – one of the first in the Ovens Murray region.

Named Wattletree Grove after its Benalla location, the home has been built to meet the NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation standards, designed to provide people living with disability with greater independence.

Each of the residents were involved in the decision-making process from the very beginning including providing input on design, layout, colour scheme and amenities.

The residents have moved from another Yooralla residential site in Benalla ensuring they could maintain their existing friendships and community and be empowered to live their own lives with the stability of their new high-quality long-term home.





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