

# Annual Report 2023-2024

Creating Opportunities and Choice





## CONTENTS

- 3. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY
- 4. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT
- 5. PROGRAMS & SERVICES
- 6. ABOUT US
- 6. STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2028
- 8. OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE
- 9. STAFF STORY
- 10. NDIS AUDIT
- 11. KATE'S STORY
- 12. RECREATION
- 14. BUDDY PROGRAM
- 15. PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT
- 16. SIBLINGS
- 17. MUMS WEEKEND
- 18. PORN IS NOT THE NORM
- 19. HEART 2 HEART
- 20. CHILD SAFETY GRANT
- 22. CEO'S REPORT
- 24. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW
- 26. GET INVOLVED
- 27. THANK YOU

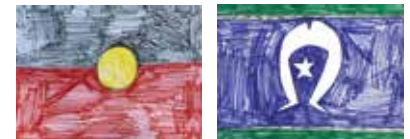


# Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wurundjeri People and other Kulin Nations, and other nations who have looked after this land for a long time. We think it is important to say thank you and show respect to them.

We really like the land because it's where we can play, learn, and have fun. We like the trees, the animals, and the fresh air. The land is like a big playground where we can run and explore. As we grow, we will take care of our special places.

Thank you to all Wurundjeri People for sharing your land with us. We promise to be good friends to the land and to each other.



Written by Jack O. Jack W. Jorge D. Patrick  
C. Sienna F. With the help of OSHC Staff  
Matilda Gillies and Tara Fowler

## Main Office

5-7 Yose St, Ferntree Gully VIC

**Phone:** 03 9758 5522

**Fax:** 03 9758 5899

**Email:** [ioe@ioe.org.au](mailto:ioe@ioe.org.au)

**Web:** [www.ioe.org.au](http://www.ioe.org.au)

**Social  
Media**



## Board of Management

### CHAIRPERSON

Michelle Trustum

### VICE CHAIRPERSON

Ryan Lewis

### TREASURER

Adrian Nemec

### SECRETARY

Eloise Fraser

### GENERAL MEMBERS

Andrew McQuie

Belinda Stephens

Marina Dickson

Check Tan

## Creating Opportunities and Choice

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



**Welcome to the  
2023-24 Annual Report  
for Interchange Outer East.  
This year marks our  
40th year of operation.**

Although IOE officially became an independent organisation on July 6, 1986, we initially operated under the umbrella of Options for Community Living Inc. for the first three years.

While our official 40th anniversary is still two years away, it is noteworthy that the need for IOE's services remains as vital as ever. IOE was established to:

- Enhance the wellbeing of families with children and young people with disabilities
- Ensure that children and young people with disabilities have equal opportunities within the community
- Provide respite care and support for these families
- Recruit and engage people in the community to assist families

These needs were emphasised during a day spent at IOE, where the Board members gained a deeper understanding of our work. The "Big Day Out" allowed the Board to interact with IOE volunteers, families receiving services, participants, and staff. This event reinforced the rationale behind IOE's operations, highlighting our distinct role amidst the complex landscape of NDIS services and affirming our clear purpose and strategic direction. This deeper understanding contributes to better governance and decision-making.

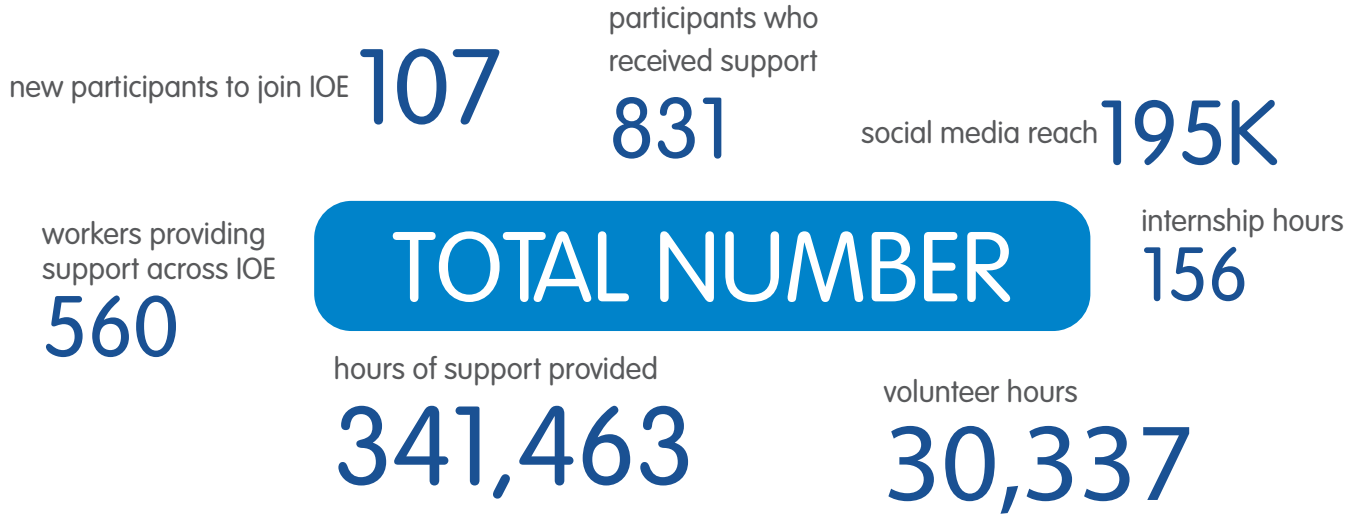
Throughout the year, the Board has continued to focus on critical projects aimed at strengthening and consolidating IOE. The Risk, Compliance, and Governance project has been working on enhancing our processes and systems to address challenges effectively. Additionally, our IT project has introduced new systems and applications to improve efficiency and support our ongoing development efforts for families.

