



healthAbility

Annual Report 2020-2021

Empowering people to live their best life



By your side

We work to address the root causes of vulnerability, prevent disease and promote lifelong health outcomes for people in our community.

Our role is also supporting people to self-manage long-term health conditions, such as diabetes and mental ill-health, with multidisciplinary teams delivering community-based programs in a comfortable non-acute setting.

We also support people, including older people and people with disability, to stay living at home longer and to live well in their community. A broad range of primary health services such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech therapy, and in-home and community care services, such as domestic assistance and personal care can be tailored to an individual's needs.

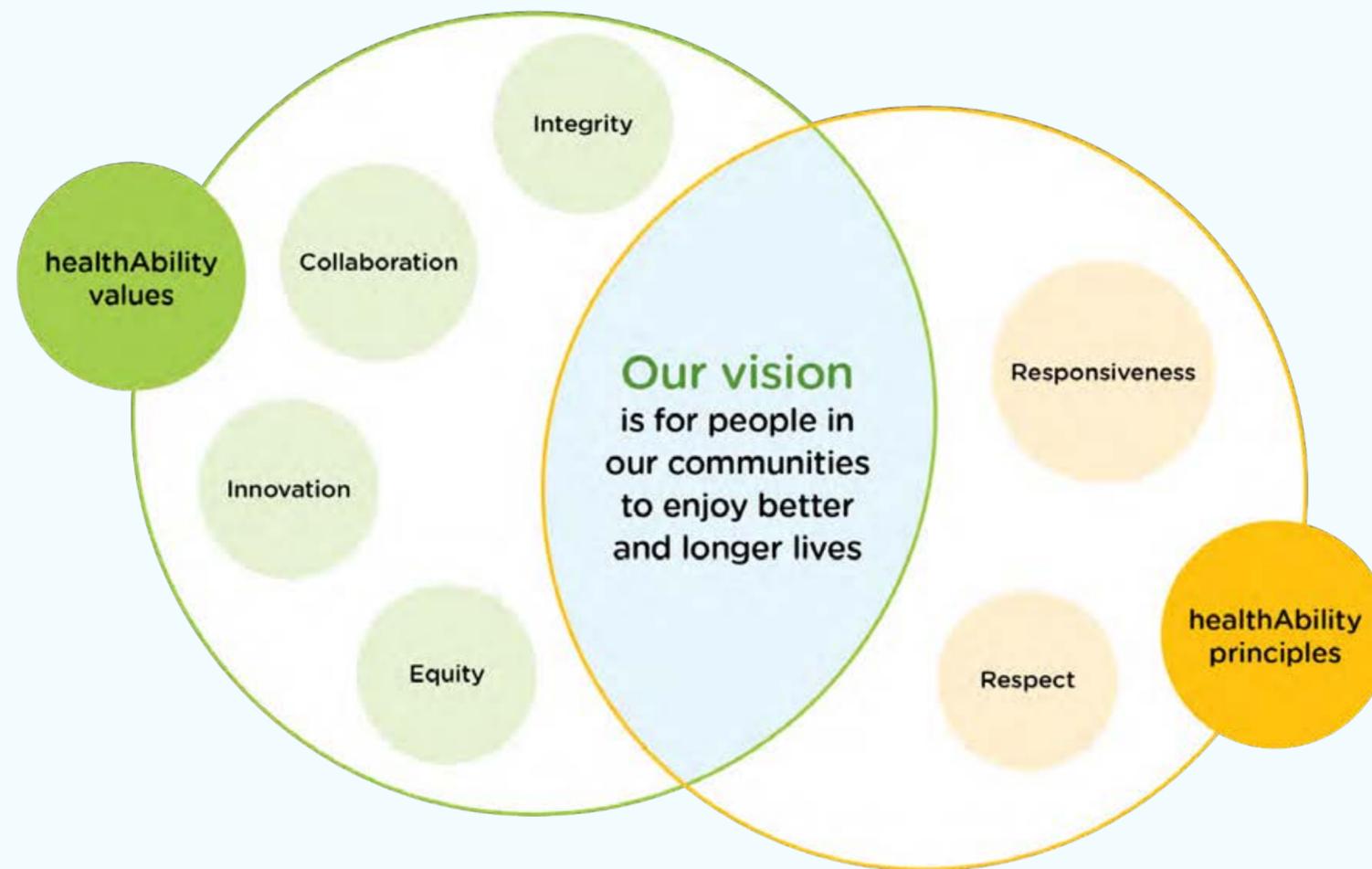


We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people and other people of the Kulin nations on whose unceded lands our community takes place.

We respectfully recognise Elders past and present. We are committed to inclusive communities.



Our vision and values



Retiring CEO report - Ronda Jacobs

It's fair to say that the year leading up to my retirement has been one of great changes and challenges.

As we continued to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were faced with the ongoing challenge of keeping our clients and staff safe, while also delivering essential services to support the health and wellbeing of our communities. I'm incredibly proud of the way the organisation has thrived during adversity, and how staff have continued to innovate and adapt service delivery to meet the needs of clients during a crisis.

Our ability to care for our communities during difficult times is due in no small part to partnerships we maintain with health providers in our region. Through these partnerships we have been able to support initiatives such as the High Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) and COVID Care program supporting those isolating at home, as well as testing and screening efforts during the outbreak's peaks.

