



Living Learning Growing

WARRAH
LIVING LEARNING GROWING

Half-Yearly Report
July – December 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

Warrah stands on the ancestral lands of the Dharug people and we acknowledge that on this land they taught their families their beliefs, knowledge and culture. Just as the Dharug people nurtured their community with love and support, similarly at Warrah we are committed to partnering with our community. With deep respect and gratitude, we pledge to continue this tradition by providing compassionate care and support to all who choose us as their partners on their journey.

About *Warrah*

Warrah is dedicated to fostering a positive influence on the lives of individuals with disabilities, empowering them to thrive in a nurturing and inclusive environment. Our core values of Community, Respect, Integrity, and Excellence serve as the cornerstone of all our endeavours at Warrah.



Chair Welcome



On behalf of the board, welcome to our 2023 Interim report covering the period 1 July to 31 December 2023. It was decided at our last AGM that Warrah would be moving its “official” financial year end to December from June to align ourselves with the requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). Going forward this will have the dual advantage of reducing some of the reporting burden on our finance team as well as making it more feasible for us to access school grant funding should the opportunity arise.

However, it also means that this being the first year, it will be an 18-month reporting period and our next financial year end will be December 2024 (as opposed to June 2024). We wanted to provide an interim update which we hope you will enjoy and, in lieu of an AGM, we will shortly be inviting members to attend a Q&A session with the Board and the executive management team, where we sincerely look forward to catching up.

Whilst it is only six months since our last update, there is still much to highlight, and we hope that all the insights into life at Warrah that are included are well received. We know that most of those reading this report will already have some connection with Warrah. We know that you, like us, will appreciate the smiles on the faces in the photos included in the following pages. Indeed, it is this hands-on day-to-day direct feedback received by our team that reassures us that we are “doing the right thing” as an organisation. Ironically this is not always

obvious as we try to navigate the ebbs and flows of government policy, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and some startling recommendations from a Royal Commission that failed to capture the nuanced needs of many in our own community.

For those with no voice it is all our responsibility to ensure that their aspirations can be achieved. We will continue to advocate on their behalf and strongly encourage you to do the same.

One easy way to express your support for our services is to become a member of Warrah. Membership is straightforward and not onerous and will give you an opportunity to have your say into the future. This is your organisation, and we would certainly love to have your “formal” support. Please do get in touch if you are interested.

Thanks as always to all our employees, partners, volunteers, participants, and community members for their invaluable contributions in making Warrah the exceptional organisation it is today, and please enjoy the report!

Steve Malin
Chair

Warrah Board of Directors

Thank you to the Board who give their time voluntarily and work together to guide the strategic direction and leadership of Warrah.

Steve Malin
Chair
Joined 2018

Annet van Kesteren
Deputy Chair
Joined 2019

Annette Waterson
Joined 2017

John Williams
Joined 2017

Ross King
Joined 2012-2023

David Ghannoum
Joined 2017

Kerry Taylor
Joined 2023

Samuel O'dell
Joined 2022-2023

CEO Update



As we reflect on the past 6 months of 2023, we recognise the significant impact of two very important documents on our community: The findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review.

Two of the **Royal Commission's** recommendations in particular have created significant apprehension in our community. 1) the phased elimination of group homes and 2) the potential integration of students from special schools into mainstream education and thereby closure of these schools.

To gain deeper insights and foster dialogue, we welcomed esteemed guests Laurie Leigh, CEO of National Disability Services (NDS), and Debbie Jagers NSW State Manager, NDS to Warrah. Their visit provided an invaluable opportunity for direct engagement with our community, allowing them to hear firsthand the concerns and perspectives surrounding these recommendations. Families passionately shared their stories, highlighting the indispensable role that services like ours play in their lives, providing not only essential care but also a sense of belonging and security.

Through these conversations, we were able to express the crucial role of group homes, particularly those housing at least five residents with intellectual disabilities, who experience challenges in caring for themselves, communicating, and behaviour management. These homes, when managed effectively like we do at Warrah, offer a familial environment that instils confidence in families regarding the future care of their loved ones. Similarly, families of students in our Specialist School emphasised the unique support and environment it provides, enabling significant growth in their children's abilities and confidence contrasting with the challenges experienced by those who had previously attended mainstream schools.

The **NDIS review** outlined key priorities for reform. Three of these priorities are very relevant to our community at Warrah. As an organisation deeply invested in the well-being of our community, we have actively engaged in discussions and advocated for measures that align with our values and objectives.

