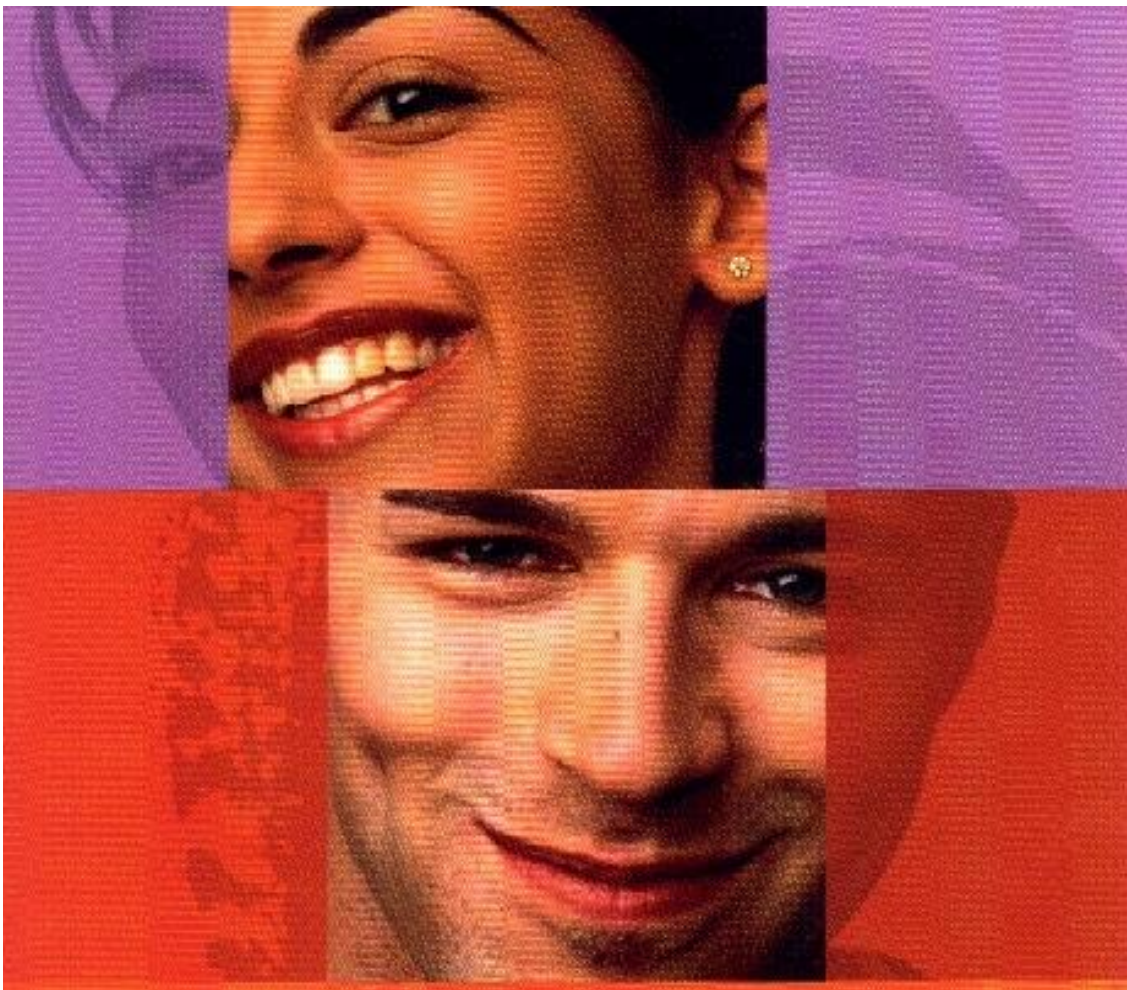


ECHO

ANNUAL REPORT

2016|2017



ECHO AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED ABN 38676218344| 26 YEARS



Vision

ECHO is committed to the attainment of an **inclusive** and diverse society responsive to the social and economic needs of the wider community. Fundamental to this response is a commitment to respect, dignity and freedom of expression and the ability to collaborate with external generic services to promote greater participation.

