



Annual Report 2017

Singing our praises

“Lovely name. Chorus is an important musical piece that ties it all together. Talks to the important part of what we all do. Employees, customers, volunteers.”

“It represents what we are as a group.”

“I thought it would be good to start fresh with a new name and that’s exactly what’s been done. It’s got its own name. Chorus is very ‘together’”

“Took three or four seconds for the name to grow on me.”

“I got goose bumps. Love the coming together. Clean. New, different, fresh.”

“I’m singing its praises already. Makes me want to sing.”

“Important for people with disabilities like me – makes it easier to answer the name. ‘Good morning, Chorus.’ And then you’re done.”

“Fantastic. So excited.”



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Introducing Chorus

The Chorus manifesto

Once upon a time, three wise organisations looked to the future and decided to merge. While many in the “community care” space had sought to build defences in response to change, the leaders and governors of our forebears embraced it. They wanted to challenge the status quo, to change the game. **Different. Stronger. Together.**

The foundations were laid many years ago, and since then our people have gone into homes and communities to provide support to those in need. Some are paid for this work, and some are not; but each and every individual can make a big difference to the lives of others.

Our people – we, all of us – care deeply about our communities and their members. We resist the pressure to treat people simply as numbers; of doing the job but ignoring the context.

We don’t “deliver care” or “provide help”. Nor do we talk about “our clients” – we don’t own anybody. Rather, we bring an egalitarian, good-humoured, human touch into the homes and lives of people.

Different. Stronger. Together.

We understand people don’t exist in a vacuum: they live in communities – cities, towns and neighbourhoods, amid networks, clubs, friends and families. While many observe a loss of community spirit, we see an abundance of goodwill and available resources every day. But sometimes – indeed, often – these go untapped. Our approach, then, is to get results by being creative and courageous in connecting people.

Different. Stronger. Together.

When people meet us – customers, families, regulators, stakeholders – they notice something different. What is going on here? It’s easy to articulate, harder to do:

- We treat every person with respect;
- We connect communities;
- We make things work.

These attributes are as fundamental to our mission as they are rare in the sector more broadly.

We are Chorus.
Different. Stronger. Together.

Purpose and values

Chorus is a Western Australian for-purpose organisation providing creative and courageous services and support for people in various stages of life – seniors, those living with disability or in mental health recovery. We offer a range of opportunities for people to volunteer their time, reconnecting individuals with their communities. Our purpose is to enable people to live the life they choose, within connected, caring communities.

Our name was inspired by the notion that a group of people with a unified purpose can work together to produce wonderful results. As such, we walk as equals.

Our core values speak to what we believe and define the way we work every day.

Put simply, we do what works by being:

responsive
practical
empowering
respectful

providing

creative
and courageous
services

for people

- Later in life
- Living with disability
- In mental health recovery



Communities

reconnecting

individuals

Together we can make a difference.
We can be stronger.

different.stronger.together



How we became **Chorus**

Chorus is an incorporated company limited by guarantee, formed through the merger of three not-for-profit groups – Community First, Volunteer Task Force and Care Options. Our amalgamation had its genesis in February 2016 when discussions led to the creation of the management entity Community Care Force Ltd (trading as Chorus Australia). The Boards endorsed the proposal the following September, with members of the three entities committing to the merger in October 2016. The following month, staff, volunteers, customers and the community were informed, with the merger being completed on 24 January, 2017.

Of our original groups, Community First was established in 1984 to support seniors, people living with disability, on the mental health recovery journey or unemployed, with offices in Subiaco, Fremantle, Palmyra, Bull Creek, Rockingham, Mandurah, Bunbury and Albany.

Our oldest constituent member, Volunteer Task Force, formed in 1970 to support seniors and people living with disability, with offices in Carlisle, Wanneroo, North Perth, Midland and Safety Bay.

Care Options, meanwhile, came together in 1997 to support seniors and people living with disability, with offices in Rockingham, Mandurah, Port Kennedy and Meadow Springs.

Message from the Chair



“Merging with momentum”

I am pleased to present to you the first Annual Report of Chorus. Our new organisation brings together Community First, Volunteer Task Force and Care Options, creating a bigger, stronger, Western Australian-based operation. This merger of equals has certainly been a historic event.

Our journey to this point has been one of merging with momentum. The Chairs and Boards of the three organisations started talking in February 2016, committing to merge in October. We made public our decision the following month. The new Board had its first meeting in January 2017, with our new CEO starting in February. The new executive team stepped into their roles in May, making great headway in the merger of our activities by year-end and setting in place solid plans for continuing the process through the next financial year.

Culture and history have been central throughout this merger. Cultural due diligence was completed beforehand with each organisation’s culture and history having been respected and further enhanced as part of the merger. Our new brand celebrates what is important in each of the previous brands, while remaining contemporary and relevant.

It is reassuring and gratifying to know that in June 2017, seven months after the announcement of the merger, our people felt happy and supported at work, and well informed about the changes.¹

Throughout the merger process, I am pleased to report, we have maintained good levels of operational stability and performance. Customers have not experienced any disruption to services as a result of the merger, and our overall financial result has been in line with pre-merger expectations.

The Board recognises the need to maintain a balance between stability and innovation through the years ahead. In coming together, Chorus is looking to leverage the best of each of our three forebears while creating new opportunities for the provision of services.

The enthusiasm and commitment of our previous three Boards, as well as their operational leadership, and their teams more

generally, enabled us to form Chorus. On behalf of the current Board, I thank each person who contributed to the merger. Without their shared vision, willingness and dedication, we would not have arrived at this point.

To my fellow Chorus Board Directors, I offer my thanks and appreciation for your untiring and devoted work in helping to shepherd this merger. To the CEO, leadership team, staff and volunteers who have worked steadily over the past 12 months in supporting our community while working on significant merger and transition activities, I thank you.

We have taken the first steps in forming Chorus. Now, we are seizing the opportunities before us. As we innovate and grow, connecting more communities, we will be different, stronger, together.

Dr Moira Watson
Chair, Chorus

¹ MergeCo culture pulse check survey

Board members

Moira Watson

PhD, FAICD, FAIM

Chair of the Board

Independent, Non-executive Director and member of the Nomination, Remuneration and Governance Committee



Moira is the Associate Dean Quality Standards and Accreditation and the MBA Director in the School of Business at Murdoch University. She was formerly the Managing Director of Chutzpa, a company concentrated on constructing corporate capability through a focus on determining factors for purpose, practice and performance. Moira is an experienced company Chair and Director serving on a range of Boards with a background as a senior leader in ASX-listed companies and as an executive director in government.

Moira is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, and holds a PhD in business management. She is a Councillor with HBF, as well as Chair of Diabetes WA, a Director of Diabetes Australia and a Director of Diabetes Australia Research Limited. She is also an appointed member on a range of government advisory groups.