These NDIS priorities include Pricing Reform, aimed at implementing best practices to enhance value for money and promote quality, potentially through the establishment of an Independent Pricing Authority. The Quality and Safeguarding Framework seeks to develop minimum standards for all supports while enhancing oversight for those posing higher safeguarding risks, with provisions to recognise providers committed to continuous improvement. The Home and Living Supports priority entails co-designing a long-term pathway with participants and providers to address current issues and facilitate the transition to suitable living environments over the next 5–15 years.

As we navigate through these dynamic times, it is imperative for us as a community to remain engaged and proactive in shaping the future of disability services. Together, we must advocate for the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the co-design of reforms, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are prioritised.

Additionally, in continuation of our commitment to the safety and sustainability of our campus, we continue to focus on bushfire preparedness. Collaborating closely with Fire and Rescue NSW, Rural Fire Services, National Parks and Wildlife, Sydney Water, and Hornsby Council we are diligently working towards restoring an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) and regulatory requirements to enhance the resilience of our campus and its infrastructure.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in our community.

Warmest regards,

Delia Gray
Chief Executive Officer

Disability Support Services

Warrah's Disability Support Services provides a Supported Independent Living (SIL) program with 24/7 support for community living, with purpose-built or modified homes and Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) options. In-home support promotes independent living, and short-term accommodation offers a break and skill-building. The Support Coordination team assists with NDIS plans ensuring choice and control.



▲ Warrah residents enjoy the beauty of Sydney, one adventure at a time



13

13 Supported Independent Living homes



54

54 residents ranging in age from 18-78



2,600

2,600 hours of in-home support



46

46 individuals use our Support Coordination



▲ ◀ Family moments and celebrations create cherished memories amidst laughter and love



▲ ▶ Achieving goals and making new friends



Social and Community Programs

Warrah's Social and Community programs are dedicated to empowering people with disabilities to thrive through our adaptable and personalised activities. Our activities are tailored to align with each person's interests and aspirations. Our overarching objective is to create an environment where people can foster self-determination, creativity, and contribution.



5 diverse Social and Community programs available



87 participants, youngest participant is 18



Micro-enterprises sold 291 candles and mowed 36 lawns

▼ **Crafting Connections:** From woodwork to art classes, our community involvement ensures everyone's interests are acknowledged and honoured.



▲ **Empowering Wellness:** From hitting exercise goals to enjoying fun activities, our programs ensure everyone finds joy and success in staying active.

◀ **Exploring Independence:** 'Discovery' fosters growth and independence through travel training, TAFE attendance, and community engagement, empowering young people to thrive.

Biodynamic Farm, Organic Farm Shop and Artisan Bakery

Warrah Biodynamic Farm, Organic Farm Shop, and Artisan Bakery are the pillars of our social enterprises, providing meaningful engagement where Warrah participants and Specialist School students contribute to the operations in each of our enterprises, creating meaningful opportunities for engagement. Proceeds directly support our disability services. Warrah Farm supplies top-quality biodynamic produce to the Farm Shop, fostering a deep connection to sustainable agriculture. Open six days a week, the Farm Shop proudly showcases our certified biodynamic products and artisan bakery goods. Our Bakery specialises in artisan sourdough bread, offering eight organic bread varieties.

Warrah's Biodynamic Farm tours provide an immersive journey into sustainable organic agriculture, attendees learn the secrets of nurturing delicious, sustainable food while supporting pollinators and fostering healthy soil.

Every week, Warrah participants and Specialist School students assist Borja the Baker in crafting more than 100 loaves of sourdough bread. Through the Artisan Bakery program, they cultivate new skills while exploring potential pathways to employment.

Our committed Warrah participants and school students take great pride in meticulously preparing and delivering our fresh, seasonal produce boxes to collection points scattered across Sydney's Lower and Upper North Shore.

The Farm Shop offers invaluable work experience and community engagement opportunities to Warrah participants and students. They attend weekly, assisting with packing produce displays, handling cash, and engaging with customers.



Sydney's only certified Biodynamic Farm



\$75K grant received to enhance the Bakery and Farm Shop training program



Fresh organic and biodynamic produce sold at the Farm Shop



Fresh organic produce delivered to 6 different collection locations



Warrah Specialist School

Warrah Specialist School provides personalised education for Kindergarten to Year 12 students with moderate to severe intellectual disability and complex learning needs. Following Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy, the school provides an innovative outdoor curriculum in a natural and idyllic environment conducive to student growth. The tailored approach emphasises Individual Learning Plans, integrating key learning areas with hands-on activities like arts, music, life skills, weaving, baking, woodworking and farming to nurture holistic development.