I was pleased to oversee our transition to one name, which is a major strategic goal we have been working towards over the past three years. I am confident that uniting all services under the name healthAbility will help to strengthen the organisation's presence in the community, increase opportunities for future growth, and provide an improved experience for clients.

One of my personal highlights for the year was being able to host a celebration event for all staff in May. It was wonderful to connect and catch up with colleagues face-to-face, and to acknowledge their extraordinary sustained resilience, energy and expertise in caring for the community during such testing times. We were privileged to have Eltham MP Vicki Ward in attendance to deliver a special message of thanks and support from both her and on behalf of Victorian Health Minister Martin Foley.

I was also able to say my goodbyes to staff at a virtual celebration in July. I was incredibly moved by the heartfelt wishes and messages of support I received. I feel truly honoured to have been able to lead such a passionate, committed, caring and kind group of people for almost 10 years.

The Board have continued to provide strong strategic direction and courageous and visionary planning for an uncertain future. They have been particularly supportive of myself and the staff during this challenging year, and I am grateful for their leadership.

The partnerships in our region have continued to strengthen as we have worked together even more closely during the pandemic. I would particularly like to thank the CEOs of many other health services for their support and collaboration in focusing on the overall health system and how we can best support our communities.

My decision to retire was not an easy one to make, but I am looking forward to spending more time with the most important people in my life - my family.

I feel that I am leaving healthAbility in a strong position, and I have every confidence that Agata's leadership and passion will steer the organisation in a positive direction during this new and exciting era.



Ronda Jacobs



Welcoming our new CEO, Agata Jarbin

Our new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Agata Jarbin commenced her role on 22 July 2021.

As our organisation moves towards a new and exciting era under the one name, healthAbility, we are thrilled to welcome Agata to our team and wider community.

Agata brings to the role extensive experience in undertaking transformational change for a range of organisations, and leading teams to achieve outstanding results in the public, not-for-profit and private sectors.

For the past six years, Agata has led the not-for-profit organisation ermha365, who provide complex mental health and disability services. During her time as Director and Board Chair, Agata enabled the organisation to thrive and expand during a challenging period.

Prior to her role at ermha365, Agata held a number of executive positions, including two years as Chief Executive Officer at the Accident Compensation Conciliation Service, and five years at State Trustees in several senior and executive roles. In both of these organisations, Agata grew revenue and client satisfaction, improved profitability, and implemented new IT and business systems while delivering new services.

While she is a skilled leader and experienced CEO, it is Agata's passion and commitment to achieving exceptional health outcomes for people, along with her

extensive knowledge of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and support services, that will be truly valuable in helping us to achieve our vision for people in our community to enjoy better and longer lives.

Welcome Agata!



Chair Report

Reflecting upon my third year in this role that I'm honoured to hold, I am astounded at the resilience, commitment and knowledge of the people who work for, lead, and govern healthAbility.

This year has undoubtedly presented personal challenges for all I'm sure, but I'm impressed by the effective part our organisation played and continues to play in the sector-wide pandemic health response.

The important role of Community Health Services in the wider health system has never been more evident than now. Supporting at-risk people in a person-centred and respectful way, while also working on prevention initiatives to improve long term health outcomes, is what community health does best.

Instrumental to successfully navigating the challenging time that was financial year 2020 to 2021 was outgoing CEO Ronda Jacobs. Although her retirement was announced in early 2021, she continued to fulfil her role for a further six months with unfailing energy and commitment. This act alone demonstrates her dedication and professionalism seen throughout her entire 10 years at Carrington Health, now known as healthAbility. Bringing our organisation together under the one name healthAbility was the icing on Ronda's retirement cake, as it's the culmination of three years work including significant strategic planning and organisational change.

On behalf of all the Board of Directors, I sincerely thank Ronda for also allowing the proper time to appoint our new CEO Agata Jarbin. Knowing the organisation was in safe hands, especially during this unprecedented time, allowed the Board to undertake what was an extensive and exhaustive recruitment process. After undergoing many and varied forms of interviews and assessments, Agata was the standout candidate and I, along with the entire Board of Directors, look forward to a long and successful working relationship with Agata.



John Rasa
Board Chair

Watch a video of the Chair Report at <https://youtu.be/HmJ-8dCvZ28>

Our Board

This year Board Director Jane Daniels celebrates 20 years on the healthAbility Board, after commencing her term in 2001. We'd like to thank Jane for her contributions and commitment during this time, and for her continuing dedication to the work of our organisation and the health sector.

We'd also like to acknowledge our entire Board for their strong governance, leadership and for guiding and supporting our strategic direction.

Find out more about our Board at <https://healthability.org.au/about/our-board/>



This year's highlights

During the 2020-2021 financial year, 16,227 clients received a service.

We delivered a total of 110,447 appointments and client contacts, including 8,210 telehealth appointments.

*COVID-19 restrictions limited our dental services to emergency treatment only for a significant portion of the year and our After Hours GP Clinic ceased operations. This resulted in a drop in client numbers compared to the previous year.

Supporting adults with disability

We established a dedicated team servicing the eastern Melbourne area for Support Coordination, and continued to provide ongoing and vital services and supports for NDIS Participants through COVID-19.

22,375

hours of service provided to NDIS participants

2,792

equivalent standard working days completed by our Support Coordination team



Caring for seniors

Our Home Care Packages team has expanded and now includes three Care Managers, an Occupational Therapist and a Physiotherapist.