However, this year has brought significant challenges. Compliance issues with the SCHADS award necessitated a complex audit of our payroll system dating back to 2017. These compliance requirements have also led to significant changes in service delivery, making it more difficult for Support Workers and Coordinators to provide flexible solutions. As a result of the payroll audit and subsequent rectifications, IOE had to restructure its overhead and administrative costs to ensure financial stability.

Despite these challenges, the commitment and clear sense of purpose shared by our volunteers, staff, leadership, and Board members ensure that decisions are made with IOE's mission in mind. I extend my gratitude to my fellow Board members, as well as our volunteers and employees, for their unwavering support throughout the year.

Michelle Trustum  
*Chairperson*

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES 2023-24



ALLIED HEALTH	RECREATION	SUPPORT SERVICES	SPECIALIST SERVICES	AGENCY & HUBS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allied Health Assistant Program</li> <li>Aquamotion</li> <li>Art Affect</li> <li>Counselling</li> <li>Functional Capacity Assessments</li> <li>Occupational Therapy</li> <li>Physiotherapy</li> <li>Behaviour Support</li> <li>The Toolbox</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult Recreation</li> <li>After Work Social Club</li> <li>Children's Recreation Programs</li> <li>GAP - Basketball</li> <li>GAP - Reactions</li> <li>GAP - Sport for Fun</li> <li>School Holiday Program</li> <li>Supported Holidays</li> <li>All Abilities Basketball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sibling Support Program</li> <li>Family Camps</li> <li>Grandparent Carer Program</li> <li>Carer Support Groups</li> <li>Parent and Carer Retreat</li> <li>Box Hill Miniature Railway Family Fun Day</li> <li>Mums Social Group</li> <li>Dads Social Group</li> <li>Host Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dungeons and Dragons</li> <li>Girls Group</li> <li>Heart2Heart</li> <li>Hello Housemates</li> <li>Home Experience Program (HEP)</li> <li>House Intensives</li> <li>Mentoring</li> <li>Microbusiness</li> <li>Prep 4 Work</li> <li>Pro Social Gaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Respite Grant</li> <li>One to One</li> <li>Short Term Accommodation</li> <li>Support Coordination</li> <li>Plan Management</li> </ul>

## What We Do

We develop and deliver services to children and young people with disabilities and their families.

## Why We Do It

To enhance family wellbeing and build inclusive communities, by engaging and supporting children and young people with disabilities.

## We support families

Family wellbeing has always been and will always be at the core of everything we do. This means building strong relationships between families and our team, underpinned by listening and trust.

## We engage and empower children and young people with disabilities

We operate within a human rights framework that respects the dignity of all individuals. For us and our community, this is about children and young people having opportunities to deepen relationships, have fun, develop skills, enhance health and wellbeing, and build independence.

## We build inclusive communities

We value our Interchange Outer East community and encourage everyone to make a contribution. This builds inclusive, cohesive and equitable communities. Our community includes a range of people, such as families, children and young people, our team of staff and volunteers, partners and other community members.

In 2023, IOE was placed to create a new strategic plan, aiming to shape our direction and priorities for the coming years. This plan reflects our commitment to build inclusive communities, empower individuals with disabilities, and ensuring that our services evolve to meet the growing needs of our participants and their families.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

By focusing on our key strategic priorities, and operating within the values we place on ourselves as an organisation and as individuals, we will achieve our three key objectives.



We invest and operate in a way that secures our ability to provide **family support programs**.



We are **family focused**.



We are **dynamic**. We are innovative, challenge the status quo and adapt as needed.

## OUR PRIORITIES

### FAMILY FOCUS



**By 2028, Family Focus looks like:**

- Staff and volunteers understand the importance and value of 'family' in all shapes and sizes.
- Parents and siblings of people with a disability participate in activities and connect with other families.
- Participants and their families feel safe to be themselves when participating in services.

### GREAT TEAM



**By 2028, Great Team looks like:**

- Strong leadership that promotes open communication, transparency and feedback among the workforce.
- An environment of equality, inclusion & belonging, embracing our differences and celebrating diversity.
- Staff feel like they have purpose within the workplace and are valued for their contribution.
- Our staff challenge the norm.

### VALUE VOLUNTEERS



**By 2028, Value Volunteers looks like:**

- The agency is positioned as a youth volunteer leader.
- Training providers recognise IOE as a pathway to employment.

### QUALITY SERVICE



**By 2028, Quality Service looks like:**

- People have fun.
- Participants, families, volunteers and staff feel safe to contribute and participate in services.
- Teams are innovative and dynamic.
- Services are adaptable.
- Services meet legislative requirements and child safety standards.

# OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE



2024 has been a year of incredible progress and achievement for OSHC@IOE, as we continue to deliver a program that prioritises the individual needs,

growth, and well-being of each student. Our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and enriching environment remains at the core of everything we do. This year, we have strengthened our focus on sensory experiences and life skills, recognising the importance of hands-on learning and individualised support. By offering tailored activities that foster independence, creativity, and social connection, we have seen our students flourish in new and meaningful ways.

A standout initiative this year has been the introduction of weekly excursions, where a group of students visits the local Arboretum every Thursday afternoon. This project, which involves collecting recyclable waste and participating in the container deposit scheme, has taught our students about sustainability and environmental responsibility while fostering a sense of pride and contribution to the wider community. It's been a joy to watch our students grow in confidence and develop essential life skills through this hands-on learning experience.