Ray Glickman

M. App. Soc. Stud, Bus, Psych & Phil,
FAICD, FAIM

Deputy Chair of the Board
Independent, Non-Executive Director and member of the Nomination, Remuneration and Governance Committee



Ray was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the City of Fremantle in 1995 before joining Amana Living as CEO in 2004. He left Amana Living in 2016 to focus on writing, board directorships and establishing his management consultancy business, From Left Field.

Ray is currently a Member of the Statutory Planning Committee of the WA Planning Commission, a Director of writingWA, a Director of United Way WA, a Director of Ocean Gardens Inc and Chair of Tiller Cycles Pty Ltd. Formerly, he was a Director and Deputy President of Aged and Community Services Australia, Chairman of Aged and Community Services WA, President of the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of Therapy Focus Inc and Chairman of the West Australian Maritime Museum Advisory Board.

Craig Adam

BSc (Hons), FCCA

Independent,
Non-Executive Director
and Chair of the Finance Committee



Craig is a finance executive with more than 20 years of experience gained from a broad range of roles in Australia and the UK where he has led finance teams through strategic change, international expansion and corporate restructuring. He is experienced in the financial services, media, retail and production sectors. Roles have included extensive involvement with sales, brands and marketing, product development, operations and IT, in addition to core finance disciplines. A Fellow of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants since 2007, Craig is currently Chief Financial Officer for the Retail Division of Bankwest.

Ian Brunette

Independent, Non-Executive Director and member of the Finance Committee

Ian is an IT leader with 20 years' diverse strategic and hands-on experience in the technology, finance and health insurance industries, both in the UK and Australia. He has demonstrated strengths in setting strategy, leading cohesive teams and in the delivery of value. Ian has led large teams and been accountable for managing extensive budgets. Through top-flight analytical skills, he delivers organisational benefits, using both operating model and IT solutions to provide business outcomes.

Ian is currently Chief Infrastructure and Operations Manager for HBF.

**Tony Cull**

MBA, CPA, GAICD, B.Bus

Independent, Non-Executive Director. Member of the Finance Committee and the Audit, Risk, Compliance and OHS Committee

Tony has significant international commercial experience, having held senior operational and finance roles with Tate and Lyle PLC, a UK multinational corporation, and through directorships with Tate and Lyle Group subsidiaries and related companies. He has 17 years' experience as a Director. He currently holds non-executive directorships of The Geraldton Fishermen's Co-Operative Ltd, Ngarluma Ngurra Ltd, and the Collaborative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products.

**Barbara Powell**

B. Soc Wk (Dist)

Independent, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Nomination, Remuneration and Governance Committee

Barbara has more than 25 years' experience in community services and development management in local government, and currently holds the position of Director, City Engagement at the City of Kwinana.



Geoff Brayshaw

FICA, FICD

Independent, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit, Risk, Compliance and OHS Committee



Geoff practised accounting for 35 years and on his retirement from practice in 2005 was an Audit and Assurance partner and former managing partner of the Perth practice of BDO. He was National President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 2002 and awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in 2007. Geoff is a Director and chair of the Audit Committee of Poseidon Nickel Limited, and is a former director of Fortescue Metals Group Ltd (where he also chaired the audit committee) and of AVEA Insurance Ltd.

He was, until recently, a member of the Companies Auditors and Liquidators Disciplinary Board, and formerly a Board member of the Small Business Development Corporation in Perth. He has also chaired a trustee Aboriginal corporation, Gumala Investments Pty Ltd.

Stuart Flynn

BA (Hons), M.Bus

Independent, Non-Executive Director and member of the Audit, Risk, Compliance and OHS committee and the Nomination, Remuneration and Governance Committee



Stuart currently operates a successful corporate and communications consultancy. From 1998 to 2013, he was Chief Executive Officer of Southern Cross Care (Western Australia) Inc and oversaw the construction and redevelopment of aged care facilities, retirement villages, day centres and affordable housing projects. Previously, he held CEO positions in the not-for-profit sector and was a senior executive in the public sector, having been a regional director of health in two Australian states. He also worked for 10 years as a tenured academic at UK and Australian universities.

Stuart has also held a number of board and committee positions in the mental health, aged care and health and criminal justice sectors. He is currently a member of the Western Australian Mental Health Review Board. In 2001, he was awarded the Prime Minister's Centenary Medal for outstanding service to providers and customers in the mental health sector and, in 1988, was the Australia-Britain Society's Bicentennial Menzies Fellow, reviewing UK services to victims of crime.

Message from the CEO



I believe we are all in the business of making a difference, and we'll be stronger if we do it together. With this in mind, I welcome you to the combined Annual Report for Chorus.

Over the last year we have had a purpose: to navigate a changing community care landscape and lay foundations for a new type of organisation. We have drawn on the complementary strengths and styles of our three existing companies to create something much bigger than the sum of our parts.

We have worked hard and achieved outstanding results. I would like to acknowledge our extraordinary staff and volunteers who have continued to deliver exceptional services during our merger. You have been courageous and creative in the face of change, rolling up your sleeves and getting on with the job. I have loved spending time at our locations and meeting you.

I would also like to thank our former CEOs who had a vision that the community would be well served by a bigger, stronger organisation.

I am grateful for their vision and leadership

during an exciting and challenging time.

At Chorus, we see ourselves as part of the community and our commitment to customers is woven into the fabric of our culture. We provide for people later in life, those living with a disability and in mental health recovery. We do so with purpose, integrity and a smile.

Chorus has a combined 100-year history of supporting the WA community and I am proud to present this combined '100th birthday' edition of our Annual Report. I am confident that, as one, we will meet the challenges ahead and continue to deliver the outstanding community care that is showcased in this Report.

Thank you everyone for your good work.

Dan Minchin



Working **alongside** people later in **life**

How we have **helped**

Our range of services help people live independently at home and in their community. We adopt a creative and courageous approach that connects and supports people.

Support in the home

Chorus services include assistance with everyday tasks, more complex packages of support, and assistance with housing.

Assessment service

We have worked hard to build a strong, constructive culture, achieving great results, with our culture pulse check score growing from 5 out of 10 to 7 out of 10 in just six months. The team developed a structure that included coaching and support and achieved the highest monthly performance in three years with more than 1688 hours of assessment services. Our South Australia Regional Assessment Service exceeded key assessment targets for 10 of the 12 months this year.



Case study

Through the support of our Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged program, Pamela now has a place to call home.

The program supports older people who are homeless, or living in insecure housing and at risk of becoming homeless.

“I’ve had constant positive support,” said Pamela. “The team work really well together; they all follow up as promised, and they keep me and each other informed.”

