

Access for all

ANNUAL REPORT 22 | 23

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we work today and pay our respects to Elders past and present and to emerging community leaders. We also acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the communities we work.

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Cover: Spinal Life team member Finley Coll took part in an extensive review of accessibility on the Sunshine Coast, joined by colleagues and volunteers.

Snapshot

COMMERCIAL SERVICES



Hours of Personal Support:
573,028 hours



Support Coordination:
273 clients



Plan Management:
182 clients



Occupational Therapy:
8,459 hours



Community Nursing:
3,219 hours

MEMBERS



2,024 members



Systemic advocacy
campaigns: **3**



Peer Support Facebook
group: **2,908** members

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS



1,185 stories mentioned us

SPINAL LIFE AUSTRALIA BACK2WORK



47 referrals
Industries include landscaping, IT,
beauty therapy, sales and mining

HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE

BRISBANE:



Physiotherapy: **1,383** hours



Exercise Physiology: **1,987** hours



Fitness Hub: **101** members



Assistive Technology and IT: **98** hours

CAIRNS:



Physiotherapy: **2,296** hours



Exercise Physiology: **1,029** hours



Hydrotherapy pool: **1,418** hours



Allied Health Assistant: **824** hours



Accommodation: **1,777** nights stayed

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



Step 1,2,3 Training: **28** sessions



Extended competencies
training: **70** days



Training provided to external
organisations: **104** days

Message from the CEO



This financial year was challenging in many ways, and I would like to commend our team for going above and beyond to find solutions when faced with adversity.

I'd also like to thank our customers for being flexible as we worked through difficulties being experienced across the disability sector.

These included unprecedented staff shortages due to ongoing COVID-19 challenges, seasonal illnesses and general difficulty sourcing new team members due to low unemployment rates. The shortages particularly affected Personal Support Workers (PSWs), who provide essential support to people in their daily lives.

Among our activities, we worked to improve employment conditions to support current PSWs, and encourage new team members to join us. Measures included providing more training and paid qualifications, as well as incentives of permanent part-time positions where possible.

We also advocated to the Australian Government to ask for new incentives and policies to make it easier for people who wish to work in our sector, such as reviewing visa requirements as well as encouraging pensioners to rejoin the workforce.

We commenced the New Year with a flurry of activity focused on growing PSW numbers, and increasing our resources and budget directed to this goal.

Towards the end of the financial year we saw this approach begin to show results, with the recruitment and onboarding of PSWs trending upwards, and we look forward to streamlining this area further to ensure our efforts are as effective as possible.

We continued to be guided by our critical success factors:

- Understand and respond to individual customer needs
- Be an employer of choice with a fully engaged workforce
- Have a strong and compelling brand
- Have the expertise to deliver on our specialist role
- Maintain strong relationships with key partners, funders and suppliers
- Drive improved quality and efficiency focused on customer value.

The Executive Team met for a strategy day to refine these critical success factors, which were then further refined by the Board, and they will be reflected in the year ahead as we continue to focus on what's important for our customers, our community, and the organisation's financial sustainability.

We will also focus on growing services and supports, based on feedback from our members and partners, and reviewing what's happening in the disability sector.

Furthermore, we will continue our advocacy efforts on a range of key topics including accessible tourism, ensuring appropriate supports are available when our members are admitted to hospital, and lobbying for people aged over 65 years old to access the NDIS.

Thank you for your support and here's to the year ahead.

MARK TOWNEND

Message from the Chair



Things have been tough in recent times for most Australians. And thanks to rising costs, tight staff availability and demand for our services continuing to grow, it's certainly been true for Spinal Life Australia.

But even in the face of challenging economic conditions, we have remained resolute when it comes to achieving our short-term objectives – and forging a strategic path towards long-term growth and prosperity. This way, we will continue to be a leader in our industry, while staying true to our mission of supporting people to live accessible, equitable and empowered lives.

We've improved staff recruitment and retention for personal support services; ramped up our allied health services, including community nursing, occupational therapy and physiotherapy; and are further developing the Cairns and Brisbane Healthy Living Centres.

We continued to advocate for things like better access to housing, transport and community support services, and are also working more closely with government to improve and better integrate spinal injury rehabilitation and outreach services.

As part of our forward-focused activities, this year we made the decision to invest into an equipment supply business, Move Mobility (formerly known as The Mobility Aid Shop), which is in the process of expanding to several locations including Shailer Park in Queensland.

Our aim is to create a more streamlined experience for customers to trial and purchase equipment and assistive technology, allowing them to move forward with their lives, including when they are first discharged from hospital.

This investment will allow our team to share our expertise regarding products that are – or should be – in stock, as well as our experience about the challenges our customers are facing, and how we can resolve these issues.

To ensure continued financial sustainability, despite the challenges we are facing, we have focused on a number of things. One such project involves the potential development of our Woolloongabba site.