Additionally, our students took part in a deeply meaningful collaboration with Interchange Outer East (IOE) to create a new Acknowledgement of Country. Through thoughtful exploration of Finding Our Heart and guided discussions, we crafted an acknowledgement that reflects our shared respect and gratitude for the Traditional Owners of the land. This was a powerful learning experience for our students, offering them the opportunity to engage with important cultural values. As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to fostering growth, learning, and respect, and we are grateful for the support of our families and the dedication of our incredible team—Ailsa, Matilda, Elizabeth, Hayley, Faith, Donna-Jane, and Ruby—who work tirelessly to make our program such a success.



## Sharon Smith

I have been with IOE for over 3 years now, after spending 33 years in retail. I absolutely love my job and wish I had changed a long time ago.

“ *I get the opportunity to meet so many awesome people and their families. I love supporting them in reaching for their goals and seeing their growth. There's so much joy and satisfaction for both of us.*

While some shifts are routine based there is so much autonomy. As a Support Worker I can help participants choose activities that suit their interests, I love how coordinators match support workers with participants looking at skills, needs, interests to ensure we both get the most out of our time together. I've been in a few tricky situations during my time and cannot thank the team enough for the guidance and support received.

My family have seen a huge improvement in my happiness at work. The change is so much that my youngest daughter also now works for IOE and also loves her job.

*Shaz came into our lives just over three years ago. It was her very first shift with Interchange Outer East, and from the first interaction with our son Mitchy we could see there was an instant connection. Shaz has such a calming presence in our lives and always makes Mitchy feel safe . She can see positivity in everything that she does even on our hardest of days. From her infectious laughter to her singing voice we always know our boy is in safe hands and is being treated with kindness and respect.*

*Thank you Shaz for being part of our family !*



# A SUCCESSFUL NDIS AUDIT



IOE successfully completed our latest National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) audit, with an outstanding result of zero non-conformities.

The audit process examines our operations, systems, and processes, ensuring they meet the standards set by the NDIS. Achieving zero non-conformities is a great accomplishment, reflecting our dedication to providing high-quality, consistent, and reliable services to our participants.

Our audit success highlights the strength of our systems and processes. Over the years, we have invested in developing operational frameworks to ensure they are robust, efficient, and aligned with best practices. These systems enable us to deliver consistent, high-quality services and to adapt and evolve in a constantly changing environment.

***Also contributing to our successful audit outcome is the dedication of our staff. We are fortunate to have a team who bring years of experience, knowledge, and passion to their roles. Many IOE staff have been with us for several years, providing continuity and stability. Their commitment to our values and their focus on the needs of our participants are what set us apart.***

IOE's audit success is not just a reflection of our current practices but also of our commitment to continuous improvement. We are always striving to refine our services and processes to better meet the needs of our participants and their families. This result motivates us to keep raising the bar, ensuring that we remain a trusted and reliable provider of disability support services well into the future.

A big thank you to our families and staff that took time out to speak with the auditors.

# KATE'S STORY

Kate had a strong desire to be an independent adult living her own life like her siblings and peers. She was limited by the need for an accessible home and access to unplanned support. For example Kate may need help to pick up a dropped item, help to reach something up high or help if she had a fall.

Kate was determined to live independently in her own home. She didn't want to be told she needed to share her space with people she didn't know, or that she had to live with others at all. It was decided she would be supported to trial spending time living alone with support available to ensure this was the best option for her. This would provide evidence to the NDIA that this model was suited to her.

IOE supported Kate to appeal the NDIS' original decision that Kate should live with another NDIS participant in a two person unit. We were successful! Kate has now received NDIS funding that enables her to live in her own accessible apartment. She can book in support workers at times when she wants them, and has access to support if needed at all other times.

Kate is thriving in her own apartment, with her self-confidence soaring. She's now managing her own support team, coordinating times to host family and friends, and accessing the support she needs independently. Kate says having an accessible apartment means she can cook safely, get around her home safely, and even undertake tasks of daily living with more independence. This independence allows her to enjoy a relationship with her parents just like her siblings do, without needing to rely on them for support.

Kate would like to thank her parents and support coordinator for believing in her and helping her secure the NDIS plan and supports she needed to live on her own terms. She loves having a home that she can decorate as she likes, where she can get to the shops independently and host family and friends whenever she wishes. Kate has even been able to return the favour by having her parents stay at her apartment.



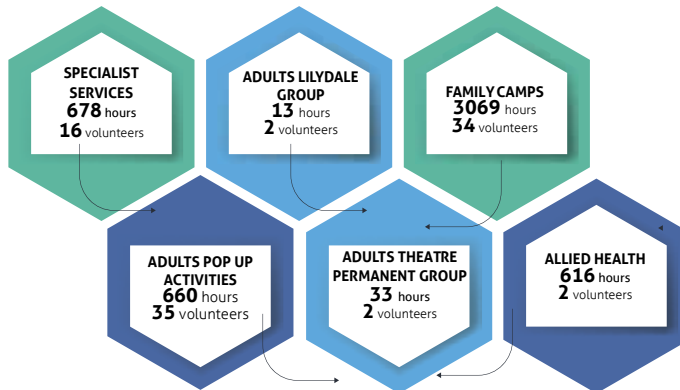
# RECREATION

## Adult Recreation Program

Adult Recreation has been striving to both introduce new experiences into our program whilst also honouring the treasured annual favourite activities. Groups on the After Work Social Club Program have stepped out of their comfort zones by going indoor skydiving at iFly and pop-up groups have attended the annual favourites such as Ability Fest where one of our participants was interviewed by Channel 7 News! In the past year, Adult Recreation has run 141 activities and 47 getaways, providing participants with over 20,000 hours of fun and their families with vital respite time.