Mission

ECHO will **empower** people in situations of helplessness, marginalized or devalued to access life options and pathways reflective of their skills, abilities and choice.

Values

Equity
Compassion
Hope
Opportunity

ECHO presents as an effective and accountable organization. We value teamwork and acknowledge the importance of person centered service provision and the achievement of individual outcomes.



Chairperson's Report

On behalf of the ECHO Board of Management, it is my privilege to present the 2017 Annual Report of the activities of the Association.

I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land. I would also like to pay my respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to all Indigenous Australians.

The last 12 months has seen ECHO survive and flourish in a quest for funding and relevance, ensuring our capacity to deliver innovative and insightful employment services to the local community.

The Board is keen to foster and develop ideas and practical steps to increase both financial reach and disability participation and choice. Under the excellent leadership of our CEO Michael Locke, our teams have successfully harnessed such challenges translating to the day-to-day operations of complex contracts.

Although monitoring financial reports and developing good governance are fundamental to ECHO, it is the individual stories of job seeker success that inspire our Board.

I thank my fellow Board members; Alan Colling, Pam Leopold, Claudia Davey, Kelvin Blair, Mike Jeffares and Christine McKenna for their continued diligence and enthusiasm. I also extend a warm thank you to all members and volunteers who support us with their important contribution.

As the Association looks forward to the future, ECHO will evolve in ways not previously imagined. It is this history of community giving that ensures a service of measurable value and integrity.

David Keating
Chairperson

CEO Report

The importance in being earnest permeates comfortably at the core of a community association such as ECHO, but it is the financial and contractual nuances of contemporary service delivery that ultimately determine business success.

This response to the demands of existing and new government contracts is pivotal to our future. It requires planning, policy development, increased project cohesion and importantly financial competence. The highly skilled ECHO senior management team have strived to develop mature processes and a multi-skilled approach.

Our experience and success in the disability employment sector will again see ECHO guarantee the continuation of servicing. Service models are dynamic and fluid with changes to DES immanent. ECHO must embrace a person centred model and continue to evolve services with greater choice, flexibility and responsiveness.

Our alliance with the AMES Consortium has been a demanding journey as we attempt to balance individuality with the collective partnerships required for success in jobactive. Intuitive alliances with a range of community stakeholders and industry partners has become essential where many new lessons are learnt and success is hard won.

Organizational longevity and stability of a local community group necessitates effective relationships between executive and directors. I thank ECHO

Chair, David Keating and the Board of Management members Alan Colling, Claudia Davey, Pam Leopold, Mike Jeffares, Kelvin Blair and Christine McKenna for their support and good governance.

I am mindful of the poverty and hardship that unemployment brings many in our community. ECHO commits itself to explore better ways to deliver real employment and training options to our local participants.

The year ahead with the continued rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (**NDIS**) will be a game changer for many people with disability. We sit on the cusp of generational and social change as we look to increase our footprint in this disability space.

Michael Locke
Chief Executive Officer

Operations Report

This year has been another busy and productive one within Employment Services. The end of financial year has come around so quickly and ECHO's year has been successful, challenging and progressive as we continually evolve and survive in this ever-changing environment.

ECHO is operating over 11 sites holding contracts in Disability Employment Services, Disability Management Services and jobactive.

The contracts require motivated, skilled and resilient staff. Recruitment can be challenging at times, and in 2017 I warmly welcomed the return of Claudia Davey to HR bringing with her experience and knowledge in Industrial Relations and HR practices.

ECHO employs over 60 staff and I would like to welcome all new employees to our organisation and wish them well as they embark on a rewarding and challenging career. I would also like to congratulate staff who have been promoted internally to higher roles within ECHO.

Disability Employment Services

This year has seen ECHO Disability Employment Services and Disability Management Services successfully maintain its 3 star ratings across all ESA's. This has secured all existing business and has placed us in healthy position to tender and secure further business in the next financial year. The outcome of all our hard work will be known in late January 2018.