We prepared a Development Application for the site, which was submitted to Brisbane City Council in August 2023 and would enable taller buildings to be built on the site.

We have no plans to develop the site ourselves, due to the scope of our plans and the limitations of the space. However, if the application is approved it would be a very attractive proposition for developers, especially given the upcoming 2032 Olympics and Paralympics and the site's close proximity to the Gabba stadium, the Cross River Rail and the Brisbane Metro line.

The value of the site would be dramatically increased and, if sold, would allow us to proceed with plans to build on a new site, ideally within five kilometres of the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Our goal is to provide more valuable services and short-term accommodation options, particularly for people transitioning home from hospital. It would be a great way to fund our precinct and provide the best outcomes for our members, customers and community.

Thank you to my fellow Board Directors, the CEO and Executive Team, who are achieving great success, not only delivering our existing services at the highest quality, but also focusing on what may be needed in the future and campaigning for better access and inclusion for the entire community.

And finally, thank you to our incredible staff and volunteers, who are doing an exceptional job and helping us to achieve our mission, and supporting our customers and community to live life the way they choose.

GYL STACEY

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 1

Understanding and responding to customers' individual needs

When it comes to delivering services and planning for the future, we believe there's nothing more important than listening to customer feedback.

Our Healthy Living Centres are key examples of how we've listened to customers. We've created inclusive, collaborative and supportive places where people can access all their rehabilitation, wellness and fitness needs at one location.

The result is streamlined referrals and the ability for customers to access a multi-disciplinary team and the latest technology in one place, rather than having to travel to multiple locations for appointments.

In 2022-23, our focus continued to be growing these Centres, as we celebrated our first birthday in Brisbane and our third birthday in Cairns.

Our Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists identified and implemented a range of additional services, including upper limb therapy which uses an evidence-based program called GRASP to help people strengthen, maintain and stretch key arm and hand muscles using everyday props.

Small group sessions were established in Cairns for upper limb therapy, while one-on-one appointments were made available in Brisbane and Townsville.

We began Exercise Physiology classes via telehealth through the CoviU platform, aiming to give more people in regional areas access to exercise classes that support their health and wellness.

In February we also launched adaptive yoga classes in Brisbane, with classes already running in Cairns. This was later expanded to telehealth yoga classes, for people in regional areas to be able to participate.

In Western Australia, we continued to grow Support Coordination services, to help people in the state navigate their NDIS plan more easily, including linking them to service providers and assisting with managing funding.

Our Plan Management service also increased across the country, providing one-on-one support to manage the financial side of the NDIS, including paying invoices and providing access to our Careview Advantage app, which helps customers to track their budgets more effectively.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Spinal Life conducts customer surveys to identify any areas of improvement, measure customer satisfaction and ensure we are delivering the highest level of service.

A key metric of the customer experience is the Net Promoter Score (NPS), an indicator of how our customers perceive us.

Our most recent survey was distributed in December 2022 to customers of our key services: Personal Support and Home Care, Allied Health, Support Coordination and Plan Management.

Outcome

+32

Collective NPS of +32. This 18-point gain on the previous survey period shows that the improvements made this past financial year have made an impact.

~90%

Our Plan Management service was a particular standout performer, with a customer satisfaction rate of almost 90%.

Jacques Jacobie



Spinal Life's incredibly successful Back2Work project provides return-to-work support, free of charge, to newly injured patients at the Spinal Injuries Unit (SIU) at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

One such patient is 27-year-old Jacques Jacobie who, in 2020, sustained paraplegia following a motorcycle accident.

After months of rehabilitation at the SIU, and a further transitional stint in Brisbane, he was finally able to head home to Longreach.

Here, he'd been working full-time as a mechanic at Longreach Toyota. While he was in the SIU, he'd met someone who was keen to help him get back to the job he loved: Belinda McLeod, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor with the Back2Work project.

Belinda identified various equipment that would be helpful in addressing some of the barriers that stood between Jacques and a return to his job. It included a

standing wheelchair, which can be used in a variety of positions, including lying back while under a vehicle.

On behalf of Jacques, Back2Work applied to the Australian Government's Employment Assistance Fund, through Job Access, for assistive technology funding.

Their application was successful, the wheelchair arrived, and Jacques rejoined the team at Longreach Toyota, which has been incredibly supportive and accommodating regarding his return to work.

"I know that the busier I am, the more positive I stay," says Jacques. "If it wasn't for Belinda's help, I wouldn't be where I am right now... she's helped me so much."

The Back2Work project is proudly supported by the Motor Accident Insurance Commission (MAIC) in partnership with Princess Alexandra Hospital – Metro South Health and Griffith University.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 2

Be an employer of choice with a fully engaged workforce

At Spinal Life we strive to attract and retain exceptional employees by offering comprehensive support for their financial well-being, professional growth, and overall health and wellness.