Individualised Steiner based curriculum for lifelong skills



Positive wellbeing at work - 78% | 13% above benchmark*



Highly engaged staff - 84% | 4% above benchmark*



Outdoor learning, nature connection, holistic education

*XREF Engagement Survey - Independent Schools benchmark



School Camp

Warrah Specialist School students enjoyed an overnight adventure camp. For most, it was their first school camping experience ever. This has been a dream at Warrah for a very long time, and we were so pleased to bring it to reality.

Daily Bushwalks

Each day our students start the day with a tranquil bush walk. This routine aids in their transition from home to school, while promoting a deeper connection with nature that supports self-regulation.

Work Experience

Work experience is a crucial cornerstone for our senior students, both on and offsite. Our objective is to equip students with skills that will serve them well beyond their time in school.

Early Primary

Our Early Primary class engages in play, textiles, painting, literacy, music, and math. They also enjoy cooking with garden-fresh ingredients and celebrating together many memorable milestones from first words to physical achievements.

Byron Bay

We were delighted to host students from Cape Byron Steiner School for a week-long camp at Warrah. Throughout their stay, they assisted both at the school and on the farm. Such visits are beneficial for everyone involved and provide a secure environment for community access and integration.

Book Week

Our school staff and students had so much fun dressing up as beloved book characters and parading their creativity. It is a great way to celebrate literacy and the wonder of books!

Online Safety

Senior Constables from the local police station dropped by our school to present an eye-opening presentation on online safety. Presentations such as this leave our students better equipped with skills to navigate the digital world.

Community Engagement Festivals and Events

Festivals are integral to Steiner philosophy, fostering connections with nature, cultural traditions, and spiritual growth. At Warrah, we honour seasonal and Christian festivals, celebrating humanity and nurturing wonder. Each festival imbues our community with an appreciation for nature's cycles, fostering belonging and reverence for life's rhythms.

► **Spring Picnic** – A joyful gathering uniting our community in celebration of spring's arrival. With songs, music, and games, we embraced diversity and showcased the spirit of togetherness.



▲ **Fairs and Expos** – Warrah shining bright at local fairs and expos, showcasing our vibrant community to all.

◀ **Awareness Days** – Warrah embraces awareness days, ranging from World Smile Day, International Day of People with Disability, Diwali, and World Gratitude Day.

◀ **Father's Day** – recognising all of the remarkable dads, grandfathers, uncles, and male role models of Warrah, whose love and guidance shape our lives.



Our People



Sandra

From Support Worker to Senior Manager Sandra recently celebrated her 20-year anniversary at Warrah. It's been an incredible journey and our long-term residents and staff are truly grateful to have had Sandra walking beside them.



Lauren

Having joined Warrah Specialist School in 2020, Lauren has progressed from Teaching Assistant to a NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) qualified Teacher. It's been wonderful to support Lauren during her university studies and we are thankful for the contribution she makes to the school and our students every day.



Winner of Xref's Best Workplace Award 2023



Staff numbers grew from 264 to 274



27% full time, 45% part time, and 28% casual staff



Hosted 5 Tertiary work placement students



Engaged 83 volunteers who donated >500 hours



Luke & Tammy

It's exciting to see Luke and Tammy, our tertiary work placement students, join our staff community at the end of their courses. They not only bring qualifications, but also new perspectives, energy and passion to our team.



Farm Volunteers

Warrah's Farm volunteering program is growing in popularity and each fortnight Steve welcomes new and returning volunteers to the farm. Warrah benefits greatly from their contributions, while our volunteers enjoy the physical, social and mental wellbeing from engaging in farm activities.



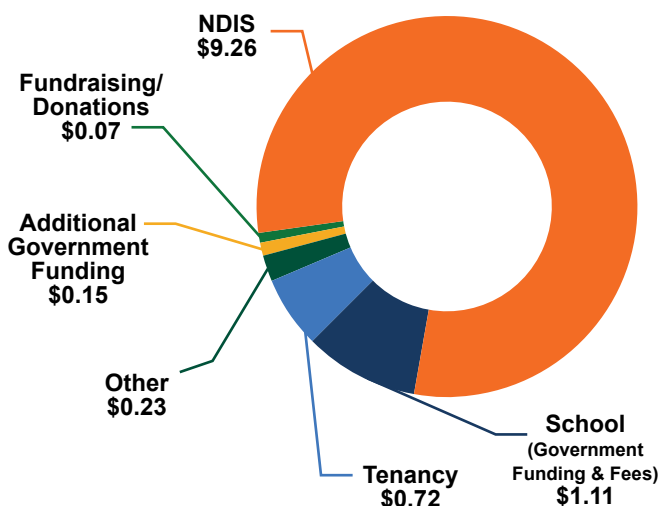
Corporate Volunteers

Orchard Talent Group enjoyed some time away from their desks to volunteer on Warrah's Farm. It's wonderful to see our Corporate partners contributing to Warrah's community.