Since transferring her Home Care Package to Chorus, Pamela has moved into a retirement living complex with much to offer – there is bingo and a hairdresser, a cafeteria has opened up, art and craft activities are available, as are the library and gymnasium.

“I am secure and safe,” Pamela rejoiced. “Nobody can come into the building without swiping in. I couldn’t be happier.”

Relocating to Perth from Adelaide has been difficult for Pamela. But the future looks bright now.

“I wouldn’t go back,” she insisted. “I am here now. This is home.”

Highlights

Gardening Australia

ABC TV program Gardening Australia filmed Chorus staff and volunteers with ABC presenter Josh Byrne for 'A Day in the Life of a VTF Gardener'. The episode screened during National Volunteer Week on 13 May to an Australia-wide audience.

Chorus customer Elaine was delighted to host the ABC Crew, along with our gardening team, in her garden.

"The well-oiled machine of the Gardening Australia crew and, of course, your own terrific "Busy Bee" gardening team was amazing to watch as the day unfolded," she said.

It was a pleasure to have them all at my home and a thrill for me to have the shoot taking place in my beloved garden! It seemed to me that they, too, enjoyed the day. It certainly was great fun being part of the show."

"The well-oiled machine of the Gardening Australia crew"



"It was a pleasure to have them all at my home"



Water Wise gardening

Water Wise Gardening has come a long way since its inception in 2013. By reducing lawn area, replanting with native plants, improving soils and mulching, Chorus creates gardens that are low-maintenance, require less water and save money.

This financial year we planted 1935 native Water Wise plants, retained and reused 63 native plants already in customer gardens and spread more than 1039m³ of mulch. We spent 3270 hours undertaking Water Wise remodeling on 268 customer gardens.

Healthy meals service

Our meals service provides healthy food options, as well as regular contact with staff and volunteers, including a wellness check. A highlight on the calendar was National Meals on Wheels Day, when Board member Tony Cull was able to join us for morning tea. The service unveiled new packaging for meals in June 2017.

"This financial year we planted 1935 native Water Wise plants."



W garden for children

In recent weeks the so-called dead space in the yard has been transformed into a thriving, waterwise garden filled with native plants. Bright Futures manager Andrea Harold said the centre had long been looking for ways to improve the area. "We asked a few landscape businesses, received some quotes and decided that we wanted to go down a sustainable pathway with our new garden," she said. "Volunteer Task Force has a lot of experience with waterwise planting and we organised for the area to get a makeover in October. "We love the final product and the kids can enjoy learning about sustainability while we look after the plants."

Bright Futures Day Care

Chorus created a Water Wise garden so that young children could spend time in a sustainable and interactive garden space. We planted five advanced trees, 140 native plants and bush tucker, constructed three wicking beds and five self-watering barrels with fruit trees in a 200m² space.

Awards

At Chorus, we work with purpose and integrity, and with a smile. This year, our good work in the community was recognised through various awards and nominations.

Excellence in Care Awards

The aged care peak body, Aged and Community Services Australia, held their annual 'Excellence in Care' Awards in June 2017 with each of our three merging organisations featuring as finalists:

Community First support team member Meg Sharp was nominated for the Employee Award; Volunteer Task Force's Water Wise Program was a finalist in the Innovation Award; and Care Options was in the running for the Employer of Choice Award for their Culture Optimisation Program.

Human Synergistics Australia Awards

We also received a national Cultural Transformation Award at the 2017 Human Synergistics Australia conference, further highlighting the achievements of the Care Options Culture Optimisation Program.

Belmont Small Business Awards

In 2016, Chorus won the Belmont Small Business Marketing Award. We were also inducted into the Belmont Small Business Hall of Fame in recognition of our service to the community, which acknowledged our award-winning track record. In response to this history of support, we happily sponsored one of the 2017 awards as a means of giving back to the community.

Landscape Industries Awards of Excellence

We are proud to be the first for-purpose organisation in Western Australia to be accepted as a member of the Landscape Industries Association of Western Australia (LIAWA). Our gardening teams are all certified under the LIAWA Water Wise Landscaper and Water Wise Garden Design programs, operating as approved Water Corporation Water Wise Specialists. This year, we won a LIAWA award in the 'Sustainable Residential' category for our services to the WA community.



Perth Garden Festival

Our Water Wise Program entry for “Imagining Possibilities” won the Best Garden award in 2017. We were competing against top gardeners and landscapers, so were delighted to be successful as a for-purpose community organisation.

How we responded to community need

Seniors in Albany

In 2016, we began delivering in-home and community services for seniors in the Albany area and have met 69 per cent of operational targets in the first year.

Mandurah transport

We started offering a direct transport service and shopping bus in the Mandurah area in 2016 to meet customer need.

Supporting people with chronic health conditions

The Care Complete project started in 2015, trialing a two-year Integrated Care program for people with multiple chronic health conditions. A co-ordinated and managed approach was expected to improve wellbeing and reduce preventable hospital admissions. Chorus was able to offer support by helping people get to important medical appointments and ensure their garden was safe and accessible.



Chorus customers

Chorus works with purpose. We roll up our sleeves and get the job done so people can live the life they choose.

Services snapshot

We surveyed more than 1800 customers to find out which services people valued, including perceived value-for-money and what further service they might desire. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. Our customer base was highly satisfied: customers said their needs were being met, were intent on remaining with Chorus and were willing to recommend our service to others.

100 years of independence

Joan wanted to reach 100 and remain living independently at home. This amazing milestone was reached on 7 April, 2017.

Chorus Gardener Frank has helped Joan with her garden since 2012, and it has given her great pleasure to have it neat and well maintained. Joan and her daughter, Roselyn, appreciate the wonderful gardening support that has helped Joan live independently at home with purpose.

Testimonials

"When your independence to get out and about is taken from you, you don't want to rely on family all the time. The outings have us excited and give us something to get out of bed for. We have a lovely group in the Northern Suburbs that are regulars and we do worry about each other if someone can't come. If we go on a van trip we all have a good chat and laugh. I think the main thing with the outings is that there's no rush, and we can all walk at our own pace with people of our own age group."

"A big thanks to the volunteers that come to help – the crew on the phones, and Ray, our driver. There is always a lot of banter between us, and we have a good laugh."

"The service we have been afforded... has been exceptional. We were informed of availability through a friend involved in aged care and our doctor. We were assessed by Brooke, who has been fantastic in obtaining services for us. We are very grateful for all assistance given. It has made our lives much easier."

"I'm writing this letter to acknowledge and commend Brooke for all her help in regards to my assistance at home. Brooke has liaised with the OT [Occupational Therapist]... on my behalf and has secured home gardening and lawn mowing with a bunch of wonderful people."