In July 2022 more than 39% of staff responded to an Employee Engagement Survey, providing valuable insights that have helped our Board, CEO and Executive Team strengthen the organisation's ability to support, retain and attract highly valued employees.

During 2022-23, we launched the Thrive Awards, where employees nominate colleagues and describe how they meet our workplace values: Accountable, Generous, Courageous, Learning and Authentic. Twenty-one quarterly winners over the year each received a \$100 Thrive Award to redeem at popular retailers, and from this pool an annual winner was chosen. Congratulations to Bevan Kearsley [see below].

As we continued to develop ways to recognise our workforce, we also addressed challenges with recruiting and retaining our Personal Support Workers (PSWs).

For those who met requirements, we introduced benefits such as the opportunity to move from casual to permanent part-time positions, and additional training to gain extra skills and qualifications.

To tackle resourcing challenges we refreshed our 'Refer a Friend' program, employed targeted recruitment campaigns and utilised different recruitment channels. We also invested heavily in our radio advertising and digital presence, implemented new strategies to improve attraction and retention, and encouraged PSWs to move to permanent part-time roles.

In response to feedback, we focused on strengthening relationships between office-based staff and our PSWs, many of whom are located in regional areas across Queensland and Western Australia.

The Spinal Life team also participated in numerous events and fundraising activities, including the Bridge to Brisbane fun run where they enjoyed participating alongside our customers.



Congratulations to Access and Advocacy Officer, Bevan Kearsley, who won the Yearly Spinal Life Thrive Award – and a \$200 Thrive voucher – thanks to his commitment to supporting our organisation, and going above and beyond the call of duty when help was really needed.

At the absolute last minute, when all other options had failed us, Bevan dropped everything to deliver mobility equipment for a training program. It took him from Brisbane to Gladstone and back again... and then on to the Gold Coast for another event. The job, which was outside of Bevan's role description, demanded flexibility and a lot of driving over an entire week, and we are grateful for his enormous generosity.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 3

Have a strong and compelling brand

Spinal Life's brand identity is strongly connected with not only our specialist services, but also our advocacy efforts. We are advocating to all levels of government and being a voice in the media to raise public awareness and support about the issues that matter most to our members.

During 2022-23 our key focus areas were:**ACCESSIBLE TOURISM**

After submitting a proposal last year to the Premier and Tourism Minister, we had a significant advocacy win when the Queensland Government declared 2023 to be the 'Year of Accessible Tourism'.

The aim was to raise awareness of the benefits of accessible tourism for travellers, their families, and operators who can improve their community and reach more potential customers.

Our Advocacy team has been hard at work to promote this issue and create real change in the industry, working with stakeholders across Queensland and Western Australia.

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

We have worked with various local governments in Queensland and Western Australia, including Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay, Cairns and more.

For example, we consulted on the development of the Ipswich Inclusion and Connectedness Plan, getting feedback and suggestions from residents by hosting community pop-ups, workshops and one-on-one sessions.

**EVENTS**

In November 2022 we were proud to support the Valley Fiesta music festival in Brisbane, and its first ever Access All Areas Stage. Aiming to make live music more inclusive, it included a free event with Auslan interpreters and a wheelchair lift to access the stage area. Our very own Tim McCallum also performed at a VIP event.

Additionally, we advocated for improvements in online ticketing platforms to ensure easier access to tickets, with no waiting on hold or submitting online forms.

**DISABILITY DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE**

Building on the foundations of our 2021 Disability Doesn't Discriminate campaign, we continued to advocate to federal politicians to address the severe inequity of funding for people with a disability aged 65+, who are unable to access the NDIS.

Sydney-based firm Mitry Lawyers opened expressions of interest for these individuals to participate in a class action lawsuit against the Commonwealth Government, with the goal to remove the exclusion so that all age groups can access the NDIS.

**PERSONAL SUPPORT IN HOSPITAL**

We continued to advocate for people to be able to access their own Personal Support Workers in hospital, in order to continue with their daily routines and vital therapies. Despite challenges within the health system and the NDIS refusing to provide funding, the goal is to demonstrate that this will not only provide patients with support they know and trust, but also reduce pressure on state health systems.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 4

Have the expertise to deliver on our specialist role

Sharing our specialist knowledge with clients, other organisations and team members who have a disability is crucial to our success.

This year, our Peer Support team continued their valuable work, visiting the Spinal Injuries Unit (SIU) at the Princess Alexandra Hospital daily to share their lived experience with newly injured patients and their families.

The Peer Support private Facebook group saw consistent growth, allowing more than 2,000 members to support each other by sharing information, advice and experiences.

Volunteers ran Peer Support catch-ups across the state, with dedicated groups for polio survivors to connect with each other.

