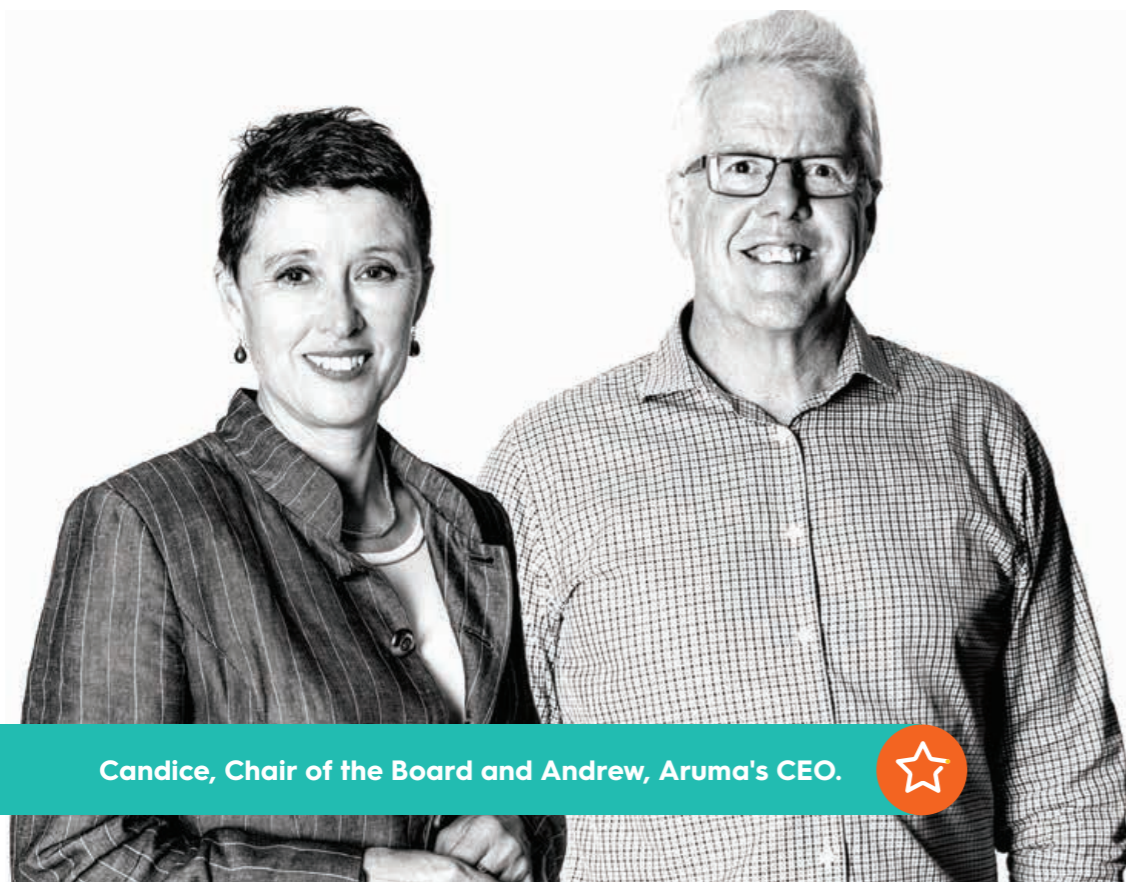


For the year  
2020–2021

# a message from our CEO & Chair



# a message from our CEO and Chair



Candice, Chair of the Board and Andrew, Aruma's CEO.



The 2021 financial year was tumultuous for organisations everywhere.

Aruma was no exception.

Together with our customers, we faced the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the continuing evolution of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), workforce shortages, increasing compliance obligations and financial pressures.

**Through all this, our 5,700 amazing staff stayed true to Aruma's Purpose – supporting people with a disability to live great lives.**

The financial impact of COVID-19 was offset for the first quarter of the financial year by the Federal Government's generous JobKeeper program, which meant we were able to continue employing our dedicated staff despite the extended closure of many of our community-based services.

As the year wore on and our JobKeeper funding was consumed, Aruma felt the ongoing financial impact of COVID-19 more deeply and directly. Along with the financial pressures of COVID-19, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) reduced many NDIS Participant plans, leaving Aruma – and other providers – with increasing support costs and reduced funding for many customers in shared living settings.

As a result, we suffered significant losses in the second half of the year and ended the financial year with a disappointing operating loss of \$4.56m on turnover of \$478.9m.

Aruma is not in immediate financial stress. However, no organisation can sustain losses indefinitely. We have restructured Aruma's operations and continue to focus on improvements that will ensure our services are both efficient and effective.