82

clients supported by our Home Care Packages team

7,639

of our clients overall were over 65

Children, youth and families

We received funding from the Bendigo Bank to run additional Paediatric sessions for vulnerable families.

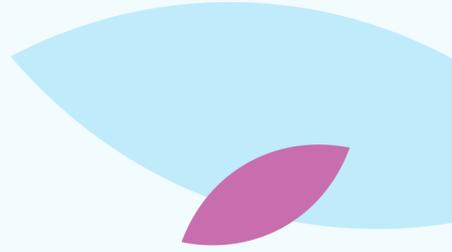
9,750

appointments provided by the Child, Youth and Family team

600

families supported





Delivering dental

The Smile Squad has expanded and now has two teams in Box Hill, and one team in Eltham. Dental staff have been assisting with COVID-19 testing at Eastern Health and the COVID Positive clinic, and High Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) clients have been given priority access to dental services.

17,837

dental appointments provided

8,588

clients received a dental service

1,537

children's dental outreach sessions delivered

Mental health matters

We expanded our mental health services during the pandemic by partnering with Wellways to deliver Psychosocial Support Services across Melbourne's east, and commenced delivering HeadtoHelp programs.

8,000

sessions of care provided

700+

clients supported

We worked with 71 primary and secondary schools in Nillumbik and Banyule



Caring for community

We entered a Connect4Health Alliance agreement with Access Health and Community, to provide greater access to health and support services for our communities.

23

Balit Booboop Narrkwarren Champions were trained by our *Baby Makes 3* team

1,300

residents were supported by our High Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) clients team

3,494

client meetings conducted by Needle Syringe Programs (NSP)

103

clients trained to use Naxolone, a lifesaving overdose-reversal medication



Community health comes of age

Community Health continued to demonstrate its intrinsic value to our health system during the pandemic by being able to rapidly and flexibly fill system gaps as well as localise and personalise preventative and responsive care.

Additionally, we innovated and adapted these core services to ensure an appropriate service mix was delivered where, when and how customers needed during this crisis. Leveraging our learning opens a range of service innovations and partnerships for the betterment of customers, communities and the entire health ecosystem going forward, especially in the realm of chronic illness.

View the full 'Community health comes of age' report at <https://healthability.org.au/about/strategy-and-reports>



What we did

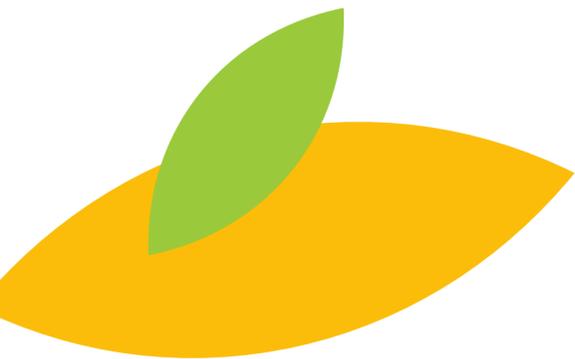
- Wellbeing calls
- COVID-19 care
- High risk accommodation response
- Head to help mental health
- Testing and screening
- Rapidly shifted to telehealth

The capabilities we demonstrated

- Place
- Partnership
- Personalisation
- Policy
- Pace and flexibility

The value we deliver

- Clear value for money
- The halo multiplier effect
- Preventing hospital and acute admissions
- Supporting chronic conditions
- Innovating, localising and personalising partnerships and services
- Flexible funding for amplified outcome



Expanding mental health supports during the pandemic



As a key part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been working with partners across our regions to meet the increased need for mental health supports during this time.

Along with our existing range of mental health services, and programs including the After Hours Mental Health Nursing Service and LIFT/STEPS programs, during the pandemic we expanded our services to help provide timely and appropriate mental health supports to people in our communities.

This expansion includes the delivery of Psychosocial Support Services in partnership with Wellways.

As the lead community health partner, we are working with Access Health and Community, Inspiro Community Health, Banyule Community Health and Nexus Primary Health to provide psychosocial supports to people across eastern Melbourne.

We also established HeadtoHelp hubs in partnership with Access Health and Community and the Eastern Melbourne PHN, with the ability to provide telehealth and remote mental health support to our diverse communities.

Our mental health teams work to support children, youth and adults of all ages living with a mental health concern, and collaborate across service areas, programs and regions to provide integrated, multidisciplinary care to meet the unique needs of each client.

To find out more about the following mental health services visit www.healthability.org.au/services/mental

- After Hours Mental Health Nursing Service
- LIFT/STEPS
- Psychosocial Support Services
- HeadtoHelp



Our clients and community

These stories showcase how we support people in our communities to enjoy better, longer lives.

View our Annual Report online at <https://annualreport2021.nchs.org.au>

Bridging the digital divide

While access to the internet and digital devices is becoming increasingly important in our everyday lives, many people in society still face barriers when it comes to digital access.

To help bridge the digital divide in our communities, our Health Promotion team is working with community health partners on a Digital Inclusion project that aims to help our clients and community members to become more digitally connected.

We spoke to Health Promotion worker and Dietitian Alex Salmon to find out more about the project, and why digital access and inclusion is so important.

What does digital inclusion mean?