“ *This year, 'Connection' has been our overarching focus for every program in Adult Recreation, with our aim being to foster a safe place for Adults to come together and immerse themselves in the community.* ”

Our groups have been out and busy, enjoying countless theatre shows, cheering at AFL matches and dancing in the crowds at over 12 festivals, seeing the likes of world famous performing artists such as, *The Veronicas*. One of our favourite new activities this year was 'Sailability', a fully accessible sailing experience that allowed participants of all abilities to get out on the water. It continues to be a joy to see the friendships both formed and maintained on Adult Recreation Programs and encourages us to continue to find unique activities and getaways for 2025, ensuring we are always providing new ways for our participants to enjoy Melbourne!





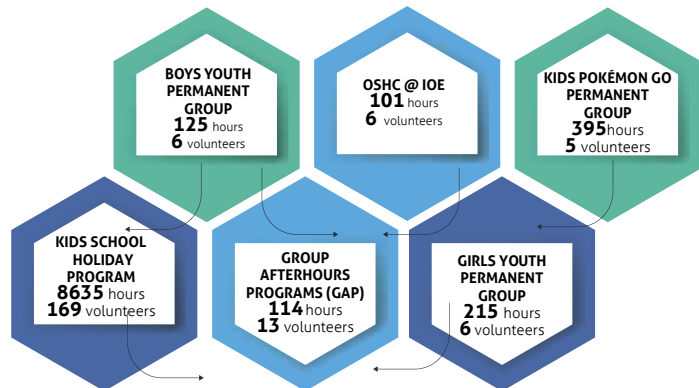
## Children’s Recreation Program

Children’s Recreation is seeing a steady increase in the number of activities going out since the decline brought on by the pandemic. The Children’s Recreation Team are continually striving to introduce new and exciting opportunities within our service, ensuring that every seasonal program is packed full of variety, inclusion and fun!

**“ We loved seeing the enthusiasm that the school holidays brought, as we sent out huge activities such as the Melbourne Show, which has a total 39 people! We both enjoy meeting new participants and seeing the success stories and joy that our programs bring to both the children and their families after they have had a well-earned break.**

The Home and Community Care Program (HACC) has grown exponentially in the two years it has been running. The program started with 10 day activities and camps a season and we are now sending out 21 per season, showing a 110% increase! Through this program we have been able to support over 50 families that were unable to get NDIS core funds for their young children, to increase their independence and work towards their individual goals.

It is an exciting time for the Children’s Recreation Program and we are committed to continue to support our participants to have new experiences out in the community that promote inclusion, independence and most importantly, fun!



# VOLUNTEER - BUDDY PROGRAM

This year, we proudly introduced the Buddy Program as a complement to our volunteer program. The Buddy Program brings together children aged 12–15 to participate in activities and camps alongside peers with disabilities. This initiative fosters meaningful connections while creating a fun and inclusive environment where all kids can play, laugh, and make lasting memories together.

Through the Buddy Program, participants engaged in a variety of fun activities, from sports and arts and crafts to games and outdoor adventures. These opportunities provided for bonding, shared



experiences, and valuable learning moments alongside our Volunteers. Children with disabilities connected with peers their age, ensuring everyone had the chance to feel included and enjoy themselves.

The program extends beyond fun and connection; it also serves as a pathway for those interested in becoming future Volunteers or Support Workers. By fostering interactions among a diverse group of kids, the Buddy Program promotes inclusivity and ensures that every child can play, connect, and thrive, regardless of their abilities. Together, they discover the value of friendship, teamwork, and understanding, all while creating lasting memories.

## Georgia's Story

“ I have been involved in IOE's Buddy Program for over a year now, starting in my last year of primary school. Since last year, I have participated in several activities and camps including HACC, School Holiday Program and Family Camps.

I found out about the Buddy Program through my mum who works at IOE, and friends who were already involved. Being involved in the Buddy Program was one of the best decisions I have made because it helped me grow as a person, make new connections, and push me outside of my comfort zone.

One of my favourite experiences with the Buddy Program was my first ever camp in the school holidays. I loved making new friends and getting to know lots of different participants. This was a very rewarding experience because I got to help participants have an amazing camp and give them great memories they can share with their families.

I look forward to staying involved in the Buddy Program in the years to come. I hope to keep meeting new people, develop new skills and make memories that I can look back on in the future

# PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

**“ Nowhere else can a young person be supported to work and study in their chosen field, quite like they will be at IOE. I wholeheartedly believe this to be the case.**

We're passionate about providing genuine opportunities to learn and develop skills in young and emerging workers within the community services sector. Not only do we intentionally provide placement and early employment opportunities that will best align with the student's learning objectives, but we also invest in their learning away from IOE. It's a collective effort of passionate staff and participants who allow students and new employees to become part of our community.