Has the financial year been challenging? Yes. But at the end of the day, we will always do everything we can to make sure people with a disability are well-supported.

**We have one clear promise at Aruma, and that's to always put our customers first.**

## COVID-19

The pandemic has continued to wreak havoc throughout the world.

At Aruma, keeping 5,300 customers and 5,700 staff safe is no easy task.

The Delta strain proved to be deadly, and thanks to our strong protocols, we were able to control any exposures to our customers or staff.

The focus for us this year has also been around vaccination. We lobbied governments - both publicly and behind closed doors - to ensure people with a disability, and the staff who support them, were given priority access to the vaccines.

When the Federal Government's 'in-home' vaccination program started, we ensured all our customers who live in Supported Independent Living (SIL) homes were supported to make an informed choice about vaccination and appropriate access to a vaccine. This was a challenge, particularly in the early months of the Federal Government's vaccination rollout.

We understand that the topic of vaccination is difficult for some people. So, we worked tirelessly to provide reputable information to our customers, their families, and our staff.

As COVID-19 continues to be our 'new normal', we know it will throw more challenges our way. Despite this, we also know our teams will rise to the occasion.



## The Disability Royal Commission

The Disability Royal Commission is an opportunity for Aruma, the disability sector and Australian society more broadly to acknowledge past mistakes, learn from them and take positive steps to respect and uphold the human rights of people with a disability.

Throughout the financial year, the Commission continued its deliberations, hearings and calls for submissions.

In August 2020, Aruma gave evidence to the Commission about the experiences of people with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And throughout the year, along with several other large organisations, we also received notices to provide information to the Commission.

We are committed to fully supporting the Commission's work and doing all that is asked of us in an open, transparent and thoughtful way.



Many of our great moments were made possible by our customers. We are truly privileged to support them.

# despite the challenges, there were also great moments

This year we met Fiona, who lives in Victoria. Her artwork was chosen by Australian fashion brand, Gorman, to be part of one of their collections. You can find Fiona's designs online and in over 40 Gorman stores across Australia.



Then there was Elyce, from Queensland, who bravely shared her story to help us improve how we support people who have experienced trauma. "Storytelling is one of the most powerful ways to change things, start a movement as I've heard," she says.

We also supported Michael from New South Wales, who - thanks to some great detective work from our staff - reconnected with his family after almost 40 years!



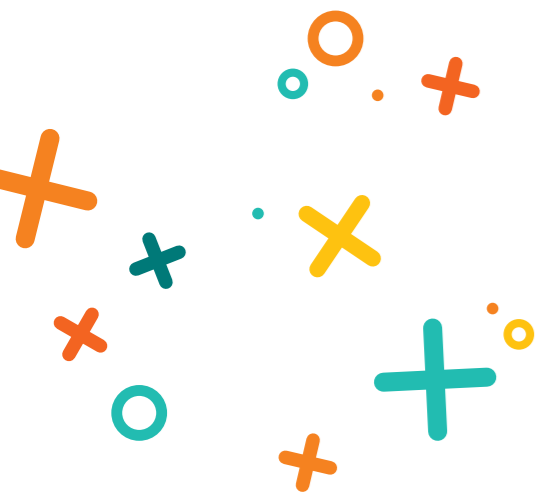
You can read their stories in more detail on our website: [aruma.com.au](http://aruma.com.au)



## Here are a few of our other great moments:

- During various lockdowns, our staff got creative and organised backyard camping, indoor dance parties, online cooking classes and many other creative activities. They strived to make good on our promise to put our customers first.
- We enhanced the way we listen to our customers and their families, and respond to incidents, feedback and complaints.
- We built important capabilities in quality & safeguarding, therapeutic supports, practice development, customer service, enterprise risk management and other areas. All these capabilities enable us to provide better support to our customers.
- We appointed five of our customers to paid positions as Human Rights Ambassadors. They support the entire organisation to make sure human rights is front and centre of everything we do.
- We launched a new look for Aussie Biscuits, our biscuits factory that employs over 30 people with a disability in Forbes, New South Wales. You can find out more about Aussie Biscuits at [aussiebiscuits.com.au](http://aussiebiscuits.com.au)

**Above all, we stayed true to our Purpose – supporting people with a disability to live a great life, the life they want, the life they choose.**



# looking ahead

This financial year was the second year of our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, which focuses on business transformation and excellence. At Aruma, excellence is about great people, quality services, efficient systems and strong customer relationships.