For someone to be digitally included, they require the following things:

- The skills with technology to do the things they need and want to do confidently and safely

- Access to appropriate and affordable devices, which may include a mobile phone, computer or tablet
- Reliable access to the internet, with enough data to meet their needs

Why is digital inclusion so important?

Digital inclusion is important because it enables people to live more independently and engage with the world in many different ways. It allows people to link better with work and employment opportunities, it enables people to complete formal or informal online learning and education, and more easily do day-to-day tasks and connect socially. It also gives people a voice in the things that matter to them.

Which segments of the community have the lowest rates of digital inclusion?

In general, Australians with lower levels of income, employment and education are significantly less digitally connected compared to Australians with higher levels of income and education. This demonstrates a substantial divide between rich and poor Australians when it comes to digital inclusion.

Those aged over 65 are the least digitally included age group in Australia, with about 1 in 5 older Australians not using the internet at all. People with disability have better rates of online access than older Australians or those on low incomes, but are still below the national average.



How is the Digital Inclusion project working to improve digital connection for our clients?

We are working with other community health services, including Link Health and Community and Access Health & Community, to make digital inclusion a shared priority in our health promotion partnership. Our focus is on improving digital inclusion for social housing communities, as well as our community health clients.

An important part of our work is engaging with key stakeholders such as neighbourhood houses, libraries, local councils and community organisations such as U3A, Lions or Rotary across inner east and north-east Melbourne. By connecting with these stakeholders, we have been able to develop a draft resource that lists public Wi-Fi locations, free Wi-Fi in community facilities, sources of low cost digital devices as well as places where people can access low-cost training and support for using digital devices.

Once our resource of local supports and services is finalised, we will distribute this to healthAbility staff and work with teams to discuss ideas and identify opportunities for how we can support our clients to become more digitally connected.

Because many of our community health clients are on low incomes, or are in older age groups, they are more likely to experience poor digital access.

Building strong families through culture and community

Since 2016, healthAbility has worked in partnership with three Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) – Oonah Health & Community Services Aboriginal Corporation (The Belonging Place), Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service, and Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place – to develop Balit Booboop Narrkwarren.

Balit Booboop Narrkwarren, which means ‘Strong Baby and Family’ in Woiwurrung language, is a culturally adapted model of the *Baby Makes 3* program. It has been created with ACCHOs to reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who aren’t currently accessing mainstream services.

This model has been developed from the key messages of the *Baby Makes 3* program – challenging gender stereotypes and roles, and strengthening positive, equal and respectful relationships – and aims to ultimately build strong families and prevent family violence.

While Balit Booboop Narrkwarren is based on the same key messages as *Baby Makes 3*, it seeks to recognise and respect the culture and specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in several ways. These include involving entire families (parents, Elders, Aunties, Uncles, carers, kinship groups etc.) in programs and activities, using art and images by local Aboriginal artists in resources, and acknowledging Traditional Owners with a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country before training sessions when possible.

Balit Booboop Narrkwarren has also been able to embed its key messages into the programs and services that families already access, by training around 90 ‘Champions’ to deliver activities and programs in local ACCHOs.

Vanessa Scales, a proud Barkindji woman and early childhood educator, has completed training to become a ‘Champion’ of the program.

She has been working across a number of locations in northern and eastern Melbourne, including the Northern Hospital, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, and Oonah Health & Community Services Aboriginal Corporation, to deliver Balit Booboop Narrkwarren to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Vanessa’s connection to community means that families taking part in the program feel safe, and can better engage with its key messages.

“I’ve worked with children all my life, so it’s been lovely not just to teach, but to bring my knowledge and my own experience of working with children to the program.

“I know a lot of families in the region, and it’s been great to get to know them and work with them. My work with the program is possible because of the connection I have with parents in the community. They feel so at ease, because they know me, and that makes a very big difference.”

Anne Jenkins, CEO of Oonah Health & Community Services Aboriginal Corporation, has praised Balit Booboop Narrkwarren as a simple and effective way to support new families and future generations.

“It’s a great program for families and carers; it’s not just for young couples and new parents. It’s simple and easy to understand and it helps people to reflect on their roles within the family.

The work of Balit Booboop Narrkwarren has continued to expand with the development of online modules and forums. The program is continuing its work in antenatal and maternal health settings, including Koori Maternity Services in hospitals, and is also working with a number of local councils and ACCHOs across Victoria.



“I would recommend Balit Booboop Narrkwarren to all ACCHOs as a means of supporting new families. Children are our future leaders, and we need to support them throughout their life’s journey, so supporting parents is a great first step.”

Anne Jenkins

Hip hip, HRAR! Building connections during the pandemic and beyond

Since September 2020, healthAbility staff have been involved in the High Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) Program, delivering support and COVID-19 prevention and planning activities to residents living in high-risk housing.

‘High risk’ accommodation refers to high-density buildings with shared facilities, and residents who may experience increased risks associated with contracting COVID-19.

With the program receiving funding to operate until the end of June 2021, HRAR is continuing to monitor properties and support COVID safety. The program is also focused on building connections with residents and linking them with services and supports to help improve their overall physical and mental wellbeing.

In partnership with Access Health and Community, we have worked across the council areas of Whitehorse, Manningham and Boroondara as part of the Inner East Catchment HRAR program to support people who live in a variety of settings, including rooming houses, caravan parks, community housing and low-rise public housing.