Working alongside people with disability

Highlights

Finding purposeful employment

Chorus supports people who are unemployed as a result of disability by connecting to education and work experience opportunities. The intention is to help people move into long-term employment, and to provide support for up to a year once they are in work.

Our performance has resulted in Chorus receiving an invitation to continue providing employment services for another five years.

Ability Arts centre

This innovative program cultivates confidence, creativity and independence for people living with disability. Participants have the opportunity to showcase their works in professional exhibitions and perform at community events. This year, we were nominated for “Excellence in Personal and Community Support” at the 2017 Disability Support Awards.

Case study

“My employment consultant, Nicola, has been a major part of me getting back on my feet. At my first appointment with her over a year ago, I was in such a bad way that I couldn’t even speak. Nicola helped me by being patient and she never pushed while I was in a vulnerable place. She was softly spoken, listened and liaised with my case manager to help me access counselling services. Nicola encouraged me to get out and meet people to help with my social isolation.

Nicola helped me to prepare for looking for work by updating my resume, creating a Seek account, and putting the apps for Seek and other helpful information websites on my phone.

At one appointment with Nicola, she approached a manager... who was visiting the office. She explained my

situation as needing something to do to build my confidence and asked the manager if there was some volunteer work I could do for her team. Within a couple of days I had an interview with a team leader and was beginning the process of becoming a volunteer. The good news was that after a couple of weeks I was lucky enough to secure temporary paid employment... and this helped me with my self-confidence.

Recently, while doing some volunteer work in the local Salvo’s store, a gentleman came in and was telling me about his new job. It sounded really interesting, so I asked him who it was with. I then went away and called the employer myself and asked if there were still positions vacant and they invited me in for an interview. I got the job and I am starting work again soon. I would not have had the confidence to do this if it wasn’t for the support and encouragement I received.” – Julie

Theatre and arts highlights

Chorus customers made a significant cultural contribution to the community.

Chorus actors

Poles Apart Theatre Company performed *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* at the Fringe Festival in Mandurah in February 2017.

"I joined the drama group on a Tuesday after I went to the Chorus show *The Journey* at the Stretch Arts Festival. After the show, I spoke to Tennille and she helped me to get it all organised so I could join the group. I catch the train from Rockingham and someone picks me up from the train station. Over the past few years we have done so many workshops with artists in lots of different forms of theatre. We have done comedy, contemporary dance, improvisation and script writing. I feel that my acting and dancing has really improved since I started coming to Ability Arts.

Tennille helped me apply for a one-week professional development at the Perth International Arts Festival in 2016 and I was accepted. It was amazing. I took what I learned there and worked it into our latest development of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* – our show

Case study

"My friend told me about Chorus, so I went and had a look, and I got excited because I could see they do great things with their people. I love it here as the staff are very nice and I have made new friends.

I do pottery and I can do things on my own now. I've entered into the "As We Art" exhibition for the last two years, and my first entry sold straight away. It was a family of elephants. The one I did last year was a family of penguins and that sold too, and I got the money from it. I'm good at pottery. I do hard things that the others can't. I really like pottery, as I like trying out new things, and I learnt how to use the wheel. I make lots of stuff for The Corner Shop and it sells, so we can buy more things for the centre.

I also do drama and have been in lots of shows at the Performing Arts Centre. I don't even get scared to go on stage, I just do it. I wouldn't have had the opportunity to go on stage if it wasn't for Chorus.



The people at Chorus encouraged me to volunteer, so now I volunteer at the Stretch Festival, the Crab Fest and the Children's Festival for the City of Mandurah." – Hayley



that we performed at The Fringe Festival in February 2017. We learned about movement on stage and how that movement can also tell a story even if no-one is speaking. In that week, I also met lots of other artists with disabilities and got to work alongside them. It was such a good experience. I've also worked with Allirio Zavarce, who came from South Australia to work with us for two weeks to help us with our show.

Chorus has really helped me with my career. Without them, I wouldn't have those opportunities, which is why I wanted to help nominate the whole Ability Arts team for an award." – Tina

Stretch Arts Festival

Pottery artists worked over several months with Chorus staff member Elli and entered their ceramic piece *The Rough and the Smooth* in Mandurah's Stretch Arts Festival Drift Art Award. The entry drew an honourable mention to receive a \$500 cash prize.

"Our drama group, with the assistance of our drama teacher, Kellee Aberg, came up with and put together the performance *The Journey - Walking in my shoes*. The performance was an emotional experience, as it focused on the lives of people with disabilities, and we used drama combined with music to deliver our message.

As a group, we came together and discussed topics related to people with disabilities, and shared some of our stories. The show

enforced that people with disabilities had the same dreams and hopes for their lives as people without disabilities but required additional support to achieve our goals. The response we got back from the audience was outstanding as we received a standing ovation at one performance.

Special thanks to Jeff and Justine for assisting with the organising and composing the music for the show. Thanks also to Kellee for organising and directing the show. The show was that much of a success we have been invited to return and perform it again at next year's Stretch Festival."

– Fiona

Wearable Arts Mandurah

Ability Arts participants have been part of this bold and experimental exhibition for five years. This year, they entered their sixth Wearable Art entry in The Common Threads Wearable Art Competition 2017. Enda Semangko – Goddess of War and Fertility passed through pre-selection where the judges receive four photographs of the garment and the artist statement.

"It doesn't matter how you are feeling, if you're sick or injured, up or down, you are still part of the group. I'm happy. I'm learning new things, and it's nice to be helped when I was down and out and in the cold. I'm happy being part of Chorus through the ups and the downs. It's nice to have someone to be there, to talk to, and to get advice from and guide me to think of myself." – Mellissa



Jabula Farm Regional Art Award

Kristi entered her ceramic sculpture in the “As We Are” Art Award for artists living with an intellectual disability, winning the Jabula Farm Regional Art Award category.

How we responded to community need

We planted the seed and it grew

Customers told us they wanted to engage in activities that provided opportunities for connection and social engagement. We responded by creating a vision for a warm and welcoming shared space where people could participate in interactive experiences, casually popping in to meet others and making friends while developing life skills and having fun. And so began the Kwinana Activity Centre.

“We have formed our own community.” – Keith

Initially, three activities were introduced based on customer feedback. From its humble beginnings, the Centre has now evolved with 40 participants engaging in 10 regular activities. On offer are cooking classes, art groups, walking groups, a men’s club, outdoor fitness activities, a recreational fishing club, music jam sessions and an all-abilities water sports club, with new activities constantly on the boil.

Partnerships

Edwina joined a weekly pottery class in Mandurah with her support worker Belinda. Edwina has low vision and is unable to drive.

“The support I’ve received from Chorus has opened up my life. I feel that, although I can’t drive, I can still do things,” she said.

“When you are forced into retirement your identity goes and you have to reinvent yourself. Joining the pottery class has opened up a world I didn’t know existed outside of work. I don’t feel so isolated.”