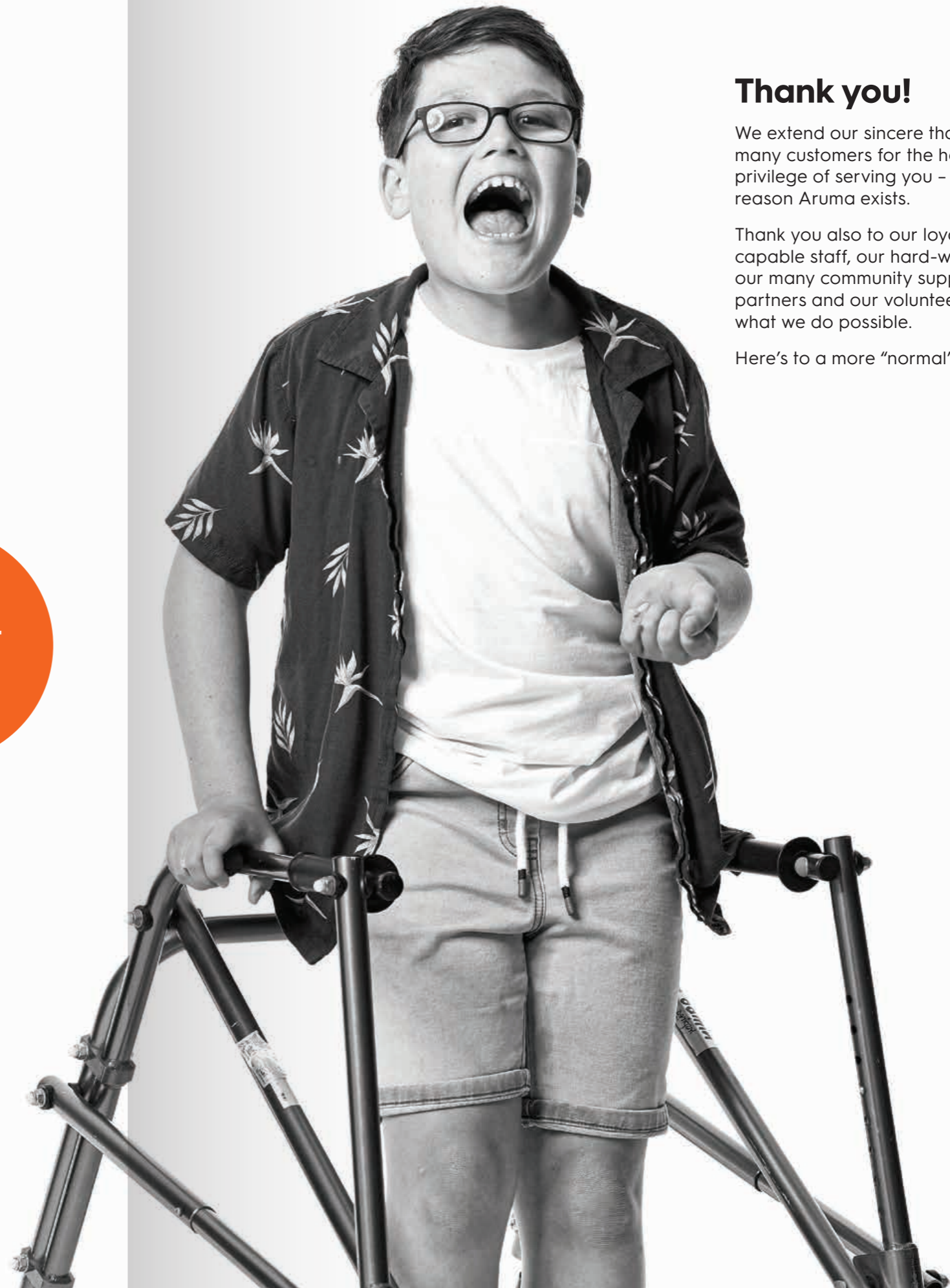
Our transformation journey is continuing. We are standardising, simplifying and streamlining how we:

**1. Serve our customers well**

**2. Support our staff**

**3. Strengthen and grow Aruma**

In line with this, we are also reflecting, and acting, on the fundamental changes that are underway in the community and disability support sector. We owe it to our customers to do so with complete openness – we are committed to providing supports that they want, and supports that meet their specific needs.



## Thank you!

We extend our sincere thanks to our many customers for the honour and privilege of serving you – you are the reason Aruma exists.

Thank you also to our loyal and capable staff, our hard-working Board, our many community supporters, our partners and our volunteers. You make what we do possible.

Here's to a more "normal" 2022!

here's to  
another  
year,  
with you.

arUma.