



# Annual Report 2024

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Peppercorn Services Inc. acknowledges the Darug nation as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which our organisation operates. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and economic connections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the Land and Seas. We acknowledge that the dispossession of Country and the disruption to family relationships have resulted in a breakdown of social networks.

Peppercorn is committed to working in ways that support and empower Aboriginal people and their families and communities.

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## **OUR VISION**

To enrich lives through connections, partnerships and opportunities

## **OUR MISSION**

To coordinate solutions for people in need, at a time they want, to live the life they choose

## **OUR TEAM**

Peppercorn is committed to creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. Peppercorn considers people to be our most important asset. As we continue to grow, we remain committed to investing in our people.



### OUR BOARD



ROB EWIN
Chair



**KATE TYE**Community

Representative



**KEVIN RICHARDS**Vice Chair



ANNE HURNI
Community
Representative



MICHAEL HOWARD
Treasurer



MARY KINNON
Former Treasurer



MEGAN ANG
Secretary and Public Officer



**HELEN COLAGIURI**Former Community
Representative



JOHN BAKER
Community
Representative



CHARLIES MCELROY

Former Hawkesbury City
Council Representative
Representative



MELISSA STUBBINGS

Community

Representative



WHEELER
Former Hawkesbury City
Council Representative
Representative

**CLR DANIELLE** 

## CHAIR'S REPORT

In my Annual Report last year, I flagged challenges on the horizon facing community organisations like ours delivering Community Transport and Aged Care support services. The Royal Commission into aged care identified the need for significant national reform in how aged care is provided and funded.

After much deliberation and due diligence, our Board made the strategic decision to merge with Active Care Network, positioning the organisation to better to respond to the industry changes underway and will help ensure that we continue to provide the best possible services to our clients. Active Care Network are an established and successful community transport operator across Blacktown, Penrith & Blue Mountains LGA's. This partnership enables a much-needed expansion of our transport fleet and significantly increases our capability to meet the transport needs of our clients under the industry reforms. It also enables us to better respond to the changing needs of our clients in the community who are accessing the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and the National Insurance Disability Scheme (NDIS).

With the amalgamation, both Peppercorn Services and Active Care Network organisations will remain. Active Care Network will continue as our provider of Community Transport Services and Peppercorn Services the provider of Aged Care; Children & Family; and Disability Support Services. Collectively, our Support Services will be delivered across the Greater Western Sydney region, by some 117 employees and 50 Volunteers. The leadership, governance and administrative support for both organisations will be provided by a new parent organisation called Community Culture. The Board of Community Culture comprises of former Board members of Peppercorn Services and Active Care Network Ltd. Leading Community Culture is CEO Jessica Innes who has worked to establish the new Executive Leadership Team. Our CEO's Report, provides further detail on the current status of our organisation and its strategic delivery.

I would like to thank all of our staff and our leadership team for their support, patience, input, feedback and their continued focus on our clients whilst overcoming the challenges of the transition period. We are very fortunate to have a very dedicated and professional team of people that work and volunteer for us.

Many thanks to our CEO Jessica Innes. Jess's vision, energy, industry knowledge, passion and commitment to excellence in all aspects of our business is a point of differentiation and a competitive advantage for us and to our clients. It's a privilege for our Board to work with Jess and her team.

Finally, thank you to our Board Members. To the retiring Board Members of Peppercorn Services and Active Care Network, your time, your contributions and your support has been greatly valued and appreciated. To the newly elected Directors of Community Culture, welcome and thank you for taking on the responsibility of guiding and governing our new organisation in its formative years. I thank you for electing me as the inaugural Chairman of Community Culture. I regard this as both an honour and a privilege.

I am looking forward to working with our Board, CEO, Leadership Team, our Staff and volunteers in the year ahead, as we strive to provide best in market services and support to our community in a very dynamic, regulated and competitive environment.



Rob Ewin Chair

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Over the past year, significant changes have shaped the direction of our organisation. The most notable development has been the merger of Peppercorn Services with Active Care Network, resulting in the creation of our new parent organisation, Community Culture. This merger reflects our commitment to enhancing our capacity to serve the community, bringing together strong service providers under one unified banner while increasing our operational efficiency and fostering better collaboration among our teams that will ultimately benefit the communities we serve.

With the appointment of the new Community Culture Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, it is clear that our organisation is well-positioned to embrace the future with confidence and a renewed sense of purpose. The team have united with a shared strategic ambition to enhance the support services we provide to a diverse demographic with evolving needs.