The initial stage of the program was focused on COVID-19 prevention, and preparing residents and properties for potential outbreaks.

This often involved performing a risk assessment of properties to determine if there were shared facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms, and any other factors that may increase the risk of COVID-19 or affect residents’ health. Residents were also provided with free care packs that included items like sanitiser, masks and soap, and they were offered education about handwashing,

cleaning techniques, and COVID safe practices.

According to Anna Gordon, healthAbility’s Partnerships Development Manager, the program has been important not only in reducing the spread of COVID-19, but also in making residents aware of the range of supports and services that are available to them.

“It’s really important to be able to connect with people in precarious housing settings, not just from a COVID-19 prevention perspective, but also to make people aware of services available to them, such as My Aged Care and NDIS.”

“Often at-risk people aren’t connected with daily news or government information and therefore may not understand the implications of emerging risks or exposure sites. The HRAR program has been really good for people who otherwise may not pick up the phone, who might be uncertain about where or how to seek help.”

As the program progresses, Anna believes there will be range of ongoing benefits for residents, even beyond the pandemic.

“For residents, they will have a better understanding of services that are available, and know that they can get support for a range of things, not only in relation to their health, but for other areas such as their housing and social isolation.

“Some people have quite complex needs, and know they need help, but might not know how to access help, who to contact, or that help is even available. For example, we’ve had residents that need help with getting physiotherapy, and we’ve referred them to our gym. We’ve also seen older men that have been feeling a bit lonely and isolated, and put them in touch with our Men’s Shed.



“It’s really important to be able to connect with people in precarious housing settings, not just from a COVID-19 prevention perspective, but also to make people aware of services available to them, such as My Aged Care and NDIS.”

Anna Gordon

“Being able to get past that first hurdle, to actually make the call for them and connect people to help they need, has probably been one of the biggest benefits of the whole program.”

Over the coming months, HRAR will concentrate its work on a range of key areas, including communicating and engaging with the community and key stakeholders, continuing to support COVID safety, and actively linking residents with a broad range of services and supports to help them address any immediate or ongoing issues.

“Deeper connection with residents is a key aim of the balance of the program,” explains Anna.

“This means going back to follow up with people we have previously visited to find out how we can help them further. It might involve connecting them to social groups, services, activities, or even volunteering opportunities.

“At the end of the day, it all comes back to helping people to live more independent and longer lives.”

The HRAR Program is funded by the Victorian Department of Health.

Empowering women leaders in Nillumbik

We’ve teamed up with Nillumbik Shire Council to deliver the Council’s Women’s Community Leadership and Connections Program, which aims to develop emerging women leaders across all areas of Nillumbik’s community.

As part of the program, Rosalyn Sandwell, healthAbility’s Program Manager – Counselling, Mental Health and Youth, facilitated two Health and Wellbeing sessions held over the first two weekends in May.

These sessions focused on helping women to build the skills needed to care for own their health and wellbeing, and demonstrated how they could use these skills to support women in their broader community.

During the sessions, participants took part in a range of activities, including mindfulness training, yoga, emotional awareness and team building exercises.

Rosalyn believes the workshops will have great benefits for women looking to take a more active role in their community.

“If women have the skills and knowledge to look after their own health and wellbeing, they feel empowered, and are better equipped to support and inspire other women.

“These sessions have helped participants to build a strong foundation of physical, mental and emotional health that will support them during their leadership journey.”



“If women have the skills and knowledge to look after their own health and wellbeing, they feel empowered, and are better equipped to support and inspire other women.

Rosalyn Sandwell



Smile Squad

Smile Squad is a Victorian Government funded program that provides free dental care for all Victorian public primary and secondary school students. The program provides dental treatment to students at school, which is carried out in mobile clinics and dental vans.

healthAbility is currently servicing 26 schools in phase one of the Smile Squad program. We have two Smile Squad teams based at Box Hill, and one team based at Eltham, with more staff being recruited.

Oral Health Therapists in the Smile Squad team are trained to check teeth, provide treatments, and offer preventative care and oral health coaching. Dental Assistants work alongside Oral Health Therapists to perform administrative tasks and prepare students for examinations and treatment.



School Readiness Program

We have partnered with Access Health and Community to provide allied health supports to selected kindergarten services in the Inner East metropolitan region, under the Department of Education School Readiness Initiative.

For eligible services, our children's team speech pathologists, occupational therapists and psychologists collaborate with educators, families and children in the kindergarten service to achieve the goals identified by the services, whilst building on existing skills that improve outcomes for all the children in their care.



Didgeridoo Mindfulness program

To help engage with local young men who may be experiencing struggles with emotional regulation, anxiety or anger, our Counsellor Luke held a 'Didgeridoo Mindfulness' program in May this year.

As well as teaching participants how to make and play their own PVC didgeridoo, the program aimed to address and teach mindfulness and breathing techniques through the use of didgeridoos, and create an environment for young men who may not otherwise seek help to talk and share personal concerns with a counsellor. Many of the participants showed a keen interest in continuing to develop their didgeridoo skills, and learnt mindfulness and meditative breathing techniques that can have great long-term benefits. The program is a wonderful example of how our mental health team works to connect with local young people and support their mental health in creative and engaging ways.



Grooving in the Cloud

On Saturday 5 December 2020 some movers and shakers got their groove on at our Grooving in the Cloud - Virtual Dance Party. Supported by a grant from the Nillumbik Shire Council, the event was held in recognition of International Day of People with Disability, which is celebrated annually on December 3.