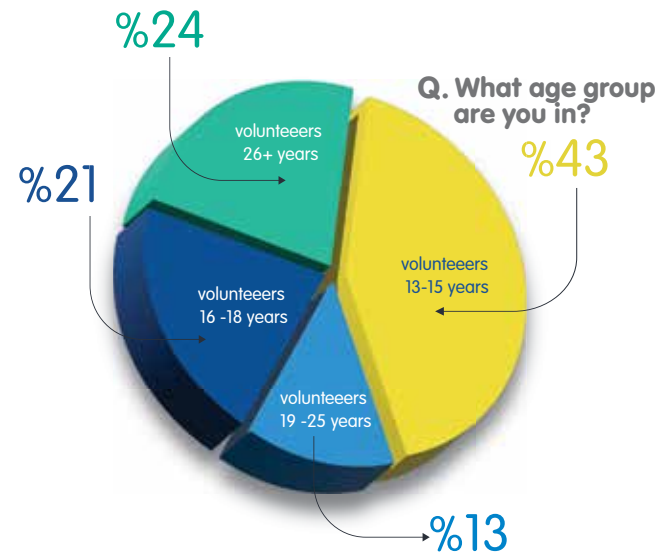
Over the past 12 months, the Pathways to Employment program has been able to support several young and talented workers with a passion for supporting people to live their best lives:

- Trainee Ruby has completed her TAFE studies in Cert III Individual Support and is nearing completion of her on-the-job training with OSHC @ IOE.
- The Junior Support Workers entered their second year of training and development and have moved into in-home shifts.
- We all adjusted to changes across the Community Services and Disability TAFE & training sector and how placement is structured, so that newly qualified workers are equipped with the skills needed by industry.
- Welcomed several students undertaking clinical and internship placements.

We've welcomed Occupational Therapy students undertaking their clinical placement, a Master of Public Policy student for a research project into Youth Engagement in Volunteering, and a student undertaking a Master of Marketing and Communications to support the development of our online marketing and communications strategy.

We've represented IOE at various Youth Career Expos and further strengthened our industry partnerships with educational institutes, local schools, Outer Eastern Local Learning Network, EV Strengthening Communities, and the Youth and Employment departments of the Outer Eastern Local Governments and their associated networks, including a feature piece in a soon to be released video, showcasing the value of Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) opportunities being made available for students as part of their VCE-VM studies.

## VOLUNTEER SURVEY



Youth engagement in volunteering research survey - 2024

# SIBLINGS

Did you know that Freemasons have been supporting IOE's sibling support program for 15 years? 15 years! Now that's something to celebrate! That's a whole generation of young people who have been supported in their role as a sibling of a child with a disability throughout their whole childhood. A generation who have built a toolbox full of coping skills and strategies, who have made strong connections with their peers and who carry precious memories to share.

Being a sibling of someone with a disability can sometimes be tough and brings its own set of challenges, including feeling different, needing support with big feelings, isolation and loneliness, dealing with other people's insensitivities and missing out of taking part in community activities.

IOE's Sibling Support Program gives children and teens who have a brother or sister with a disability the chance to do fun things and make connections with others who understand their unique situation through regular recreation-based camps and activities.



The relationships that siblings within a family share can be one of the longest of any relationships a person with a disability will have. This key point is why it is so important that we support siblings in their role. Benefits include:

- Sibling support programs are shown to improve the mental health and wellbeing of siblings, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness through creating connection and understanding.
- Empowered siblings can be positive role models and advocates for their brothers and sisters with a disability.
- Creating long-lasting bonds between siblings. We see the formation of friendships and peer support systems that extend beyond the program, fostering a sense of belonging.
- With the right support, siblings become leaders in our community, continue on to be leaders in their professions and play huge roles in the lives of their families.

The Freemasons ongoing support and dedication to children who have a sibling with a disability is remarkable and continues to make a significant difference in the lives of those we support. For many families, having this program available at no cost, means the difference between being able to access this support or not, and we couldn't do this without the support from Freemasons.

**“ It's great to come together with others who have someone with a disability in their family. It's a fun camp to come and chill out with your friends in a safe space with no judgement. - Amelia**

We are proud of our sibling support program and grateful to our friends at Monash Gully District and Freemasons Foundation for their shared vision and ongoing support of this important program.



# MUMS WEEKEND

On a sunny weekend in October, IOE welcomed 50 mums and female carers along to the beautiful Silverwater Resort in San Remo. We watched as mums arrived on Friday afternoon with their shoulders up around their ears, many reporting that they were feeling highly-strung after a busy week and the rush of organising care for their loved ones while they went away. We were looking forward to an opportunity for mums to wind down, connect with others and do something for themselves. That's exactly what happened, it was a very special weekend!

**“ I left feeling refreshed and energised. I cannot remember feeling like this. I have also made contact with parents that I feel will be future friends. - Michelle**

Activities available included: meditation & mindfulness session, watercolour tutorial, walk through the San Remo Coastal Reserve and across the bridge to Phillip Island, a night out dancing in Cowes, visit to Churchill Island to wander around the farmers market and soak in the scenery. All topped off with a special dinner where everyone came together to enjoy delicious food and lots of laughs.

On Sunday we bid farewell to everyone and watched as relaxed-looking mums floated out of the resort, ready to return home to their families.

***So nice to get away from responsibilities, meet new people who are travelling a similar journey, feel less alone, focus on self and have fun without having to think about anyone else - Nerissa***

”

IOE's mums and carer retreats are highly anticipated events on the IOE calendar. We run these retreats with funding from DFFH Additional Respite for Carers Grant. IOE always has a large wait list for these events, highlighting the need for carers to have a short break from their caring role and the value of opportunities for carers to connect with each other. We know that everyone deserves a break; we squeeze as many people as we can onto these retreats but certainly wish that we could run more regular retreats for our community and will continue to seek additional funding to do so.



# PORN IS NOT THE NORM

Porn Is Not the Norm (PINN) is an initiative that IOE became involved in in 2020. Over the last 3.5 years alongside Maree Crabb, expert on Pornography, Wenn Lawson, Autism researcher and advocate and many other professionals, families and autistic young people, we have created a series of resources that aim to prevent pornography's harms to young autistic people.