In 2022 we showcased our supports and services at Disability Expos in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville, while in 2023 we held a Community Open Day at our Healthy Living Centre in Cairns.

Occupational Therapist Lisa Bidgood presented at the Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia (ATSA) Expo,

and Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor for the Back2Work project, Tania Goossen, presented at the national conference of the Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors (ASORC).

A series of professional development seminars were introduced for Personal Support Workers (PSWs), who were also offered the opportunity to gain further qualifications. To help clients with higher support needs, our Learning and Development team created their own internal qualification for PSWs called the Complex Support Certificate. Spinal Life educators also delivered 104 days' training to external organisations throughout the year.

As part of the National Assistive Technology Alliance, we have been advocating for people aged 65+ to have increased access to assistive technology. It's part of our campaign to improve funding for this age group, which is unable to access the NDIS.

Our Access Consultants also shared their expertise with businesses, government and community organisations. This is a new and exciting business for the organisation, and we look forward to expanding these services.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

In April 2023 Spinal Life conducted a survey featuring all its members. Entirely separate to the customer engagement survey, it featured more specific questions and larger sample size audiences.

A key metric of the customer experience is the Net Promoter Score (NPS), an indicator of how our customers perceive us.

The NPS score in the latest member survey was an exceptional +34, and we're extremely proud of the

36-point improvement this represents from the previous member survey.

Members stated they valued *The Advocate* magazine, regular Member Update emails and opportunities to participate in advocacy campaigns, while the Disability Doesn't Discriminate advocacy campaign resonated the strongest with them, followed by the work we're doing to improve accessible tourism.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 5

Maintain strong relationships with key partners, funders and suppliers

Forging and strengthening relations with these three vitally important groups helps us to ensure customers have access to essential resources so they can be independent.

Work during 2022-23 included:**SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

We continued to work with researchers and innovators on projects that will improve the lives of people with spinal cord damage and other physical disabilities.

This included The Hopkins Centre, a joint initiative between Griffith University and the Division of Rehabilitation, Metro South Hospital and Health Service, focused on research for rehabilitation and resilience.

We also supported the launch of the Bionics Challenge 2022, an annual competition led by Bionics Queensland. It provides funding and mentorship to inventors of bionic devices, treatments and implants that will help people affected by road accident trauma, related disabilities and health conditions return to full and active lives.

**ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING WITH BUSINESSES**

During the year we launched our EnABLED Business program, providing disability awareness training, one-on-one mentoring

to businesses, and connections to prospective employees with disability.

The program took place over 12 months, initially in the Moreton Bay region where it was offered at no cost to businesses, thanks to the Queensland Government's Growing Workforce Participation Fund. It was also supported with resources and training from the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations.

**SHARING OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE**

From an advocacy perspective, we continued to collaborate with key organisations and community leaders on diverse topics, aiming to improve access and awareness.

Together with Tourism Tropical North Queensland we put together an accessibility hub for its website. We corresponded with various airlines on ways they could improve customer service. Our Access Consultants continued a project with Seqwater, auditing their dams and lakeside recreation areas across Queensland and providing recommendations for improvements.

We also initiated Realistic RACE events. Inspired by *The Amazing Race* TV show, it uses task-based challenges to offer participants a glimpse into what it can be like to use a mobility device.

The Queensland Government supported our Peak Inclusion Program, providing disability awareness training during Disability Action Week in November to councils in Ipswich, the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane.

**SUPPORTING POLIO SURVIVORS**

By raising awareness of the late effects of polio in the media and supporting Polio Australia's efforts we continued to support our members who are polio survivors.

This included providing information kits to hospitals across Australia, and helping to promote Polio Australia's clinical education program for allied health professionals and GPs. Extending this to aged care homes, we encouraged operators to educate their employees on polio's late effects and how to best care for polio survivors.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR 6

Drive improved quality and efficiency focused on customer value

We are continually working to enhance efficiency, responsibly manage finances and deliver top-quality services to meet the expectations of our clients.

Across the organisation we have:

- Addressed recruitment and retention challenges among our Personal Support Workers, and filled several regional vacancies within our Allied Health team
- Developed a project involving our Human Resources and Personal Support and Home Care Services team, looking at things like attracting new employees, rostering and retention, and professional development initiatives
- Implemented the Careview Advantage app for our Plan Management clients, which allows for centralised invoices and statements, and real-time budget tracking. Clients appreciate the fact their Support Coordinator can also access their accounts to monitor budget progress
- Pursued fundraising and grant opportunities to help fund important projects
- Conducted an end-of-financial-year tax appeal to

support the regional expansion of our Peer Support program, focusing on Cairns and Townsville

- Reviewed current programs, including the SEAT (Spinal Education Awareness Team) program, which was developed 30+ years ago to promote safety messages to school students and also help people with spinal cord injuries rebuild their confidence and get back into the workforce. The decision to cease this program was difficult but logical, given changes in funding circumstances and the many other safety education programs available today.

