



30 YEARS OF CONNECTING YOU



“Leisure Networks has always been a leader and an organisation that is willing to be brave. I am proud that we were able to create an organisation whose vision was clear enough that others were enthused by that, could see a future in that and wanted to be part of that. Leisure Networks started very small but was an organisation doing niche things, capturing the imaginations of many people about what we could do. We took risks that paid off.”

Jason Thompson

*Healthy Communities Team Leader,
1996 – 2005*

“The staff of Leisure Networks are indeed a treasure. People are our anchor and there is a fantastic bunch around the place.”

Jillian Evans

Executive Officer 1994 – 2008



“The reasons I chose to originally go for the CEO position at Leisure Networks have proven to be right as the organisation has a great reputation, committed passionate staff, is open to change and innovation and, most of all, gets things done that make a real difference to people’s lives.

The Board provides the leadership, strategic direction, breadth of skills, wisdom, trust, empowerment, care and accountability needed to support me in my role as CEO.”

Rob McHenry

*Chief Executive Officer
2009 – 2013*

“Leisure Networks are so very caring and helpful to their clients, I have nothing but the utmost praise for all the people who work there. It’s very hard times at the moment, but they are always there to support my brothers and myself with such professionalism.”

Kerrie Molenaar

“I came along to the AGM and it was extraordinary. It was an amazing experience of connection and showed a really deep understanding of our customers and the type of services we provide as an organisation. I knew I wanted to be part of that. I am so proud to be associated with Leisure Networks and to have the honour of being the Chairman is a truly special thing.”

Damian Poel

*Chair/Board Member
2017 – Present*

“Without our staff’s commitment and efforts, our organisation would be unable to deliver the many and varied programs effectively.”

Lindsay Drummond

*Committee of Management
2000 – 2004*

“I love Leisure Networks. The staff are the best...”

Aaron Ingles

“The AGMs for most people are boring – we have to be there and tick that box off. But Leisure Networks approached this so differently. They would have their customers stand up and speak or perform which shined a spotlight on them. Listening to the success stories and the impact it had on the lives of families as their family member became more confident and more independent in the way they were able to live their lives brought tears to my eyes.”

Howard Randall

*Board Member
2006 – 2019*

“Every person who comes to Leisure Networks comes with a passion. I am most proud of our staff and how they present themselves to our customers. In the 10 years I have been here I love that everyone we have welcomed into Leisure Networks becomes part of our family.”

Trevor McFarlane

*Manager
Financial Plan Management
2010 – Present*

WWW



Leisure Networks

“I would not want to be anywhere else. In my 16 years at Leisure Networks, we always have a great sense of fun and everything we do is with the community in mind.”

Brooke Connolley
Manager Sport, Rec and Health
2004 – Present



“I really enjoyed working alongside people who had passion, worked with integrity and were willing to give anything a crack. We were and still are an innovative team. It gives me a great sense of pride to see that the organisation is still doing the work we did back then, and still supporting people to live these contributing lives and connect to community.”

Caroline Jordan
Community Programs Manager
2000 – 2014

“For a long time, I had dreamed of working at Leisure Networks. To be CEO and to lead the organisation is a dream come true.”

Libby Mears
Chief Executive Officer
2013 – Present

“Just wanted to take this moment to thank everyone at Leisure Networks. Without support from everyone this year I’m not quite sure where we would be. I am pleased to report Manix has completed his transition to high school and has thoroughly enjoyed it all. He is now attending school full time with an aide. So once again thank you very much for all the support this year. Olaf and I are truly grateful.”

Manix’s Mum

“Successful organisations are generally those that are prepared to take calculated risks, and that is the case with Leisure Networks.”

Bryan Woodford OAM
Chair/Board Member
2009 – 2020

“From coming to Leisure Networks as a volunteer in 2006, I am most grateful for the opportunities I have had in being able to grow both personally and professionally. I have learnt so much from so many wonderful people and that’s something I will hold very dear to me.”

Cam Libbis
Manager, Community Connections
and Service Development
2006 – Present

“A group of flexible, responsive and creative people worked at Leisure Networks and they all had an incredible zest for life which hugely impacted and made a positive difference to the lives of people with disability.

The culture of Leisure Networks is what stood out then and what stands out now.”

Lenny Jenner
Chair/Board Member
1999– 2009



30 YEARS

of connecting you to community...



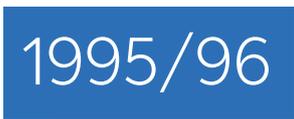
The Barwon Disability Resource Council auspiced the Leisure Buddy Project, which aimed to match volunteers with people with disabilities for the purpose of friendship and recreation. At the time, it was one of Victoria's most successful one to one volunteer programs.



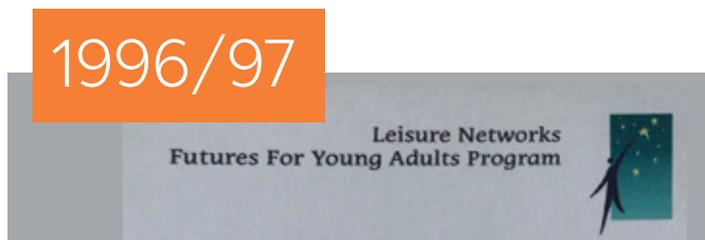
Leisure Buddy Project changed their name to Leisure Networks Association Incorporated which was now managed by a community-based committee. The change in name better reflected it's vision of intergrating people with disabilities into mainstream recreation and leisure pursuits.