“

*I feel more informed about supporting the autistic students by giving examples they can connect more with, being more aware of the monotropic thinking and literalness of what they see they believe is real - and being even more explicit in teaching about this. - Course participant*

We do this by equipping them, their parents, teachers and workers to understand pornography's prevalence, nature and impacts, and most importantly how they can safely navigate healthy and respectful relationships and sexuality in this context.

We were lucky enough to have members of the IOE community agree to be interviewed and filmed and be a part of the training resources, website and social media campaigns. The young autistic people's voices are so important and it is their experiences we have drawn upon to provide research, insight and depth to the work.

The project has included in-person education events for both parents, carers and professionals that have taken the presenters all around Australia, as well as online events, two of which IOE has hosted. With each of these event's feedback was gathered, information shared, and the PINN content continually adapted and improved each time.

The resources, available on the website, include education materials for parents and carers, learning for professionals, and education resources for use with young autistic people.

With consistent collaborators such as Westpac's Safer Children, Safer Communities Grant, Jodi Rodgers, Sexologist, from Birds and the Bee's, Jack Mulholland from Maroondah City Council, Jackie Bateman of Kids First and Leigh Bartlett from Bat Force, we are incredibly proud of the work that has been completed and although the funded portion of the project is completed, the resources will continue to be available, and inform current and future IOE programs.

*I love the way you included embedding it into other areas we teach not just our Relationships and Sexuality Education lessons but media literacy, online safety etc - the more people sharing the message in ways kids connect with it the better - thank you. - Course participant*

”



Heart2Heart, a project by IOE launched in late 2023, has long aimed to support people with disabilities in exploring dating and relationships. Unlike other services that traditionally shy away from risks, we were enthusiastic to take a risk on love.

We embraced the challenge of helping people pursue relationships and intimacy with the awareness of the higher risk of abuse faced by people with disabilities.

Engaging people and their families was crucial to understand what the barriers were and to ensure we were offering something people wanted. We consulted with 7 people and 6 families to shape the program, which brought together 26 people across two groups for six weeks of dating events at a local venue. Our mission was to support people to explore relationships in a way that decreased risks, was respectful, not tokenistic and felt safe enough for people to have a go.

These events featured informal learning, shared meals, and short dates with graded support available. We encouraged reflection, helping people identify their thoughts and feelings as they navigated the dating process.

One person's heartfelt email, expressing her dream of dating, reinforced the importance of this project. She told us she had only dreamt of it until now and was thankful for the very opportunity to explore this aspect of life.....the pressure was on!

Despite challenges like coordinating the right groups and sustaining relationships beyond the program, we continue to evolve based on feedback. Heart2Heart isn't a guaranteed path to love but offers an authentic, supportive environment to build social skills, confidence, and resilience. We know that "kissing frogs" is part of real life!

Through these events, we've seen participants commence with profound anxiety who struggled to answer questions, gain confidence, set boundaries, and in some cases, continue dating beyond the program. The program remains focused on helping people expand their social circles, develop communication and

social skills, with the understanding that lasting connections take time.

***Heart2Heart will continue as a six-week program for those ready to explore relationships with an opportunity to make real connections.***



# CHILD SAFETY GRANT



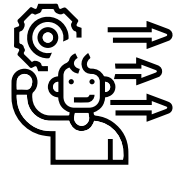
## CHILD SAFETY

IOE is dedicated to child safety. This financial year, we received grant funding from the Department of Health through the Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC-PYP). We were allocated \$26,580 in capital and \$38,000 in general funds, which were primarily used for staff training.



### Child Safety & Family Violence Training

Funded comprehensive staff training on child safety and family violence prevention, ensuring staff are well-versed with how to identify and respond to signs of abuse.



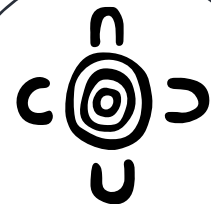
### Action Feedback Kits

Provided Action Feedback Kits to facilitate meaningful participation in feedback discussions, giving children the opportunity to express their thoughts and influence decisions.



### Augmentative Communication Devices

Purchased iPads for augmentative and alternative communication.



### Aboriginal Art

Purchased Aboriginal artwork from a local Indigenous artist for all hubs to create a culturally safe and welcoming environment.



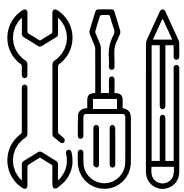
### Prosocial Gaming Equipment

Invested in prosocial gaming equipment to promote positive social interactions, teamwork, and cooperative play.



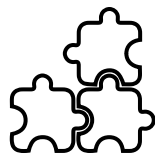
### Educational Books on Safety & Wellbeing

Purchased books focused on body safety, emotional regulation and diversity to empower children with the knowledge to protect themselves and understand personal boundaries.



### Facility Safety Upgrades

Completed essential repairs to the deck and stairs and built a retaining wall to improve the safety and accessibility of our outdoor space, creating a safer environment for all children at Yose Street.



### Cultural Resources

Purchased Indigenous books, puzzles, dolls, and games to support cultural education and inclusivity.



# CEO'S REPORT



The past year has been challenging and significant in directing the future of Interchange Outer East in the current environment. The processes and changes enacted during the year will enable IOE to continue to move forward, albeit with constraints and directives that we have not had to consider in the past. IOE is committed to supporting families of children and young people with disabilities in the best, most flexible manner possible. This is the purpose and responsibility of the organisation, and one that will be much needed in the future as we enter into the period where the outcomes of the review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will be implemented.