Chorus also supported Edwina so that she could attend a six-week Living Well course through Visibility WA.

“When I initially made my connection with Visibility WA it gave me hope that there is life after losing your sight.”

Edwina values the support she has received from the partnership between Chorus and Visibility WA.

“You don’t know what is out there until you start looking.”



Working **alongside** people on the mental health **recovery** journey

Customer surveys revealed that more than 85 per cent of people receiving Chorus mental health services were “better able to deal with the issues they received help with.”

Partners in **recovery**

Chorus supported more than 200 people throughout the year, partnering and mentoring on the journey to recovery. “Psychological distress” was the main prompt for 68 per cent of people accessing the service. Mood (affective disorders) was the most prevalent mental illness, followed by schizophrenia, schizotypal and delusional disorders.

Chorus staff are supporting customers to test their eligibility for the NDIS. A successful training program was commissioned and delivered to staff, customers and their carers. Feedback indicated the training was very well received and has helped demystify the NDIS and how to access it.

“I just wanted to say a big THANK YOU for what you have done for me and the difference you have made in my life.

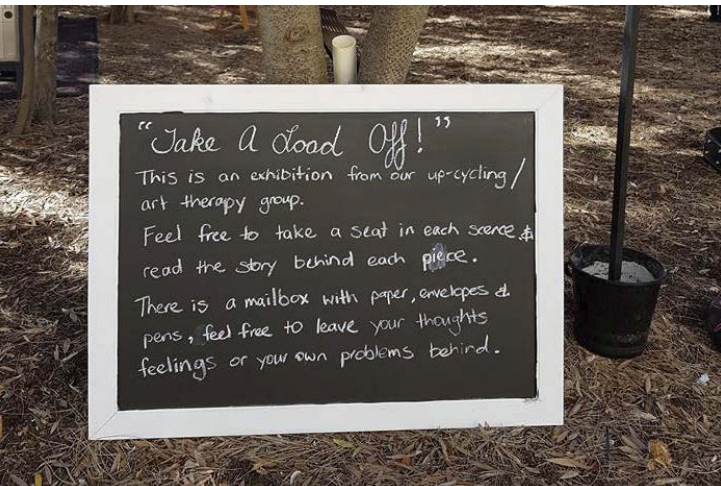
Since I met you, you showed me how to reconnect with people in the community and personal friends. When we talked, we came up with some crazy/some good ways to start occupying my life, like dancing, yoga and Pilates – I think it was the first time in three years that I began smiling again.

When I mentioned trying something new, you took the reins and found out everything that I needed to know, on some occasions making a booking for me. You worked side-by-side with me, slowly, until I could finally see the end of the tunnel and the depression and, at last, signs of the old Chrissy came shining through.

You have made a huge difference to my life. I am now reconnected with the community and most of all I am happy. Sure, there are days when I get up feeling a little bit low, so I use the tools you gave me to get over them.”

– Excerpt of letter from Chrissy to Chorus staff member Theresa





Collaborating for success

Chorus has been providing services for the Individualised Community Living Strategy since 2011. During this time, hours of service have steadily decreased as customers became more independent. This is a wonderful result for a service that aims to build collaboration between key people – those needing support, their families, and others involved in their lives – to improve relationships and physical health and wellbeing.

Highlights

Mandurah upcycles

In 2016, the Mandurah Mental Health Services team created an upcycling group to help customers learn about sustainability, develop new skills and overcome social isolation. The idea came from a customer who upcycled furniture from verge collections.

The group participated in the Mandurah City Stretch Arts Festival in May 2017 with their project “Take a Load Off”, which aimed to upcycle 20 to 30 chairs for use by visitors during the Festival. Each chair was designed and produced by customers with a mental health diagnosis and told a powerful story about the individual’s personal journey of mental health recovery, and the impact on their lives.

Testimonials

“I was treated and valued as a person. I felt I was heard and taken notice of... I had a voice.” – Kristen

“Chorus has been amazing, from helping me with my bad days to encouraging me to join in with peer groups and helping me focus on and create my goals. Even if I haven’t been happy with something, my issues were addressed and I was reassured in a timely manner.” – Kandie

“Michelle is so knowledgeable and understanding. She knows exactly where to get help for me. She is above and beyond anybody that has ever supported me. I would not have come so far had it not been for Michelle’s help. She is totally non-judgmental of me.” – Stacy

“It has helped me get out of the house and going to the upcycling group has helped me meet new people. Upcycling has also helped me focus and keep my mind occupied.”

– Geoffrey

The project offered Festival visitors a seat with the option to share their own stories by off-loading and leaving it behind in the form of a written message. These stories could be posted into a box near the seats.

“Take a Load Off” was an amazing success. The process of incorporating stories into the chairs was a great form of therapy in the recovery process. Participants were extremely proud of what they had created and received positive feedback from the community about their artworks, increasing their self-esteem and self-worth.

How we responded to community need

Mandurah youth group

In early 2017, our Mandurah-based mental health team decided to run a Youth Group for young customers accessing mental health services so they could engage and interact with peers in a fun and enjoyable environment.

Since joining the group, young adults who were previously socially isolated, have formed new friendships – the smiles on their faces say

it all! They have enjoyed a beach barbecue, bowling, rock climbing and the Tunnels Tour at Fremantle Prison.

Mental health scholarships

As part of our person-centred recovery program, Chorus provided scholarships in the form of financial support for people enrolled in a Community Services course.

New programs

Chorus supported the WA community with funding from the Western Australia Primary Health Alliance. This has resulted in some positive outcomes, including:

- The establishment of Mental Health Carers Advisory Groups in country WA;
- A suicide prevention program using a wellness recovery action planning program, proven to reduce psychological distress;
- A Wellness for Men Pilot Project in the Bunbury region;
- A Wellness for Women Pilot Project in the Albany region; and
- The establishment of a Community of Practice for those on the mental health recovery journey, or who are dealing with alcohol and other drug issues, in the Great Southern region.



Working and volunteering with **Chorus**



The magic of **volunteering**

Chorus offers volunteer roles across the Perth metropolitan area as well as in Bunbury and Albany. From gardening to office roles, assisting with our healthy meals program, day centre activities and transport positions, we can find a purposeful role for most people. Our volunteers have told us they love seeing the smiles on customers' faces, that they feel a part of the team and are delighted to be able to support people to remain independent in their homes.

Chorus volunteers have benefited from the growth and development opportunities arising from the merger of the three original entities. As one strong organisation, we have offered the same high level of volunteering to a much wider community.

WA State Volunteering Conference

Chorus presented at the state Volunteering Conference on the success of its partnership with Alzheimer's WA. Our presentation – "When volunteering is so much more than giving time" – focused on people with younger onset dementia who, with a support person, give their time to volunteer with Chorus in meaningful activities.