The organisation started out with just four staff members. The team was small but passionate and committed to providing support to people with a disability, particularly young people who saw their lives differently from the way perhaps the Department or State Government might have. The team also supported grass roots sporting clubs, seeing clubs as an important place and connector for people and communities.



“The only thing constant is change.”
Merrin McCracken, Chair



Through their Futures For Young Adults Program, Leisure Networks provided an alternative for young people with a disability. Strong relationships with families as well as the Department of Human Services (DHS) resulted in the signing of the first Funding and Services Agreement between the DHS and Leisure Networks. Leisure Networks supported 111 customers.

Leisure Networks' Committee of Management made a decision to set the organisation on a “road of restructure”. It was decided that there needed to be better services for people with a disability who lived in the Barwon Region. They began developing a framework on how they could work with people with a disability and their families to achieve this. Leisure Networks was supporting 89 customers.

1997/98



Leisure Networks was successful in securing a three-year funding deal for The Access All Abilities (AAA) from Sport and Recreation Victoria. The first AGM was held.

1998/99



278 people with disabilities took part in regular community recreation of their choice due to Leisure Networks either initiating or being part of projects to enable this connection.

2000/01



Lindsay Drummond, Chairperson of the Barwon Region Sports Assembly (BRSA), met with Leisure Networks Committee of Management to discuss the possibility of the two organisations working together more closely. A merger took place of Barwon Region Sports Assembly (BRSA) and Leisure Networks.

2005/06

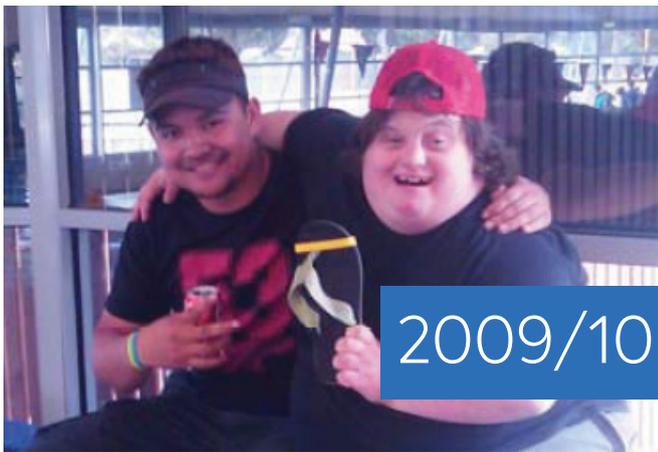


Leisure Networks moved from 71 Little Malop St to Sports House, 370 Moorabool St. With the support of the City of Greater Geelong as well as Sport and Recreation Victoria, Leisure Networks was funded to support spaces and places as well as community organisations to be inclusive. Sports House had become a place for the sharing of not only resources but also ideas. The staff had grown from 4 in 1994 to 10.

2008/09



Leisure Networks participated in a department of Human Services Pilot Program, to establish a quality system that complies with the disability services framework. The pilot was the first in Victoria.



Leisure Networks received accreditation for Quality Service Delivery in line with the State Disability Plan. iPlan disability had been operating now for 12 months and assisted over 90 individuals in the Barwon South Western Region to secure funding to meet their desired goals and aspirations. A tender was won for the \$2m VicHealth “Healthy Sporting Environments” project; to work with 100 clubs over two years in regional Victoria.



Club Help

The support for grass roots sporting clubs was enhanced with the launch of a comprehensive and simple to use website Club Help. This website was the first of its kind for Victorian sport and continues to be a “one-stop” shop for club volunteers. Leisure Networks continued to build healthy communities through the Active in Parks program working with older adults to be active and connected.



In March 2013, Libby Mears was appointed CEO to commence the next phase of the growth and change for Leisure Networks. The organisation was ready for the launch of the trial of National Disability Insurance Scheme in Geelong and we received our very first NDIS customer in September 2013. Our services expanded to evening and weekend supports.



In July the organisation launched its Towards 2017 Strategic Plan and created our new framework for building a strong, inclusive culture. The Leisure Networks values and trademark behaviours we developed have been the foundation of our culture ever since. Our people embraced the new model of the NDIS as we saw the positive impact on people’s lives. The team was 20 people.



WE ARE SEEING MORE PEOPLE BE PART OF THEIR COMMUNITY, BUILDING CONFIDENCE, SOCIAL SKILLS AND NEW FRIENDSHIPS.

- Annual Report 2014/15

In 2015 our club development work expanded with a new partnership around gender equality in sport with Maribyrnong Council. We recruited a Manager, People and Culture and began delivering support coordination services.

2015/16



When the NDIS rolled out to Melbourne Leisure Networks followed! We excitedly launched our new team of Melbourne-based support coordinators and our team grew to 80 staff.

2016/17



The NDIS commenced its rollout in North East Melbourne and Leisure Networks launched services in Epping and West Heidelberg. An annual Award recognising peers who demonstrate the values, behaviours and culture of Leisure Networks was established in Bryan Woodford OAM Chair's name (The Woodford Award). Leisure Networks moved into its new Geelong Headquarters after outgrowing its home of the last 10 years in Sports House.

2017/18



Leisure Networks officially started providing around-the-clock, seven-days-a-week in-home support. Leisure Networks' first cruise and international trip took place!

2018/19



Staff increased to 140. A new office opened in Werribee. Financial Plan Management Services grew exponentially, enabling choice and control of NDIS funding for over 1000 customers.

2019/20



Leisure Networks adapts its programs and services to meet the needs of its customers through the COVID-19 pandemic. TED25 strategy is launched with the vision to support 8000 people to make real connection in their community, creating a real impact in their lives by 2025.



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