Bringing our community together

A lot has changed since we first started serving our community 45 years ago.

Our family of services and staff has grown to adapt to these changes, always striving to help people in our communities to enjoy better and longer lives.

This year we have united all of our services together under one name, to truly bring our community together. From mid-2021, Carrington Health, Box Hill Family Dentistry and Healthy Bite Dental moved to one name - healthAbility. Moving to one name enables us to deliver a better experience for our clients, and create a more unified organisation for our staff and stakeholders.



Watch the video at <https://youtu.be/zF7TbJvbMes>

Our brand



Our people

Employee Value Proposition

We have developed an Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to define the essence of our organisation, capture why people are proud to work here, and help attract new employees. An EVP articulates what an organisation offers its people and why people want to work there.

We took a collaborative approach to developing our EVP, gaining feedback and input from our leadership team and employees to help us understand why people choose to work at healthAbility and what's unique about the organisation and our people.

Although our clients are at the heart of what we do and we strive to positively impact our communities and those who need it most, the wellbeing of our employees is just as important.

When joining healthAbility's supportive, kind, caring and ethical culture, you are welcomed by multi disciplinary teams passionate about the health and wellbeing of clients and communities, from prevention through to specialist care, and passionate about continually learning and building on their areas of expertise.

We embrace this passion and are values driven, offering careers with meaning and environments that are flexible, evolving, creative and connected.

Through our consultations with staff, we agreed on the seven key themes that make up our Employee Value Proposition:

Our community – We have been serving our local communities for the past 40 years. Their health and wellbeing is our priority, from prevention through to speciality care. We want people in our community to enjoy better and longer lives.

Our clients – We put all aspects of a client's wellbeing at the heart of what we do. We believe access to a multi disciplinary team helps us ensure our clients feel connected, supported and well. We go the extra mile to make this happen.

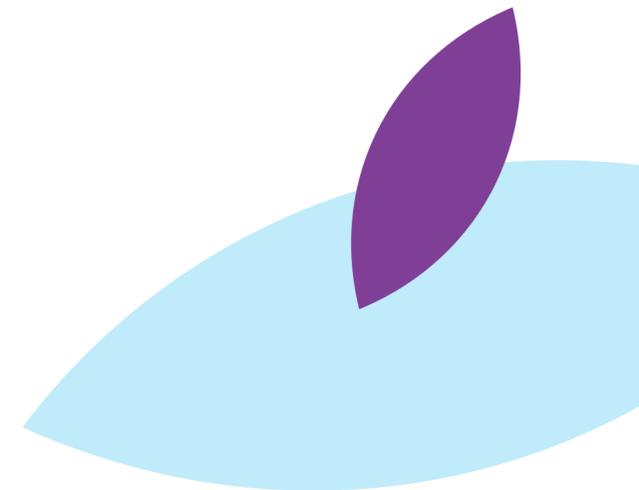
Our colleagues – When you join healthAbility, you will have people who are equally as passionate working with you by your side; passionate about the health and wellbeing of their clients and communities, and passionate about building on their areas of expertise. We embrace this passion and offer careers with meaning.

Our culture – We have a supportive and welcoming culture. We are kind to each other and care about the health and wellbeing of our People as well as our clients. We act ethically and morally.

Our values - We are grounded in our shared values of integrity, collaboration, innovation and equity. We collectively believe in making a positive impact on our communities and in helping those who need it most.

Our flexibility – We are large enough to offer choice and small enough to ensure our people feel connected to each other. We give our employees the flexibility to schedule their day and to work across multiple sites.

Our adaptability – We know community health is always changing and we strive to stay at the forefront of the latest thinking and practice. We are creative problem solvers. We are constantly evolving and help our people to do so through learning and development



Staff celebration

In May we were thrilled to host a celebration event for all staff, as we were unable to have a Christmas event in 2020.

After more than a year of not being able to gather everyone together, it was a great opportunity to celebrate our achievements and for staff to re-connect in person. For many new staff who started during last year's lockdown, it was a chance to meet their colleagues face-to-face for the first time!

During the event, special guest speaker Vicki Ward MP, State Member for Eltham, acknowledged how tough the past year has been for all of us, and expressed her sincere gratitude for the way we have been able to pivot, innovate, and continue to provide care and support to people in our communities.

It was also lovely to hear positive stories from staff about how they've been able to help clients and support each other during challenging times. Given the extensive lockdowns during subsequent months, we feel very lucky that we were able to celebrate together when we did!



People Matter Survey

Earlier this year our staff participated in the People Matter Survey, which is offered annually to community health services by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

The survey was a great opportunity for staff to provide feedback on our workplace and culture, and it has provided us with valuable information to help us continually improve our workplace culture and the services we provide. We were pleased to receive many positive responses from staff, particularly considering the challenges we have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This is a family-friendly, and carer-supportive organisation, which is flexible and allows employees to reach their targets in flexible work times.”

“This organisation is full of wonderful, caring people who genuinely care about their patients/clients’ wellbeing.”

“They are prepared to take on new things even when it stretches the organisation and the path ahead is not clear, and are willing to take certain risks to expand or improve services.”

“We are kept updated with information through COVID-19 and know where we stand with the rules and regulations. They are doing a great job lifting our spirits to get through this hard time.”