Our Information Technology team delivered projects including:

- Upgrading our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and payroll systems to improve internal processing times
- Updating our networking technology to enhance security
- Maximising our disaster recovery and backup capabilities
- Supporting the implementation of the CoviU platform, which allows us to provide telehealth services so more people have access to health, fitness and wellness services.

AUDITS COMPLETED

To meet our legislative and regulatory requirements, Spinal Life is required to participate in several annual audits. It's an important way for us to check how we're tracking and continuously improve our services.

We completed an annual audit of our finances, and an Aged Care Quality Standards audit, and successfully passed an independent audit of our NDIS supports and services. It's a rigorous process that ensures we continue to meet

– and exceed – requirements set by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

During 2022-23, we also implemented Folio: a new feedback, complaints and incident management system. As well as housing key organisational documents, it provides a clear process to manage any concerns and prompts improvement.

Pillars of Sustainability

At Spinal Life, sustainability lies at the core of our values and the foundation of our commitment. We are dedicated to preserving our planet, championing social equality, and ensuring ethical governance in every facet of our work. Our commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) is a pledge to leave a legacy of positive impact, empowering both current and future generations to thrive.

To guide our sustainability initiatives, we have established a dedicated Sustainability Committee. This Committee has thoroughly examined the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and identified the goals that align closely with our organisation's mission and activities.



Our Planet

This pillar relates to our environmental sustainability, to protect our natural resources and reduce our carbon footprint for future generations.

In 2022-23, audits of all Spinal Life office sites were completed by ecoBiz Queensland, a State Government program that provides free advice on ways to improve environmental sustainability and reduce operating costs. These recommendations are being reviewed to reform our future practices.



Our People

This pillar relates to our social commitment as an employer, providing a supportive and equitable working environment so all our team members can thrive.

In 2022-23, Spinal Life conducted an Employee Engagement Survey seeking valuable feedback to improve our workplace. We recognised 21 winners of our newly-launched Thrive Awards, where employees nominate colleagues and describe how they meet our workplace values: Accountable, Generous, Courageous, Learning and Authentic.



Our Governance

This pillar relates to our leadership, ensuring we are meeting industry standards and have feedback channels and processes available to action if needed.

In 2022-23, Spinal Life participated in several independent audits of our services and finances, and implemented a new feedback, complaints and incident management system called Folio, which provides a clear process to manage any concerns and responses, plus review improvements.



Our Community

This pillar relates to the support we provide to our community, delivering essential services to our customers and fearlessly advocating to improve access and inclusion.

In 2022-23, Spinal Life expanded our telehealth services for customers who live in regional areas. We advocated to all levels of government on key issues; including accessible tourism, inequity of funding for people with a disability aged over 65, and more.

We have also enhanced our relationship with the GIVIT online platform to enable people to list used disability equipment for donation rather than disposal.

Our Board



GYL STACEY
CHAIR, ELECTED DIRECTOR

What was an advocacy issue that the Board worked to address, and how will this benefit members?

Spinal Life was instrumental in raising concerns and advocating for improved facilities at the Spinal Injuries Unit which ultimately resulted in the Queensland Government announcing funding \$20M of immediate improvements and a commitment to build a new Spinal Unit. We think people who have suffered a catastrophic injury deserve the highest quality acute and rehabilitation care available.



PROF PHILLIP MORRIS
ELECTED DIRECTOR

What key action was taken during the year and how will this set up our organisation for future success?

The decision to apply for a development application with Brisbane City Council for the Woolloongabba site. This positions Spinal Life to be able to build a new home nearby that incorporates a greater range of facilities and services to support people with a spinal cord injury.



MICHELLE WILSON
APPOINTED DIRECTOR

Why is being sustainable important to the organisation and members?

Sustainability is much more than caring for the environment – building a sustainable organisation ensures that we continue to provide daily support services to our clients and provide flexible employment options to our workforce. The choices that we make in providing these services must reduce our physical impact on the environment, ensure our governance and monitoring systems are robust and most importantly, consider all of our stakeholders, both internal and external, with every future decision made.



GERARD O'BRIEN
**DEPUTY CHAIR,
APPOINTED DIRECTOR**

What key action was taken during the year and how will this set up our organisation for future success?

The investment in Move Mobility as a key shareholder is designed to improve service levels in the mobility equipment industry for our clients and members. This is a long-term investment which ultimately will also return a share of profits to Spinal Life to reinvest in our advocacy efforts.



MARK DILLMAN
APPOINTED DIRECTOR
– RESIGNED AUGUST 2023

What was an advocacy issue that the Board worked to address, and how will this benefit members?

We continued to campaign on behalf of people aged over 65 years old who are living with a disability, who deserve access to the same benefits as those entitled to the NDIS. This is a campaign we will continue until action is taken to address this key community issue.