Dementia partnerships project

The dementia partnerships project is open to organisations to work together with Alzheimer's WA to enhance the lives of people living with dementia in the community.

Supported by the WA Department of Health, the project aims to build capacity within the community sector to help providers improve the experience and enrich the lives of people living with dementia who access community support services. Chorus is partnering with

Testimonials

What do you think about volunteering?

"Loving it."

"Best thing I've ever done."

"Helping people is amazing."

"It's keeping my mind and body active."

"It gives me a purpose to get up in the morning; a sense of self-worth."

Alzheimer's WA dementia experts, forming a leadership team who are working with a dementia consultant to identify key areas that will build on our ability to respond to the needs of people living with dementia.

Chorus supervisor Lis Bremmer completed the Certificate IV in Dementia Practice as part of our involvement with the Dementia Partnership Project.

City of Joondalup Volunteer of the Year

Sara volunteers with the gardening team at our Wanneroo depot and was acknowledged for her community service this year.

"Beldon resident Sara Munagorri (71) won the senior citizen award for over three decades of volunteering.

"Sara has spent many years assisting the gardening team at the Wanneroo depot of Volunteer Task Force, visiting the homes of elderly and disabled people in our community, doing various gardening chores," [City of Joondalup Mayor] Pickard said.

"She certainly comes with a solid background in the field, having worked as a gardener with the Education Department for near on four decades.

"She puts as much effort into other people's gardens as she would her own and walks the dogs of elderly people in her church who are no longer fit enough."

– Community News, January, 2017

Wanneroo Volunteering Open Day

The Chorus-run event promoting volunteering for the Wanneroo area drew a number of new volunteers who signed up on the day. City of Wanneroo Mayor Tracey Roberts and Mr Paul Terrance Miles, MLA attended.

Where we've been

We love getting out and about, and throughout the year attended a number of community events. We promoted our services and talked about volunteering opportunities at more than 40 events, including fairs, festivals, career and lifestyle expos, "Have a Go" Days and conferences.





How we **responded** to community need

We have partnered with a range of organisations this year. We appreciate the support of those corporate and school groups who have helped us with a range of services, including garden makeovers and meal deliveries.

Volunteer Recognition

Chorus has a very strong volunteering culture and we celebrate volunteer milestones by presenting long-serving volunteers with 5, 10 and 15-year Service Awards.

Throughout the year, we have acknowledged our volunteers with morning teas (such as Harmony Day), lunches (including Christmas and Christmas-in-July), barbecues (including Safety Week) and at events during International Volunteer Day and Volunteer Week.

Volunteers Sandy and Helen attended International Volunteer Day at Government House with 28 others from Chorus.

"I would have to say the energy has been absolutely marvellous, and the company. So it's been an absolutely awesome day."

- Helen

"The whole venue is just spectacular, and to be here with the people that I work with has been a joy. Absolute joy." - Sandy

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers for your contribution to the community.

Whistle while we **work**

As well as seeing 700-plus volunteers each year, Chorus employs more than 400 people in a range of roles, all with the purpose of helping people live the life they choose.

What people like about Chorus

"I feel very privileged to share my days with customers whose life stories never cease to amaze me. To be able to see firsthand the benefits of getting out and about socially, and the difference it makes in a person's life, is a great joy." - Linda

"I love being part of Chorus, an organisation really thinking about the kind of organisation it wants to be, and giving all of its people the opportunity to have a say in what that is."

- Jane

"Chorus puts people first. I feel respected and empowered, and love coming to work." - Judith



Testimonials

What does volunteering mean to you?

"I feel very privileged in my life and am at a time I'd like to give back in some way. Being a 'people person', the visiting program suits me perfectly and gives me a lot of satisfaction."

– Linley

"I volunteer with visiting the elderly as it is so nice to sit and have a cup of tea or go for a walk and have a nice chat about family and what we have both been up to since we last saw each other. We are both crafty ladies and so it is nice to get ideas on different things to make. We both enjoy each other's company."

– Cathie

"In my first experience at doing volunteer work, I have learned so many different but relevant skills, including interacting with people. I have been mentored and supported throughout my volunteering experience. Volunteering has been an invaluable introduction into the real-world workplace and for that I am very grateful."

– Veronica

"I love helping out the customers; I get something different every day to do. I get to work with a nice crew and have made friends with a lot of people." – Trevor

"I enjoy the company and helping people out. I like the friendly atmosphere. Volunteering has given me confidence in myself and recognising that there are good people in the world wanting to help others. I have found it very educational." – Paul

"I have a client who I often take shopping to the bank or the post office. She loves stopping for a coffee and chat, and enjoys the interaction. She enjoys it so much that often coffee time takes precedence over her other tasks. I enjoy the fact that I am helping someone and that I am being useful. The customers are always so grateful for our time and assistance and we get a strong sense of their appreciation." – Kay

"I enjoy driving and also sharing stories with people. Volunteering gives me a great opportunity to do both of these in my retirement." – Phil

Connecting communities

Over the past two years, 43 students from the Australian Islamic College in Kewdale have volunteered through our student program. During this time, we have put together an all-female gardening team and supported them to learn about Water Wise and gardening in general.

Chorus has a great relationship with the school – from its interaction with parents to conducting enrolments and inductions at the school.

Volunteering has been shown to be of benefit not only to the community but also to the students, and Chorus acknowledges the endeavor of the students in making a difference in their community.

“It has been rewarding being able to give back to the community,” said Mohammed Badal, the college’s Football Academy Health and Physical Education Co-ordinator.

“Volunteering has changed the students’ attitudes.

“The students at the College have been grateful to help people with disabilities. They are eager to continue volunteering and ask when they can go out volunteering again.



“Volunteering has also given the students new skills, many of whom have not used gardening equipment before.”

“Our students are able to go out in groups with their peers and get to learn new skills in a safe environment. The tasks are meaningful and many of our students have gone on to working in Horticulture... The hours spent... go towards their Certificate I in Agrifoods (Horticulture), which ends up being a great outcome for our students.” – Jacqui, Warnbro Community High School

Focus on culture

Chorus has a diverse and vibrant culture, derived from the more than 1000 people who work and volunteer with us across WA. Culture is central to the way we do things at Chorus. People are central to everything, and our values guide our behaviour and our approach to the work we do.

The Chorus way is to:

- Get everyone involved;
- Put customers first;
- Stand behind the values of being Responsive, Practical, Empowering and Respectful.