“Looking after staff wellbeing - our direct daily report person ensures we are all well and is very supportive.”

“They support me to do my job and access professional development.”

“My manager is fantastic and very easy to talk to about anything. I’m always getting praised for my hard work.”

Always improving

Client feedback

“I really appreciate your organisation, because during this pandemic you guys help all people, especially students. Today our housemates got donation packs. That’s really important for us during this winter. Thank you so much for your kindness.”

“I’m eternally grateful that the dentist gave my tooth a chance and she completely fixed my pain. She really listened to me and explained things. I’m very thankful and happy.”

“I really appreciate your work in bringing the social support group online, coordinating the activities and generally being a little ray of sunshine. It’s something wonderful to look forward to every week.”

“Incredible service from the In Home and Community Support team - spot on!! Wonderful caring service, and always advised us of changes. Can’t recommend the service enough, thank you.”



“I would like to show my appreciation for being attended to and treated by your gym/exercise staff. What a completely professional and delightful experience! These pros are so thorough and so caring!”

“Just want to shout out to your amazing team. The Support Worker was in this morning to help Dad and he wished Dad well for his upcoming birthday. Made my Dad’s day. Thank you for all that you do.”

“Thank you for all your help with my father, and all the hard work you did to put in place all the required aids and equipment for dad’s safety. We thank you very much for your help, kindness and support. My parents and I are very happy and grateful.”

ICT systems

Even before the pandemic began, we understood the importance of effective Information Communications Technology (ICT) systems. As described in our Strategic Plan 2019 -2024, we identified that our ICT systems and processes needed to support staff to operate efficiently and effectively. Our knowledge is dependent on building quality data and ICT systems to enable effective decision making, measure our impact and achieve a sustainable financial position.

Last year the organisation was propelled into this long-term vision, with remote working, telehealth, increased information security requirements and our response to the pandemic as a health organisation, driving the need to innovate and adapt our ICT systems.

During this period, we significantly enhanced ICT by implementing:

- Microsoft Teams to bring phones, emails and messaging to a single space for staff
- A new IT Helpdesk enabling access to our ICT support team from any location
- A new Cloud-Based Phone System to increase flexibility of communication for staff
- Migration of our servers to the cloud to strengthen cyber security and reliability
- More reliable remote access to support delivery of telehealth services
- Multiple Wi-Fi points with single Wi-Fi access everywhere to help staff work on and offsite
- Over 100 new devices for remote service delivery and telehealth for rapid response to client needs and better work experience for staff

- Sharepoint for a staff Intranet to improve staff communication and engagement
- The Prompt document management system to strengthen compliance and quality
- Revised monthly reporting to help us make better decisions about the services we provide

Solar panels

In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, solar panels have been installed on the roof at healthAbility – just in time for summer!

The health of our communities relies on the health of our planet, so the decision to generate our own renewable energy was an easy one to make.

Following a five-week installation process, 140 solar panels went live on 20 November and have been generating power for almost one month.

According to data collected so far, we've saved around 3,700 kilograms of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere. That is equivalent to planting 95 trees, or the carbon dioxide generated if you drove 15,000 kilometres by car!

We will display these statistics on the TV screen in healthAbility reception. They will be updated each month, so be sure to take a look next time you visit.

CEO Ronda Jacobs recognised the contributions of everyone involved in the solar panel project.

“It's so exciting to see the solar panels go live so that we can start reducing our environmental impact and demonstrate our commitment to sustainability. I'd like to sincerely thank our funders and dedicated staff members for making it happen!”

The installation of the solar panels was made possible with a grant of \$9,240 from the Community Energy Efficiency and Solar Grants 2020 program run by the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.

We'd also like to acknowledge our Facility Manager Barry Phillips and everyone involved in coordinating the installation for helping us to become a more environmentally conscious and sustainable organisation.



Quality and safety

During 2020-2021 our Quality and Safety team's key focus was supporting the health and safety of our staff and clients during the continuing COVID-19 health emergency.

We did this by implementing COVID-19 infection control training and preparation activities, and reduced the risk to staff and clients by supporting staff to work from home where practical. We also employed a dedicated OHS/COVID Manager to ensure our infection control and safety practices were of the highest standard, and to keep staff updated with accurate and timely information.

Alongside our COVID-19 prevention and preparation activities, we continued to foster a culture of safety across the organisation by aligning our emergency management responses, revamping our occupational health and safety committee and providing professional development to all our health and Safety representatives. We have ensured timely reporting and clinical review of all clinical, OHS and Hazard incidents are promptly reported and actioned.

In 2020 we commenced the Prompt project, which is working to improve our information, procedure and document management systems. Prompt will ultimately become our 'one source of truth' for operational and service delivery documents across the organisation. It will help staff to quickly find the accurate information they need so that we can continue to provide quality services in the safest way possible for our clients.

As well as supporting client safety, over the past year we have focused on collecting client feedback through a range of channels, including feedback forms and surveys. We are incredibly grateful for the feedback we receive, as it enables us to identify priority areas for improvement so that we can provide the best possible experience for everyone who visits and uses our services.

Accreditation activities 2020-2021

healthAbility as a health service provider has a number of standards that we need to meet to ensure safe and effective care for our clients. In the last 12 months we have been successfully assessed against the following standards.