CAROL TAYLOR
ELECTED DIRECTOR

What was an advocacy issue that the Board worked to address, and how will this benefit members?

The advocacy undertaken by Spinal Life to secure accessible booking access to Ticketek for people with disabilities is a huge win for concert goers! From a big picture point of view it sends a very clear message that promoting inclusivity is not just a matter of good ethics but also of good business in today's diverse and inclusive society.



REBECCA TWEEDY
ALTERNATE DIRECTOR

What key action was taken during the year and how will this set up our organisation for future success?

During the year we continued our important work to recruit and upskill more of our Personal Support Workers, so they can provide a high level of professionalism for our clients. It was also exciting to see the growth of the Healthy Living Centres in Brisbane and Cairns, where we are providing expert clinical management.



DR DINESH PALIPANA OAM
ELECTED DIRECTOR

Why is being sustainable important to the organisation and members?

From affecting temperature regulation to the built environment, sustainability has significant implications for people with spinal cord injury. It is critical that we play an active role in ensuring sustainability for the future.

2022 Annual General Meeting

During this financial year we saw significant changes to our Board, including a proposed change to the Constitution that was voted through by members at the Annual General Meeting in November 2022.

The proposal means the Board now includes two types of Directors:

■ **ELECTED DIRECTORS**, who are voted by members and will always be people with lived experience of spinal cord damage. These Directors, who combine their first-hand knowledge of disability with their professional skills, make up the majority of the Board, and include the Chair position.

■ **APPOINTED DIRECTORS**, who are chosen by the Board specifically to meet skills that our organisation needs to be successful in this competitive environment.

At the AGM, Chair Gyl Stacey was re-elected to the Board, along with current Board Directors Gerard O'Brien and Michelle Wilson, as part of the previous Constitution voting requirements.

Visit spinal.com.au to read more about our Board and Executive.

Our Executives



MARK TOWNEND AM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I am proud of everything our team has achieved this year across all our service areas, as well as our advocacy work which has made a real difference in the community; and how we are continuing to respond directly to our customers' feedback to develop and invest in new services that will hopefully make their lives easier.

NATALIE VON SNARSKI
CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER

I enjoyed the collaboration and teamwork across the organisation to address the recruitment challenges we continued to face, and how we were able to create new initiatives to increase our workforce and provide much-needed services to our customers. This includes developing new training programs for our Personal Support Workers to help grow their skills and careers at Spinal Life.



FRANCES PORTER
EXECUTIVE MANAGER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

We had another great year at our Healthy Living Centres in Cairns and Brisbane, with our services continuing to grow. This allowed our team to expand their skill sets to ensure they are providing relevant, innovative services, resulting in some great outcomes for our customers including access to the latest equipment, increased employment opportunities and better health and fitness.

ROSS DUNCAN
EXECUTIVE MANAGER, MEMBER SERVICES

I was thrilled when the Queensland Government announced that 2023 would be the 'Year of Accessible Tourism' across the state with funding grants on offer to boost inclusive tourism. We had written to the Premier to propose the concept, as we knew it would raise invaluable awareness about the many benefits of accessible tourism for both customers and operators.



DANIELLE READY
CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

I was proud to lead our team to implement new technology to improve services, such as introducing an online platform to deliver telehealth Exercise Physiology and Adaptive Yoga classes to people living in regional areas; and our Plan Management app that makes it easy for our customers to track their NDIS budgets on the go, in real time.

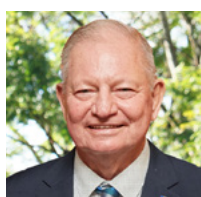
Our Patron and Ambassadors



HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE DR JEANETTE YOUNG AC PSM

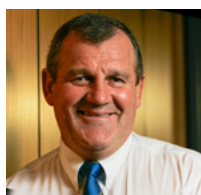
Governor of Queensland

Her Excellency, the Honourable Dr Jeanette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland, hosted a morning tea on Friday 2 December in support of International Day for People with a Disability (3 December). The event recognised Spinal Life's longest serving employees and their commitment to supporting people with spinal cord damage to live accessible, equitable and empowered lives. These team members were accompanied by members of the Board and the Executive Team. We thank the Governor of Queensland for hosting the event and her ongoing support as Patron for Spinal Life Australia.



WARREN PITT AM

Warren is our Community Ambassador for Far North Queensland and Cairns, showing his support for our Spinal Life Healthy Living Centre and activities across the region.



GREG CORNELSEN OAM

Greg has been a long-time supporter of Spinal Life, lending his profile to assist us whenever needed.



TIM HORAN AM

Tim has previously arranged for rugby players to visit the Spinal Injuries Unit and attended to meet patients and their families.