This year we have made a considerable investment in our information and communication systems to improve our efficiency and connectivity across the broader group of organisations, priming our organisations for the next phase of our strategic plan. As we work to adapt to ongoing family services, disability and aged care reforms, we are seizing opportunities to further develop our social connection opportunities across all of Western Sydney.

We continue to advocate for longevity in preparedness and recovery support services, given the high prevalence of natural disasters in the region, and the need for proactive approaches to enhancing community capability and readiness.

The evolving regulatory landscape has required us to make significant adjustments to how we deliver services now and into our future, however we remain committed to providing exceptional, compassionate care to our clients.

As we reflect on the challenges that we have overcome as a new harmonised team and appreciate the achievements of the past year, Community Culture is ready to meet the challenges ahead and continue making a positive impact in the lives of the individuals and communities we serve. Our focus in the coming year will be embedding our new workforce capabilities framework, our transition into the aged care Support at Home Program and the recommissioning of our Children and Family services.

My sincere appreciation goes out to our Board Members who have provided their unwavering support particularly during due diligence phase of the merger. Their vision for Community Culture respects and preserves Peppercorn Services, its culture and rich history.

To our amazing volunteers and staff, you have been critical to our success in providing meaningful and personalised supports to our community in a seamless manner. I'm proud of the initiative that you take and the passion that you bring each day, striving for better outcomes for the people we support and the communities we work with.



Jessica Innes

Executive Officer

## AGED & DISABILITY SERVICES

#### Lawn & Home Maintenance

The Lawn & Home Maintenance team has made significant strides following its integration under Peppercorn's leadership. This consolidation has brought the team together under a unified vision, enhancing both service delivery and client support. While we've temporarily rented storage units locally for our vehicles and trailers close to where services are provided, we are actively planning for future growth serving more people across Greater Western Sydney. As we expand our workforce, these resources will be reallocated to ensure gardeners have what they need to continue delivering exceptional service.

A key focus this year has been developing the team's skills beyond gardening, encouraging staff to engage meaningfully with clients and foster deeper connections. Our Gardeners offer more than just a helping hand; they are an essential part of our clients' social support network, bringing both expertise and care into every interaction.

A considerable review of the services has been undertaken aimed at streamlining operations and boosting efficiency as we grow our internal capacity and service offering to include home safety services.

With new gardeners joining the team, we're well-positioned to continue enhancing our services, making a lasting impact on both our clients and the community.

#### **Social Connections**

Our commitment to expanding and enriching social support services has seen exciting developments this year. Some of our dedicated Support Workers began their Certificate III in Individual Support in August 2024, while also working towards their Light Rigid (LR) licenses. These efforts will enhance their ability to provide even more comprehensive and diverse support to our clients.

We have also strengthened our Group Social Support services by collaborating with Active Care Network. This partnership allows us to increase the number of services and diversity in social programs for both transport and aged care clients across three LGAs.

Volunteers remain the backbone of our programs, and we're grateful for the assistance they provide. Recruiting of new volunteers has been particularly important as some of our long-term volunteers have been on leave. Volunteers are essential in supporting our team during client outings, where their presence adds warmth and engagement to the experience.

With Thanks to the passion and dedication of the entire team, our clients have enjoyed a wide range of engaging outings this year. From individual support to group outings, we remain committed to creating fun, meaningful experiences that enrich the lives of those we serve. Special mention must also go to our drivers, whose efforts enable these outings to happen—they truly help us deliver these memorable experiences.

In 2025 our focus will be to establish centre based day programs across Greater Western Sydney, and develop our overnight holiday program.



#### **NDIS Support Coordination**

This year, Peppercorn has continued to expand our NDIS Support Coordination Services, with a focus on providing specialist support for individuals with younger-onset dementia. While we primarily serve the Hawkesbury region, our services are open to anyone needing support coordination, regardless of their funding status. Our goal over the next 12 months is to secure full NDIS registration, following a thorough audit in February 2024

We are proud to be an active member of the Nepean Dementia Alliance, advocating for younger people with dementia and promoting awareness through local initiatives. Our team has been engaging with businesses in St Marys to encourage them to become dementia-friendly, offering staff training to help them better support customers living with dementia. This initiative helps create safe spaces for community members who may need assistance.

Our Team has been instrumental in spreading awareness on what support is available for people living with dementia with, representation at key community events, including the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (NBMPHN) dementia community event in Katoomba. We look forward to continuing to raise awareness at future events in Springwood and Penrith.

Our involvement in the Western Sydney and Hawkesbury Support Coordination networks continues to grow, enabling us to connect with various providers to ensure our participants receive the best possible support. This network involvement allows us to offer tailored support, meeting the unique needs of our clients.