The ECHO DES Team comprises of Area Manager Kay Bevan who oversees three Employment Services Areas – Bayside, Maroondah and Monash. Bayside team has 9 staff covering Box Hill, Oakleigh and Dandenong sites. Branch Managers – Kathy Anastasopoulos, Paula Goldsack and Elsa Lopez and staff have provided employment assistance to over 2650 job seekers since the beginning of the contract in March 2013, 908 job starts have taken place, 687 clients have achieved 13-week outcomes, and 564 have achieved 26-week outcomes.

The Maroondah team have 10 staff providing services to Wantirna, Ringwood and Lilydale sites. Branch Manager's - Mandy Marsh, Kate McConnell and Kim Ly. Employment Assistance in both ESS and DMS has been provided to over 2271 clients since the beginning of the contracts, 966 job starts have taken place, 749 clients have achieved 13-week outcomes, and 594 clients have achieved 26-week outcomes.

The ECHO Monash team have five staff covering Narre Warren, Cranbourne and Pakenham sites. Branch Manager Elsa Lopez and staff have provided employment assistance to over 796 clients since the beginning of the contract, 312 job starts have taken place, 214 clients have achieved 13-week outcomes, and 173 clients have achieved 26-week outcomes.

ECHO has a team of highly skilled Industry Relationship Officers continually networking with local industry from large corporates to small local businesses providing assistance and

employment advice on expanding and recruiting staff to meet increased business demands. Industry Relationship Officers secure vacancies for both DES and jobactive contracts.

Job seekers and workers are given a high level of support and assistance to achieve employment goals. ECHO develops a detailed Job Plan providing the job seekers with an evolving document assisting with career direction, job search, marketing and liaising with employers, job clubs, ongoing support and training once employment is obtained. A range of work experience, work trials, internal and external training options and career guidance is available; assistance is offered for additional needs in training, course costs and purchase of work related items.

Our Annual Audit by SAI Global took place in November this year and all DES sites successfully gained ongoing certification, verifying a high level of service delivery.

jobactive

Echo delivers jobactive services in the Inner Metropolitan, North East and South East Employment Regions. jobactive services are provided to over 1300 jobseekers across seven sites, Narre Warren, Cranbourne, Windsor, Greensborough, Wantirna, Lilydale, and Ringwood. This year ECHO has promoted and provided Employment Services through Find a Job Day, Jobs Fairs, and Job Expo's. The Job Expo held in March for both DES and jobactive was attended by over 200 job seekers, 13 employers and secured ongoing employment for 41 participants.

Since July 1, 2015, Echo has had in excess of 3,800 Anchored Placements across the Inner Metropolitan, North Eastern and the South East Employment Regions, which has made a great impact in what the Government has designated as Priority Employment Regions.

ECHO has continued to deliver its high

quality labour hire services to the City of Casey with 150 temp staff.

ECHO attended and participated in a number of events including the Wilson security Indigenous Pilot – Wilson Security, The Indigenous Employment and Careers Expo – Victorian Indigenous Programs Network, The Mornington Peninsula Shire Internship opportunities – Mornington Peninsula Shire/DoE and the Indigenous multicultural wall mural unveiling – SkillsPlus.

Compliance

The Compliance team have worked hard coordinating and preparing for internal and external audits, staff training, , ISO accreditation 2015, securing QAF accreditation and working to securing stage 2 of the IRAP accreditation. The team ensures policies and procedure are formalised, reviewed and maintained making a significant contribution to ECHO's success and ensuring ongoing contractual compliance.

Administration

Admin has worked hard supporting all offices and keeping them operational with IT support and many essential tasks that keep the projects flowing. Thank you for all your continued support.

Management and Staff

Special thanks to our CEO Michael Locke who always inspires us to think outside the square. I wish to thank all Management, and staff for all your hard work and continued dedication in making ECHO the provider of choice.

Bev McNamara
Operations Manager

Echo Australia Inc
Independent Auditor's Report
to the Members of
Echo Australia Inc

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Echo Australia Inc (the association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017 and the income and expenditure statement, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of Echo Australia Inc is responsible for the preparation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic.) and the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Echo Australia Inc as at 30 June 2017 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic).

**Echo Australia Inc
Independent Auditor's Report
to the Members of
Echo Australia Inc**

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Echo Australia Inc to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.



Fawcett & Company

Dated this 21st day of November 2017