The start of the year involved the introduction of a new "Client Management System" and a new "Human Resource and Payroll" system. Testing of the systems raised some concerns regarding undercharging the NDIS and accordingly how we were paying our staff. Further work throughout the year, including the engagement of independent advice and audit services, has resulted in a substantial reduction in IOE's capacity to finance the planned reform of the organisation towards ongoing financial viability. Subsequently, IOE undertook a restructure to significantly reduce overhead costs to ensure the organisation could balance the budget in 2024-25.

Working through these issues has been difficult, however we have endeavoured to continue to provide services to families with as few changes as possible. A strict interpretation of the SCHADS award has required a reduction in flexibility in service delivery and our ability to meet family needs. Whilst this points to the inflexibility of an industrial award that was built for organisations operating houses and day services, rather than an award that supports a community care model, it is what it is, and we continue to work with those restrictions.

In combination with both the fiscal challenges, and an inadequate industrial award, the NDIS is about to enter a phase of change. How the future changes to NDIS will affect the families and participants is unclear, however as an organisation we will continue to adjust and develop our services to meet the changes in line with our purpose and how to best support families of children and young people with a disability.

On the positive ledger we have been able to grow existing services and develop new options as well. Significantly, our volunteer program has blossomed and the energy and lift these young volunteers provide to IOE is a real pleasure to experience. It is also important to note the services that we continue to develop outside of NDIS funding streams and those services we have provided on a pro bono basis. These innovative services, such as Family Camps, Carer Supports, Mums Weekend, Carers retreat, Sibling Support, HACC weekend camps and day activities, Crocs playcentre family nights, Bush Buddies (Healesville playgroup), Inclusive Basketball at Knox, Evolve (drop in centre for young adults), Mary Poppins, Family getaways, Carers Basketball and our OSHC (Out of School Hours Care) programs, are vital components of IOE's future.

**There are many organisations that have developed disability services since the commencement of the NDIS. Formulating strategy and identifying the unique value provided by IOE in this environment is important. IOE does not exist to be a business, we aim to deliver services and programs that better support children and young people with a disability and their families. That is what we will do.**

Fred Brumhead  
*Chief Executive Officer*



# FINANCIAL REPORT

Interchange Outer East Incorporated

REG No. A 0009 955P 2023/2024

Statement of Comprehensive Income for year end 30 June 2024	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	3	26,492,034	25,718,176
Other income	3	184,330	97,380
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>26,676,364</b>	<b>25,815,556</b>
Depreciation and amortisation expense	4	(356,583)	(403,664)
Employee benefits expense	4	(27,465,018)	(24,142,524)
Occupancy expenses		(216,720)	(203,002)
Finance costs	4	(62,919)	(59,773)
Client expenses		(879,270)	(1,348,590)
Other expenses		(1,979,090)	(1,100,473)
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>(30,959,600)</b>	<b>(27,258,026)</b>
<b>Deficit from operations</b>		<b>(4,283,236)</b>	<b>(1,442,470)</b>
Unrealised gain / (loss) and investment related income on financial assets - recognised at fair value through profit and loss		431,157	415,197
<b>Total comprehensive income/(expense) for the year</b>		<b>(3,852,079)</b>	<b>(1,027,273)</b>

Statement of Cash Flows for year end 30 June 2023	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from customers and non-government grants		690,401	792,672
Receipts from government		25,794,618	25,133,782
Payments to suppliers and employees		(27,082,296)	(24,578,556)
Interest received		150,728	47,540
Finance costs		(62,919)	(59,773)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	15(b)	<b>(509,468)</b>	<b>1,335,665</b>
<b>CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Investments made in term deposits		(4,822,960)	-
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(19,673)	(58,305)
Franking credit refund		33,602	49,840
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities</b>		<b>(4,809,031)</b>	<b>(8,465)</b>
<b>CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Principal portion of lease payments		(190,985)	(263,987)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<b>(190,985)</b>	<b>(263,987)</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF CASH</b>			
Cash at beginning of the financial year		6,709,303	5,646,090
Net increase in cash held		(5,509,484)	1,063,213
<b>Cash at end of financial year</b>	15(a)	<b>1,199,819</b>	<b>6,709,303</b>



## Financial Overview

In the 2023/24 financial year, we saw a modest increase in revenue of 3%, which was unfortunately offset by a significant rise in employee expenses. These increases primarily stemmed from several strategic investments aimed at ensuring long-term sustainability and compliance with evolving industry standards.

### Key Contributing Factors to the Loss

**Payroll Audit:** We chose to undergo a comprehensive payroll audit, aimed at ensuring compliance with the complex SCHADS award, impacting a considerable portion of the increased expenses. This audit was essential in mitigating any potential future risks and maintaining fair wage practices.

**Technology Upgrades:** We also incurred costs related to the implementation of new computing systems. These systems are crucial for adapting to the changing NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) landscape and its evolving requirements, ensuring that our operations remain effective and compliant.

As a result of these factors, the organization experienced a loss of 14.4% of revenue in the 2023/24 year, compared to a smaller loss of 3.98% in the previous year. While this represents a setback, the investments made this year are intended to position us for improved efficiency and compliance moving forward.

**Financial Position:** Despite the operational losses, we maintain a strong balance sheet with member funds of \$4M, providing a solid foundation for future growth and long-term financial stability.

To obtain a copy of the full financial report for the year ended 30 June 2023, please contact Interchange Outer East. An explanation of the *notes* is provided in the full financial report.