Assessment	Service
Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Mid Cycle Review	Whole of service
NDIS Practice Standards	Services that our NDIS participants access
Human Services Standards	Counselling services relevant to these standards
Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme	Dental services

2020 was the first time that healthAbility undertook the new NDIS Practice Standards Assessment. The assessor noted that:

- healthAbility had a strong focus on evidence-based and participant and family-focussed service delivery
- Participants and nominees spoke very highly of the availability, responsiveness and supportive approach provided by healthAbility

The assessor also noted that we demonstrated the following strengths:

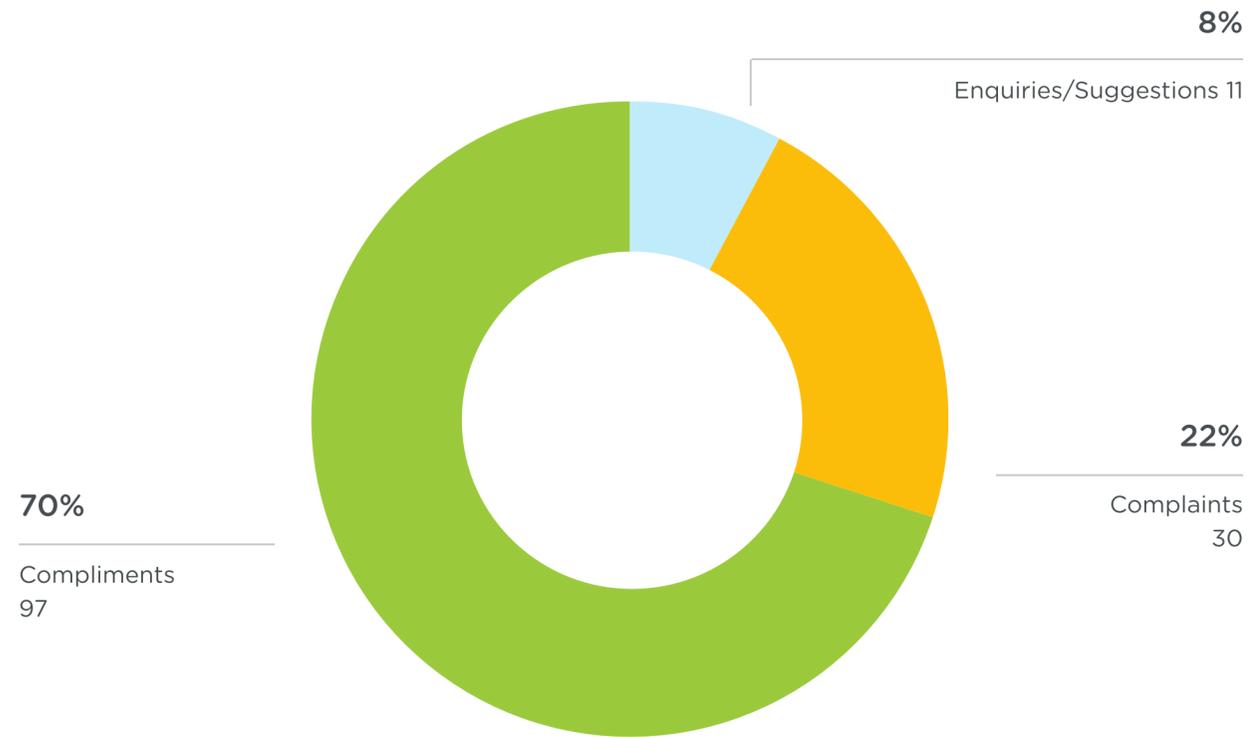
- Resilience and a culture of commitment and learning that was evident in the organisation's journey as a merged organisation and in its response to the pandemic

- It was evident that the attitude to the learnings from the audit is part of the organisation's quality process
- The formation of forums and opportunities to harness the voice, skill and commitment of people
- Unanimous high level of participant and family satisfaction of those participants interviewed
- Participants and representatives indicated that they can always have their questions answered and requests fulfilled by staff
- Participants and representatives agreed that the support they receive is customised to their needs, that they are given plenty of options in having their preferred service providers and they are reassured that they are in full control of their plan
- A clear commitment to capacity building in our people and services to ensure that the organisation remains contemporary, sustainable and can continue to address unmet need for its communities
- The strength of teams and collegiality in terms of supporting staff and also being able to respond to participants and families
- The focus on systems development and improvement

healthAbility was congratulated on the outcome of the assessment and for the good practice and participant outcomes reflected through the audit process.

Client feedback

We value the feedback that we receive and we have made improvements on how we capture feedback. Over the last 12 months 70 percent of the feedback provided has been positive, with our dental services receiving the most feedback from our clients.



We are pleased that the compliments we received told us:

- We are professional, both in our conduct and behaviour
- We provide good outcomes
- We have a positive attitude in our conduct and behavior
- Our sites are comfortable
- We are friendly, respectful, caring and helpful in all that we do, and in our communication
- Our services are effective and available

Some of our complaints highlighted that we need to improve our communication and responsiveness and we are working towards ensuring that we improve our communication with clients and families.





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All photos and videos featured in this report were produced in accordance with Victorian Government COVID-19 restrictions at the time of production.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people and other people of the Kulin nations on whose unceded lands our community takes place. We respectfully recognise Elders past and present. We are committed to inclusive communities.



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