We also welcomed Victoria Lillie to our team as a new Support Coordinator. With five years of experience as a Local Area Coordinator (LAC), Victoria brings invaluable expertise to the role. Her dedication and insight have already made a positive impact on our NDIS services.



Trish Glover

Manager - Aged & Disability Services

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING SERVICES

The Health and Wellbeing team supported over 1,500 community members this year, delivering a broad range of timely services despite funding uncertainties at times. We continue to enhance client support by improving systems and tailoring services based on community feedback.

#### Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP)

Our team worked across the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury areas, engaging with seniors and individuals with disabilities to create personalised emergency plans. The team also hosted community events to raise disaster preparedness, including the Boots on the Ground Volunteers Conference and free first aid training for isolated communities. Collaborations with organisations like Autism STEP helped us distribute sensory preparedness kits and run disaster forums for people with disabilities.

#### **Community Sector Disaster Capability Project**

In partnership with Bligh Park Community Centre, we led a project to strengthen the role of community organisations in disaster preparedness. After consulting with over 30 local organisations, we hosted events to address identified gaps and improve local disaster response. The project concluded in June 2024, with the final report available on the National Council of Social Services website.

#### **Recovery Support Services (RSS)**

Our RSS team continue to support over 200 clients impacted by flooding in the Hawkesbury and Nepean areas this year. By providing both practical and emotional support, we assisted residents recover from multiple flood events. Our presence at recovery centres offered a familiar, trusted source of help for those in need.

The team continue to educate the community about the latest disaster related information, including updates to disaster messaging, recent apps, disaster dashboards and resources. We continue to remind the community that having a reliable person-centred emergency plan includes planning for everyday emergencies and knowing and sharing their plan with others.

#### **Children and Families**

The Children and Families team continued to deliver Targeted Early Intervention services for children aged 0-6, supporting over 1,600 clients this year. Our playgroups and parenting programs, including Circle of Security, Anxiety Coach, Mothergoose, and Triple P, remain essential in helping families build stronger connections. We also increased collaboration with partners such as Community Health and Connect Child & Family Services, providing support for first-time parents and delivering specialised information sessions.

In 2025 we aim to offer Tuning Into Kids once the team complete their training.

Partnerships with organisations like the Women's Cottage helped us respond to the increasing prevalence of domestic violence cases, ensuring families received the support they needed. Our partnership with NSW Oral Health also provided dental check-ups for children, helping to address broader health needs in the community.

There has been an extraordinary response to our new dig it with Dad Programs. We will strive to deliver this on an ongoing basis.

#### **LINCS Program**

The LINCS volunteer program continued to provide home visits and support for families. Highlights included our LINCS family picnic events and the launch of a toy and resource library for volunteers to use during visits. LINCS helped numerous families build confidence and independence, with volunteers playing a key role in this success.



Megan Kezik

Manager - Health & Wellbeing

## INFORMATION SYSTEM CAPABILITIES

This year, our focus was on streamlining operations and enhancing service delivery through improved systems and technology integration. The strategy concentrated on three key areas:

- 1. Client Service Systems: We transitioned from legacy systems to AlayaCare, centralising client management, care planning, reporting, and billing across all programs except transport, which remains integrated with RouteMatch for streamlined operations.
- 2. Workforce Management: The implementation of HumanForce began, simplifying employee and volunteer processes from onboarding to performance management. This system will improve onboarding governance, career development, and staff retention by offering better visibility of training, performance and operational needs.
- 3. Technology Integration and Security: Following the office relocations, we upgraded our infrastructure to meet the Essential Eight cybersecurity standards. Plans are underway to move to a cloud-based solution, enhancing security and collaboration across the organisation.

These advancements position us for future growth, allowing us to deliver more efficient and secure services for both staff and clients.



Dean Berg

Manager - Business Intelligence

## WORKFORCE UPDATE

Our workforce decreased slightly this year with volunteers increasing and continuing to play a critical role. Despite the challenges of merging teams and cultures, we focused on recruitment and retention, hiring new staff and implementing systems like HumanForce to improve onboarding and career development practises

With 77% of our team in frontline roles, we have been able to meet increasing service demands, particularly in aged care and community transport. Although our turnover rate was higher than we would like, this is attributed tin the phasing out of Flood Recovery Support Services ending. We are seeing stability as funding contracts were extended for another year albeit with less funding.

This year saw a significant review of roles and position descriptions across the whole organisation, as we developed efficencies and saw opportunities for growth or promotion of staff. Alongside this, we also developed a new capability framework document that will be rolled out next year.