Statement of Financial Position for year end 30 June 2024	Notes	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,199,819	6,709,303
Receivables	6	619,580	1,104,482
Other financial assets	7	4,924,584	101,624
Other assets	8	977,846	733,032
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>7,721,829</b>	<b>8,648,441</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Other financial assets	7	5,540,024	5,113,311
Property, plant and equipment	9	351,923	441,394
Lease assets	10	1,001,884	1,105,390
Other assets	8	248,847	246,557
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>7,142,678</b>	<b>6,906,652</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>14,864,507</b>	<b>15,555,093</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Payables	11	1,776,061	1,225,071
Lease liabilities	10	234,550	258,527
Provisions	12	6,742,250	3,738,792
Other liabilities	13	766,241	1,047,643
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>9,519,102</b>	<b>6,270,033</b>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease Liabilities	10	908,484	986,798
Provisions	12	375,888	364,466
Other liabilities	13	54,937	75,621
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,339,309</b>	<b>1,426,885</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>10,858,411</b>	<b>7,696,918</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>4,006,096</b>	<b>7,858,175</b>
<b>MEMBERS FUNDS</b>			
Accumulated surplus	14	4,006,096	7,858,175
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS FUNDS</b>		<b>4,006,096</b>	<b>7,858,175</b>

Statement of Changes in Members Funds for year end 30 June 2024	Accumulated Surplus \$	Members Funds \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2022</b>	8,885,448	8,885,448
Deficit for the year	(1,027,273)	(1,027,273)
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>7,858,175</b>	<b>7,858,175</b>
Deficit for the year	(3,852,079)	(3,852,079)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>(3,852,079)</b>	<b>(3,852,079)</b>
<b>Balance at 30 June 2024</b>	<b>4,006,096</b>	<b>4,006,096</b>

# GET INVOLVED

**We are here to create opportunities and choice throughout the community. There are many ways for you to join our community. Volunteering on weekends or school holidays, donating \$5 out of your pay, attending events or sharing our posts. How you contribute is up to you - it all makes a difference!**

## Amplify Us

IOE has a strong social media presence and we encourage our followers to get involved in the conversation, share our posts and support our campaigns. Engaging with us on social media is one of the easiest ways that you can show your support! Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn and share to amplify our message.

## Volunteers

IOE volunteers provide valuable experiences and opportunities for others as well as themselves. Volunteering is both fun and rewarding. Recreation volunteers assist children and young people with disabilities on a variety of recreational and social programs. Host volunteers will be matched to a child with a disability and share your home with that child, e.g. one weekend a month.

## Families

Families who have a child with a disability living in Melbourne's outer east are invited to call, email or visit our website for information on joining our programs.



## Community Partnership

There are various mutually beneficial ways the community and local businesses can become involved. If you would like to discuss the possibilities, please get in touch or visit our website.

## Donations, Payroll Giving & Fundraising

All donations go directly to IOE programs and services for the benefit of participants and their families. Find out more or make a one-off, regular, bequest or workplace payroll donation at our office or via the website: [www.ioe.org.au/get-involved/donate](http://www.ioe.org.au/get-involved/donate)

## Members

Anyone in the community is invited to become an IOE member, allowing them to vote on matters which influence the direction of the agency. A membership is a prerequisite for becoming a member of the board of management. An annual fee of \$20 applies.

# THANK YOU

Each year, there are many businesses, organisations and individuals who support the agency in a variety of ways. We are grateful to have their support in providing meaningful opportunities for children and adults with disability and their families.



## MAJOR SPONSORS

Freemasons Foundation  
Victoria

Monash Gully District  
Freemasons

Worshipful Master and  
Brethren of the Canterbury  
Lodge

Worshipful Master and  
Brethren of the Bayden  
Powel Lodge

Rotary Club of Balwyn

Box Hill Miniature Steam  
Railway

Lions Club of Park Orchards

Gift a break

Department of Families,  
Fairness & Housing

Yarra Ranges Community  
Led Recovery Large Grants  
program

Regional Community  
Recovery Committees

Bendigo Bank – Community  
Enterprise Foundation

Uniting – Carer Gateway

## SUPPORTERS

Buds N Roses

Knox City Council

Yarra Ranges Council

Victoria Police

Maroondah City Council

St John Ambulance

Butchers Club, Ferntree Gully

Good 360

Jane Sarratt- Speech  
Pathology

## FRIENDS AND PARTNERS

Different Journeys

Sandra Buchanan - Art  
Therapist

David Mang

Monbulk Community  
Care Op Shop

Officeworks Ferntree Gully

Bunnings Scoresby

Australian Sports Museum

Club Kilsyth/Club Ringwood

Museum of Play and Art

Puffing Billy Railway

Gumbuya World

Croydon Hills Primary School

Our Village

Collingwood Knights

Arrabri Community House

Mountain District Learning  
Centre

Viva La Dance

BK 2 Basics

Rowville Rehearsals & Hire

Knox Club

Maroondah Nets

Lilydale Tafe - Travis  
Burroughs and Janet  
Gardiner

Debbie Cowan - Hackett from  
In a Whisper Equine Therapy

Cire – First Impression  
Clothing

Forever Friends Farm

Yarra Junction Fitness – Yarra  
Junction Centre

Discovery Church – Op Shop  
Staff

Lilydale Community House

The Rings Basketball

Vibe Dance

Knox Leisure Aquatics and  
wellbeing - Ruby and Maggie

Ferntree Gully Stihl

Bayswater Bowls Club

Tommy Hopkins – Fittlife  
Boxing

EV Strengthening  
Communities

OELLEN Outer Eastern Local  
Learning Network

Brok Thompson,  
Monash University  
Masters Placement Student