Our Values

Our core values - responsive, practical, empowering and respectful - communicate what we believe as an organisation and define the way we work together every day, with our staff, volunteers and the people we provide support to.

responsive

We roll up our sleeves and get on with the job. With resolution, with humility and a smile. Always listening, always learning, always improving.

practical

Sometimes it's the little things that make the biggest difference. The practical stuff, doing whatever it takes to solve the problem.

empowering

We believe that our people and the people we provide support to are equal and are the key to unlocking endless possibilities and boundless opportunities.

respectful

Always. With each other and with the communities we work in.



Culture is a journey

The award-winning journey started at Care Options has continued since the three-way merger that created Chorus, and we are already using our findings to build a new kind of community organisation that enables people to live the life they choose.

Three factors lie at the core of our culture: our determination to engage everyone and to develop leaders, along with the work of our Culture Optimisation Groups (COGs).

An initiative of the latest gathering was to hold workshops with more than 200 people across Chorus. The group also developed an idea to create a cultural artefact for Chorus: a three-panel mosaic celebrating the coming together of our three organisations. The artwork was created by hundreds of our people over four months. Many of the mosaic tiles were handmade by customers in our Ability Arts program.

Five more initiatives strengthening our culture have been set in motion at Chorus. We hosted culture information sessions for people from Community First and Volunteer Task Force, who had not previously been exposed to the same culture work. Leaders completed an accredited self-assessment tool, receiving feedback on their own leadership style. Coaching sessions to help teams work together constructively have begun at both the executive and group level. Also, a culture pulse check survey was conducted in June 2017, affirming Chorus's valuable work in this area while offering feedback for improvement.

The key to effective cultural change is to involve the whole organisation and to respect everyone as equal contributors. For Chorus, organisational culture is about the journey not the destination, and we look forward to the road ahead.



Culture pulse check

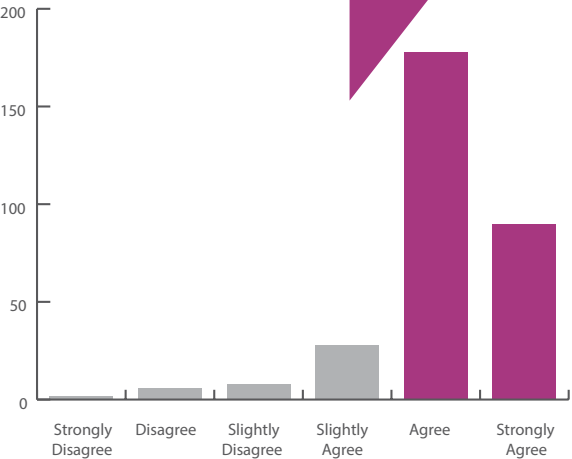
Prior to merging, we reviewed the organisational culture of Community First, Volunteer Task Force and Care Options. We found a strong cultural alignment between the three organisations. Six months after the merger (in June 2017) we conducted a culture pulse check survey to understand how staff and volunteers were feeling.

7.72 Current Workplace Culture (Average)



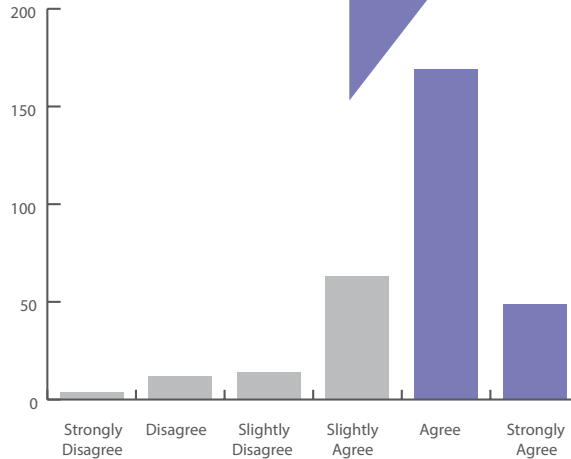
“ I feel happy at work ”

267 people either agreed or strongly agreed



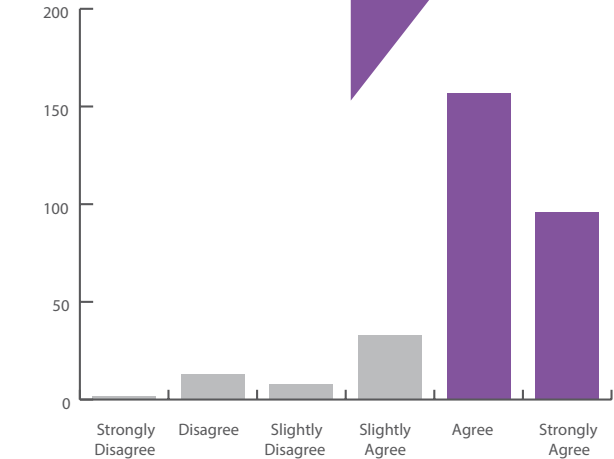
“ I feel informed about the changes that are going on at work ”