Leadership development remained a priority, with strategic training and workshops helping to strengthen our leadership teams. With our first Leadership retreat happening in February, it was a time to reset, rest and then strategically plan what the future holds. There was plenty of team building activities, vulnerability from participants and excitement for the vision of where we could all see the organisation going.

We also began planning a Young Leaders Program to ensure long-term succession and address the retirement of key staff within the next five years.

While recruitment was challenging, particularly for driver roles, our focus on upskilling and internal promotions positions us well for the future.



Glenn Robinson

Executive Experience Officer

## TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the financial results for Peppercorn Services Inc for the financial year ended 30th June 2024.

Peppercorn recorded a net surplus for the year of \$143,791, which was slightly below the \$179,513 surplus from the previous financial year.

#### Income Sources and Grants

Total Revenue for the financial year was \$6,062,761 (an increase of 14% on the prior year). The increase was partially driven by additional government funding to provide services to flood-affected residents and organisations during the financial year. This funding is expected to reduce into future financial years as communities rebuild from natural disaster.

Grants make up 91% of Peppercorn's revenue. The team has worked diligently throughout the year to continue to build relationships with funding bodies, and deliver high quality services to ensure that we remain the provider of choice.

#### **Expenses**

Total expenses for the year were \$5,918,970 - an increase of 15% on last year. The increase was driven by a combination of delivering more services and the inflation impact on staff and other service delivery costs.

#### **Balance Sheet Position**

Our net assets as of June 30, 2024 were valued at \$1,941,078. This strong balance sheet position will enable the organisation to invest in the next stages of the strategic plan and ensure we remain strong and viable in the coming years.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of the dedicated staff and volunteers for their hard work throughout the past year. We operate in a sector that is rapidly changing. It is imperative that we be agile enough to be able to keep in front of the changes and the challenges that are thrown our way. I understand that change is not always easy and takes a lot of resilience. The team has demonstrated this throughout the year, whilst still maintaining a dedicated focus on the needs of our client groups, and continuing to provide the trusted care that we are renowned for.



Michael Howard

Treasurer

## AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT

The Audited Financial Accounts of Peppercorn Services Incorporated for the financial year 2023-2024 are reported in the following pages.

Peppercorn's financial management systems operate in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and meet the reporting requirements of the relevant funding bodies. The chart of accounts is based on the Australian Government approved National Standard Chart of Accounts for reporting by not-for-profit organisations and is compliant with the guidelines set down by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC).

Peppercorn undertakes a strict financial auditing process utilising the expertise of SDJA, Certified Practicing Accountants. The audit is conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, which require that the auditors comply with ethical requirements and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement. The audit involves procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report.

Procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement and include the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. The audit also evaluates the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The Audited Financial Report is supplied to our funders and is lodged with the ACNC. An extract from the Audited Financial Statements is provided in this report. A copy of the complete Audited Financial Report including Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2024 is available on request.

## OUR FUNDERS

#### **Family Services**

- NSW Department of Communities and Justice Targeted Early Intervention
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
   LINCS Volunteer Family Support

## Community Aged Care Services

- Community Transport
- \_ Lawns and Home Maintenance
- Meals
- Group Social Support
- Individual Social Support
- Dietetics (Allied Health) Transport for NSW

#### **Transport Services**

- Transport for NSW

Access for people who are transport disadvantaged.

- NSW Health

Health Related Transport

# Preparedness and Recovery Services

- Resilience NSW

Flood Recovery Support Service

- Wentworth Healthcare Limited
   Wellbeing Support Service
- Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

Person Centre Emergency Planning

- Hawkesbury City Council

Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre

# Community and Sector

Development

**–** NSW Council of Social Services

**NCOSS Sector Capability** 

#### **Disability Support**

National Disability Insurance Scheme
 Support Coordination

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Peppercorn Services Inc. Statement of Financial Position As at 30 June 2024

|                               | Notes | 2024<br>\$ | 2023<br>\$ |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------|------------|
| Assets                        |       |            |            |
| Current                       |       |            |            |
| Cash and cash equivalents     | 6     | 2,056,182  | 2,272,399  |
| Trade and other receivables   | 7     | 691,457    | 650,030    |
| Other assets                  | 8 _   | 22,846     | 91,717     |
| Total current assets          | _     | 2,770,485  | 3,014,146  |
| Non-current                   |       |            |            |
| Property, plant and equipment | 9     | 97,181     | 126,276    |
| Total non-current assets      | _     | 97,181     | 126,276    |
| Total assets                  | _     | 2,867,666  | 3,140,422  |
| Liabilities                   |       |            |            |
| Current                       |       |            |            |
| Trade and other payables      | 10    | 320,153    | 438,495    |
| Provisions                    | 11    | 240,211    | 200,318    |
| Contract liabilities          | 12 _  | 337,779    | 640,958    |
| Total current liabilities     | _     | 898,143    | 1,279,771  |
| Non-current                   |       |            |            |
| Provisions                    | 11    | 28,445     | 63,364     |
| Total non-current liabilities | _     | 28,445     | 63,364     |
| Total liabilities             | =     | 926,588    | 1,343,135  |
| Net assets                    | _     | 1,941,078  | 1,797,287  |
| Equity                        |       |            |            |
| Reserves                      |       | 209,377    | 583,377    |
| Accumulated funds             |       | 1,731,701  | 1,213,910  |
| Total equity                  | _     | 1,941,078  | 1,797,287  |

# STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Peppercorn Services Inc.
Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For Year Ended 30 June 2024

|  | Notes | 2024<br>\$  | 2023<br>\$  |
|--|-------|-------------|-------------|
| Revenue  |       | •           | •           |
| Revenue from contracts with customers          | 4     | 5,983,750   | 5,223,557   |
| Other income                                   | 5     | 79,011      | 91,831      |
| Total revenue                                  | _     | 6,062,761   | 5,315,388   |
|  |       |             |             |
| Expenses                                       |       |             |             |
| Administration and other operating costs       |       | (1,126,773) | (1,040,072) |
| Depreciation                                   |       | (29,095)    | (46,601)    |
| Employee benefits                              |       | (4,228,849) | (3,459,003) |
| Lease payments for short-term/low-value leases |       | (62,094)    | (57,415)    |
| Program costs                                  |       | (472,159)   | (532,784)   |
| Total expenses                                 | _     | (5,918,970) | (5,135,875) |
| Surplus before income tax                      | _     | 143,791     | 179,513     |
| Income tax expense                             |       |             |             |
| Surplus for the year                           | _     | 143,791     | 179,513     |
|  | _     |             |             |
| Other comprehensive income                     | _     | -           | -           |
| Total comprehensive income                     | _     | 143,791     | 179,513     |

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

Peppercorn Services Inc. Statement of Cash Flows For Year Ended 30 June 2024

|  | Notes | 2024<br>\$  | 2023<br>\$  |
|--|-------|-------------|-------------|
| Cash flows from operating activities                     |       |             |             |
| Receipts from grants, donors, customers and others       |       | 6,258,078   | 5,317,502   |
| Payments to suppliers and employees                      |       | (6,522,147) | (5,221,201) |
| Interest received  |       | 47,852      | 4,583       |
| Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities      |       | (216,217)   | 100,884     |
|  |       |             |             |
| Cash flows from investing activities                     |       |             |             |
| Payments for property, plant and equipment               | _     | -           | (54,256)    |
| Net cash used in investing activities                    | _     | -           | (54,256)    |
| Cash flows from financing activities                     |       |             | _           |
| Net cash provided by financing activities                | _     | -           |             |
| Net change in cash and cash equivalents                  |       | (216,217)   | 46,628      |
| Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year |       | 2,272,399   | 2,225,771   |
| Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year       | 6     | 2,056,182   | 2,272,399   |

# STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

Peppercorn Services Inc. Statement of Changes in Equity For Year Ended 30 June 2024

|                             |          | Motor     |          |             |           |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
|                             | IT       | Vehicles  | Building | Accumulated | Total     |
|                             | Reserves | Reserves  | Reserves | Funds       | Equity    |
|                             | \$       | \$        | \$       | \$          | \$        |
| Balance at 1 July 2022      | 75,000   | 374,000   | 134,377  | 1,034,397   | 1,617,774 |
| Surplus for the year        | -        | -         | -        | 179,513     | 179,513   |
| Other comprehensive income  | -        | -         | -        | -           | -         |
| Total comprehensive income  | -        | -         | -        | 179,513     | 179,513   |
| Balance at 30 June 2023     | 75,000   | 374,000   | 134,377  | 1,213,910   | 1,797,287 |
|                             |          |           |          |             |           |
| Balance at 1 July 2023      | 75,000   | 374,000   | 134,377  | 1,213,910   | 1,797,287 |
| Surplus for the year        | -        | -         | -        | 143,791     | 143,791   |
| Other comprehensive income  | -        | -         | -        | -           | -         |
| Total comprehensive income  | -        | -         | -        | 143,791     | 143,791   |
| Transfer (from)/to reserves | -        | (374,000) | -        | 374,000     | -         |
| Balance at 30 June 2024     | 75,000   | -         | 134,377  | 1,731,701   | 1,941,078 |



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