Financial Summary

This year's financial performance has woven together lessons, challenges and collaborations. We began the year with the threat of COVID-19 diminishing and the expectation of normality returning. Despite our expectations, the challenges of recruitment continued, particularly for our Personal Support Workers and Allied Health professionals.

Since re-joining Spinal Life in September 2022, I have enjoyed the collaboration between all teams in trying to meet the demands of our services in recruiting our most essential staff. Due to the size and leadership of our organisation, we have been able to pivot quickly, and this has benefited us, with many new initiatives being rolled out quickly to increase our workforce and match demand.

As disclosed in the financial statements, the organisation's group net assets have increased by 0.5% to \$40.4M (2022: \$40.2M). The total comprehensive income for the financial year, as shown in the Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, was \$181K (2022: loss of \$1,359K).

Through Spinal Futures Ltd, a registered charity and fully owned subsidiary of Spinal Life Australia, we continued to explore new investment opportunities to facilitate growth in our services and ensure we are providing the best possible support to our customers.

In December 2022, Spinal Futures acquired 23% of the shares and voting interests in Mobility Healthcare Australia Pty Ltd, which has recently rebranded to Move Mobility. The investment aligns with the company's mission as we work towards improving the experience of our members and clients when purchasing mobility devices, aids and equipment.

We reviewed the operations of the Inclusive Communities Foundation, a Trust created using profits from the sale of a previous Spinal Life business. The Trust is also used for funding investment opportunities as another way to raise funds for key projects, including our exciting plans to build on a new site; if our Development Application lodged with Brisbane City Council in August 2023 is successful.

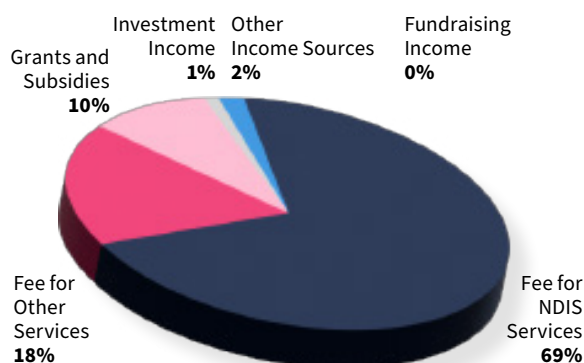
We all remain committed to exploring innovative strategies to continue to overcome recruitment challenges, along with ways we can expand our services to better support our customers, members and community, as well as ensure the organisation's success into the future.

You will find more detail within our full financial report which is available on our website, and we invite you to contact us if you have any feedback or questions.

Danielle Ready
Chief Finance Officer

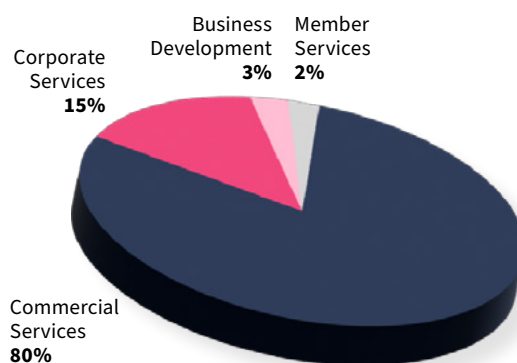
Financial Highlights

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



	\$'000
Fee for NDIS Services	35,480
Fee for Other Services	9,022
Grants and Subsidies	5,103
Investment Income	755
Fundraising Income	115
Other Income Sources	1,035
TOTAL	51,510

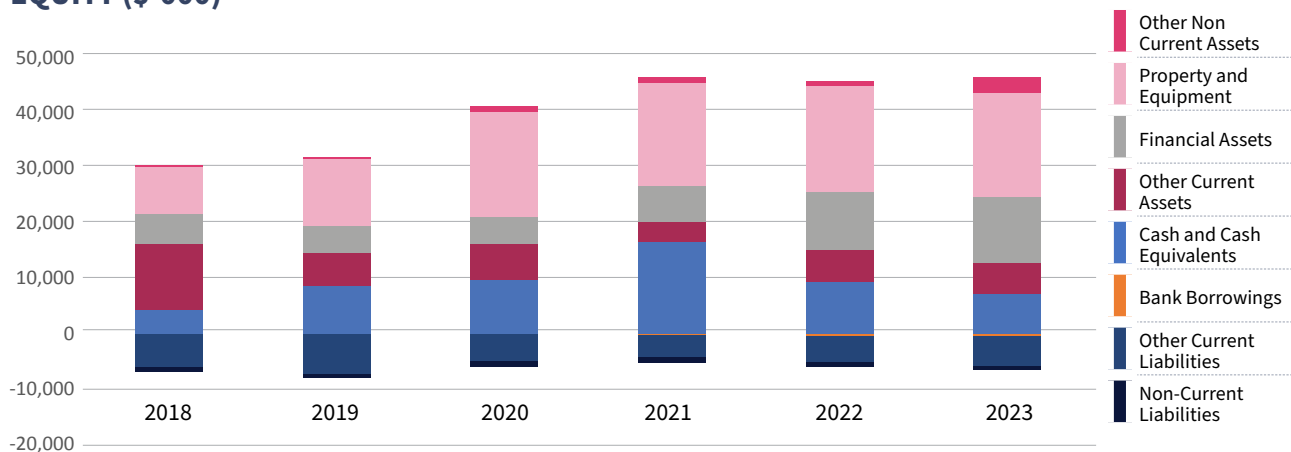
WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT



	\$'000
Commercial Services	40,978
Corporate Services	7,540
Business Development	1,658
Member Services	1,153
TOTAL	51,329

These are extracted from the full set of Consolidated Financials. Full sets of Consolidated Financials are available on request.

EQUITY (\$'000)



As disclosed in the financial statements, the organisation's group net assets have increased by 0.5% to \$40.4M (2022: \$40.2M). The total comprehensive income for the financial year, as shown in the Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, was \$181K (2022: loss of \$1,359K).

Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
REVENUE	51,012	46,977
EXPENSES		
Salaries and on-costs	44,364	40,771
Staff related costs	819	1,099
Client support costs	433	156
Depreciation and amortisation	1,079	1,086
Information technology & telecommunication expenses	1,670	1,309
Motor vehicle expenses	175	144
Occupancy costs	680	656
Unrealised loss on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss, net	-	670
Other expenses	2,058	1,979
TOTAL EXPENSES	51,278	47,870
NET OPERATING LOSS	(266)	(893)
FINANCE COSTS	(51)	(41)
OTHER INCOME		
Capital grants received	47	29
Share of profit from associates, net of tax	6	-
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	53	29
NET LOSS	(264)	(905)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
ITEMS THAT MAY BE RECLASSIFIED TO PROFIT OR LOSS		
Changes in the fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	5	(9)
ITEMS THAT WILL NOT BE RECLASSIFIED TO PROFIT OR LOSS		
Changes in the fair value of equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	440	(445)
TOTAL OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS)	445	(454)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/LOSS	181	(1,359)

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	7,385	9,535
Trade and other receivables	1,620	2,200
Term deposits	1,784	1,947
Other current assets	2,169	1,746
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	12,958	15,428
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	5,339	4,602
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	6,619	5,807
Investment in associates	1,014	-
Property and equipment	18,901	19,311
Right-of-use assets (leases)	223	308
Intangible assets	1,672	531
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	33,768	30,559
TOTAL ASSETS	46,726	45,987
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	2,115	1,547
Unexpended grant funds	1,333	1,307
Lease liabilities	81	85
Provisions	1,940	1,676
Bank loan - Insurance premium finance facility	207	382
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	5,676	4,997
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Lease liabilities	190	271
Other liabilities	5	6
Provisions	499	538
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	694	815
TOTAL LIABILITIES	6,370	5,812
NET ASSETS	40,356	40,175
MEMBERS' FUNDS (EQUITY)		
Other reserves	1,043	598
Accumulated surplus	39,313	39,577
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS (EQUITY)	40,356	40,175

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$'000	\$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from government and customers	51,230	47,923
Payments to employees and suppliers	(50,489)	(47,296)
GST received/(paid), net	55	(87)
Cash generated from operating activities	796	540
Interest received	166	16
Interest paid	(51)	(41)
NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	911	515
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds on sale of financial assets, net	3,270	1,261
Investment in associates	(1,007)	-
Acquisition of financial assets	(3,903)	(7,963)
Payments of property and equipment	(428)	(1,442)
Payments of intangible assets	(1,336)	(87)
NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(3,404)	(8,231)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Principal elements of lease payments	(85)	(86)
Dividends and realised gains	603	370
(Repayments) / proceeds from borrowings	(175)	242
NET CASH INFLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES	343	526
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(2,150)	(7,190)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	9,535	16,725
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS END OF YEAR	7,385	9,535

Our thanks

Our funding partners

Australian Government – Department of Health
Australian Government – Department of Social Services
Australian Government – Department of Veterans Affairs
Motor Accident Insurance Commission
Queensland Government
– Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services

Queensland Government
– Department of Justice and Attorney General (Gambling
Community Benefit Fund)

Queensland Government
– Growing Workforce Participation Fund

Queensland Government
– Department of Transport and Main Roads

Our key partners and supporters

Bionics Queensland
Bowerbird Industries
Brisbane City Council
Followmont
GIVIT
Griffith University
Menzies Health Institute Queensland
Moreton Bay Region Industry and Tourism
Polio Australia
Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service (Queensland Health)
QUT
Seqwater
Sunshine Coast Council
The Hopkins Centre
Visit Mandurah
Visit Rockingham
Visit Sunshine Coast
Youngcare

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