220 people either agreed or strongly agreed

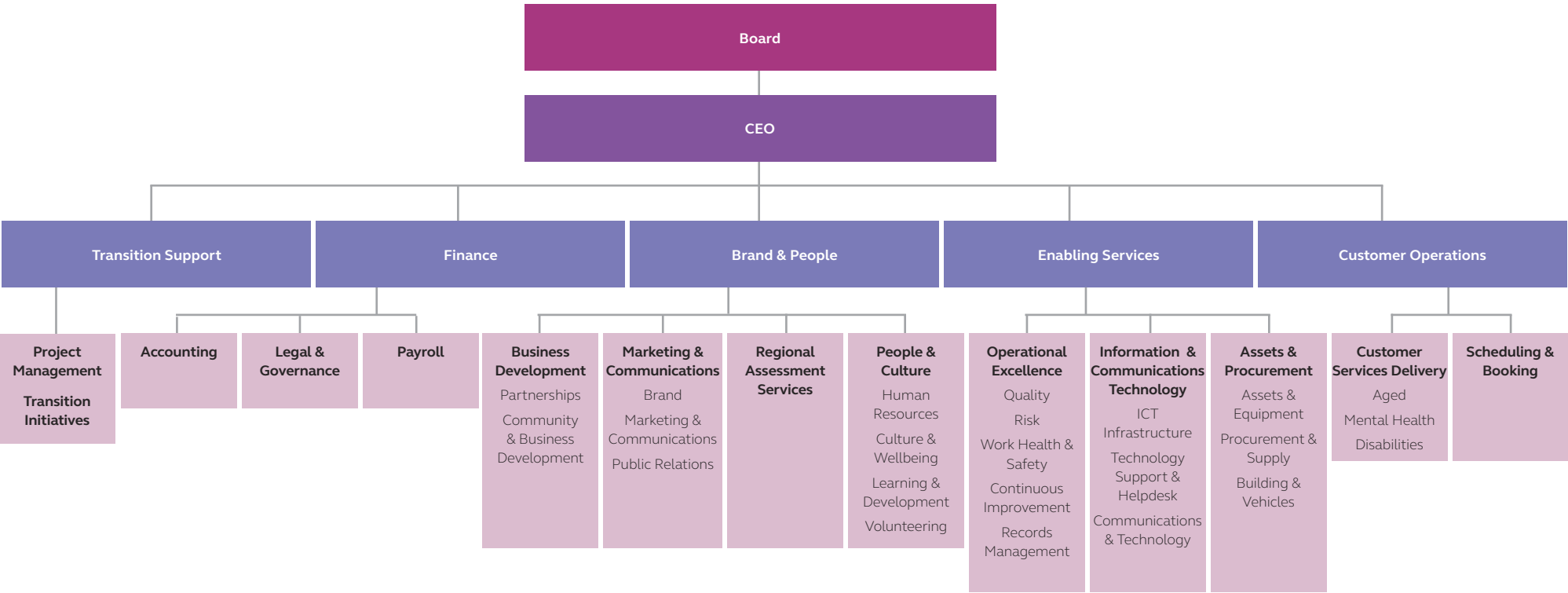


“ I feel supported if I have a problem at work ”

256 people either agreed or strongly agreed



Chorus structure



Chorus executive team

Dan Minchin

BA (Hons), Post Grad; Advanced Management Program, MBA, GAICD

Chief Executive Officer

Dan joined as our inaugural CEO in February 2017. As a community leader and social entrepreneur, Dan is gratified by the opportunity to steward the creation of Chorus, building on the legacies of Volunteer Task Force, Community First International and Care Options.

Previously, Dan was Silver Chain's Head of Strategy and General Manager, East Coast. In this role, he led Silver Chain's expansion beyond WA to become a national innovator in community healthcare. He has also worked as a strategy advisor and consultant to some of WA's best-known organisations.

He is a member of the Council of Methodist Ladies College, and has previously been Chairman of Primary Care WA and the WA Music Industry Association.

Dan has been fortunate to complement his practical experience with study at Harvard Business School, Melbourne Business School, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the University of WA.



"We are doing something special at Chorus. I'm optimistic that by joining forces and embracing market change we will enable customers to live the life they choose, in turn showing a real impact on the community at large."

Nigel Jones

B Comm; Commerce, Accounting, CPA, GAICD

Head of Finance

Nigel has executive responsibility for governance, company secretarial and finance. An experienced director and senior executive, he has a successful track record in mining, health, insurance and the financial services sector. With a background of senior roles spanning the spectrum of start-ups through to billion-dollar companies, he brings broad experience in leadership, strategy and change management, with expertise in finance, governance, risk management, IT and corporate services. His previous positions include Group Corporate Executive and Company Secretary for HBF and CEO of HealthGuard Health Benefits Fund, along with a range of senior financial roles in resource companies in Australia and overseas.



"I'm passionate about helping people and organisations to achieve their potential. Working with Chorus ticks all my boxes – personal, career and community contribution."

Louise Forster

BA (Hons) Anthropology, MBA, GAICD

Head of Brand and People

Louise joined Chorus (then Care Options) in June 2016 as the Executive Manager Business Development.

With the Chorus merger in full flight, she was soon appointed to the role of Head of Brand and People in May 2017. Her current role oversees People and Culture, Marketing and Communications, Business Development and Assessment Services with the purpose of providing strategic, tactical and collaborative leadership to align our Chorus brand promise, people and culture. Louise brings extensive experience as a senior manager within the community services sector. She has worked at many leading organisations and has led projects in innovative areas such as consumer-directed care, co-design, experiential learning and contemporary media (including audio, digital and social media and film).

"I want to make a positive impact on the future of our community and in this role at Chorus I can do that."



Megan Enders

BA (First Class Honours) Organisational Communication, MBA

Head of Enabling Services

Megan has worked as a management consultant and senior executive for more than 20 years in a diverse range of sectors including mining, gas and electricity. She joined the organisation in February, initially as a consultant advising on people matters as part of creating the new organisational structure. Since May, in her role as Head of Enabling Services, Megan has had responsibility for the management of ICT service provision, as well as for assets, safety, risk, compliance, quality, records and continuous improvement for the three original entities and for Chorus. Megan brings experience in leadership, strategy, people and change management across a range of functions including IT, safety, human resources, procurement and asset management. She has led teams of 200 to 600 staff through significant change programs to enhance performance and improve the bottom line. This experience is complemented by a four-year project she led establishing



a 'mini-MBA' for leaders of disadvantaged schools on behalf of an education not-for-profit group, as well as time spent as a senior policy advisor to the Federal Government and a Federal Minister.

"I'm keen to help create a new organisation that works collaboratively with people to help them live the lives they want to live."

Jamin Hirte

B Comm, Finance Management Program, Executive MBA

Head of Customer Operations

Jamin Hirte is an experienced executive with expertise in customer experience, digital, operations, financial analysis, strategic planning and business intelligence. Jamin is responsible for Chorus customer service delivery and supporting operations. Prior to joining Chorus in August, he spent 14 years at RAC, where he held senior management and executive roles in Sales, Roadside Assistance, Motoring, Digital and Information.



His major achievements at RAC include optimising Roadside Assistance, building a needs-based sales culture, and establishing the first start-up accelerator in Western Australia. For Roadside Assistance, he utilised existing insight to better manage member expectations, leading to improved net promoter score, a 10 per cent reduction in expenses and greater workforce optimisation. Prior to RAC, Jamin worked in Investment Banking and Retail Banking, where his area of speciality was pricing and financial analysis.

"By bringing a customer-centred approach to service design, we support the people of Chorus to make an even deeper impact for customers and their communities."

Financial summary

These illustrative consolidated financial reports are unaudited and have been created by consolidating the audited financial reports for the three individual entities (Care Options, Community First and Volunteer Task Force). Although the merger was legally completed on 24 January 2017, the illustrative consolidated financial reports reflect the full year financial performance of the Chorus group.

Illustrative Condensed Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

Year Ending 30 June 2017

	2017
Revenue	\$29,981,503
Expenses	
Staff Costs	\$20,096,590
Other Operational Costs	\$9,812,834
Total Expenses	\$29,909,424
Surplus/(Loss)	\$72,079
Other Comprehensive loss	(\$88)
Total Comprehensive Income	\$71,991

Illustrative Condensed Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

Year Ending 30 June 2017

	2017
Assets	
Current Assets	\$16,997,724
Non-current Assets	\$6,788,386
Total Assets	\$23,786,110
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	\$6,428,654
Non-current Liabilities	\$2,367,191
Total Liabilities	\$8,795,845
Net Assets	\$14,990,265
Equity & Reserves	\$14,990,265

contact **us**

If we all work together the possibilities are endless. Contact us to find out how we can work with you.

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