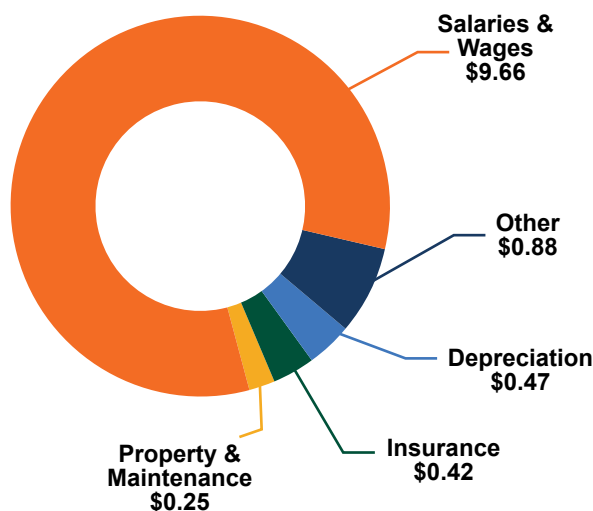
Financials

Visit the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) for Warrah's detailed financial records. Please note that Warrah's financial reporting period has changed to a calendar year, therefore the next audited report will provide the financials for 18 months, ending December 2024.

Income
July-December 2023
(\$ Millions)



Expenditure
July-December 2023
(\$ Millions)



Thank you

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous donors, supporters, and volunteers, many of whom prefer to remain anonymous. Your contributions enable Warrah to enrich the lives of people with disabilities. Thank you for your generosity.

Donors

Anna Wetzel
 Anne Ball
 Barbara Stannard
 Bryan Deane
 Condor Glass and Glazing
 Construction Consultants P/L
 Darren & Petricia Augustus
 David Milton
 Diana Green
 Don McLeay
 Frank & Elaine Hanlon
 Galston Garden Club
 Gaurav Vaid
 Hannah Semler
 HELM
 J Williams
 Jintra Ludnongki
 Jo Norton
 Josefina Stamati
 Judy Lau
 Krystal Bertrand
 M.H. Holt
 Marcelle & Ross King
 Max & Janie Miller
 Maxx Thaddeus Sukkar
 Micheline Lane

Nalla Portable Buildings Pty Ltd
 Netcare Technology
 Peter & Phillipa Tyldsley
 Ray & Sue Attard
 Robert & Joanne Kerr
 SDSS
 Steve & Tina Malin
 Urban Taskforce

Pro Bono and In-Kind Support

2157 Fine Gifts and Homewares
 A Floral Affair
 Annet van Kesteren
 Back to Eden
 Bakers Delight - Dural
 Beauty Clinic Glenorie
 Bega Cheese Limited
 Billabong Retreat
 Blush Skin & Beauty
 Bunnings - Dural
 Cellarbrations Glenorie
 Dinner on the Table
 Dural Christmas Tree Farm
 Fairmont Resort
 Glenorie Bakery Café
 Glenorie Newsagency
 Glenorie Pharmacy

Glenorie RSL
 Hilvert Advisory
 Mel Hayes Photography
 Nati Roses International Pty Ltd
 Platform Fitness Glenorie
 Robert Cliff Master Jewellers
 Shear Envy Hair by Christine
 Sydney City Organics
 Taronga Zoo
 Unique Health Products
 Village Thai Cuisine
 Walkers Meats
 Wendy Dighton
 Woolworths - Dural

Volunteers

Cape Byron Rudolf Steiner School
 Gaurav Vaid
 Jackie Bowe
 J. Boyes
 Kath McLachlan
 Leander Heinz
 Linda Pine
 Louise Craig
 Redfield College
 Saphira Jager
 Spring Picnic Volunteers
 Zoe Meret Barthmann

Use your voice for kindness, your ears for compassion, your hands for charity, your mind for truth, and your heart for love. Anonymous

Living Learning Growing

WARRAH
LIVING LEARNING GROWING

Enriching the lives of people with disability

20 Harris Road, Dural, NSW 2158

PO Box 357, Round Corner, NSW 2158

www.warrah.org.au

ABN 95 572 025 945