

include, support and build

strategic plan
2025-2027



Aruma's 2025-27 strategy is for an inclusive society, with support that makes a positive difference to people with disability, while continuing to build Aruma as a long-term sustainable human rights organisation

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a message from our participants

"I hope this strategy improves what Aruma does. I like the plan to 'Include' – these changes are good ones! Everyone should be treated equally as far as I am concerned, everyone is the same as us. Equal rights for everyone!"

- Tracey



"This is good. I like the person-centred approach. It means all the staff help me. I also like the idea of open employment. The idea of being paid the same as anyone else sound pretty good to me!"

- Geoff



a message from our Board and CEO

Inclusion is not just inviting someone to the table, but genuinely wanting them there. Aruma has three simple priorities to achieve over the next three years:

- We want Aruma to **include** and show others how to always be inclusive of people with disability
- We want Aruma to offer **supports** that genuinely make a difference in the lives of people with disability
- To achieve these first two priorities, we must continue to **build** Aruma into a human rights organisation that is sustainable over the long term. We will, as a first order of business, build our finances and assets, and we will continue building staff engagement and reducing carbon emissions - eventually to (net) zero.

Encouraged by our long-held commitment to human rights, the aspiration of our first priority of **inclusion** is to inspire the hearts and minds within our organisation and the communities within which we serve to always foster equality of opportunity for people with disability. We'll support Aruma's participants to make their own decisions, and ensure that Aruma employs more people with disabilities and refocuses its supported employment programs to provide new pathways to open employment. Central to our ambition is a desire to expand the depth of our connections in our local communities, for participants to engage in the life of their community and for Aruma to help lead change for inclusion within local communities. To influence the systemic changes required, advocacy and collaboration with governments and other organisations will be a key activity for Aruma.

Aruma has been providing **support** to people with disability in different ways for more than sixty years. To be confident the supports we provide make a difference in the lives of people with disability, we'll use evidence

to ensure we do only what works, that we remove restrictions on how people with disability live their lives, and that we communicate to participants and their families or guardians and respond to feedback and complaints with sincerity. We'll focus on modernising our services and facilities, influencing and implementing government reform, and empowering participants to improve their health.

To achieve these objectives, we have more work to do in **building** Aruma as an enduring human rights organisation. Our priority will be to achieve a sustainable operating model that generates a financial surplus over the next three years, so we can continue to support our participants into the longer-term and achieve our social impact goals. This includes adjusting our service and cost models as needed, and being the first disability services provider with a Sustainability Action Plan. We will grow where there are communities that need our support and where it aids the sustainability of our organisation. We are committed to building cultural safety, promoting participant and employee diversity, and building partnerships with communities, so we can provide appropriate supports to First Nations people and participants with diverse backgrounds, identities and worldviews. We're dedicated to being a great place to work and having a great work culture, and technology adaption and innovation will aid in achieving these aims.

We recognise that our strategy will be challenging to implement, however our goals need to be ambitious if we are to drive any meaningful change. Through setting clear time-bound targets and actionable plans, we will work towards our ambitious vision in a sustainable manner.

our vision

A community where people with disability have the same opportunities as other citizens to live well and contribute.

We want to contribute to a future where Australians with disabilities can lead long and healthy lives defined by their own choices and autonomy, and where their social and economic inclusion are not aspirations but realities. We envision communities where people with disability feel safe, welcomed and valued.

To fulfil our vision, Aruma's strategic ambition as a human rights organisation is:

Inclusion and equal outcomes for people with a disability across all stages of life.

To fulfil this vision over the next three years, Aruma will promote an inclusive society, and provide support that makes a difference to people with disability, while continuing to build Aruma as a human rights organisation that is sustainable into the long term.



**"We all need
support, just
in different
ways!"**

- Erica

our
values

value
teamwork
we do things
together

excellent
we do
things
well

BRAVE

bold
we
speak
up

respectful
we respect
each other

accountable
we do what
we say

our strategy

The strategic ambition

Inclusion and equal outcomes for people with a disability across all stages of their lives

The vision

A community where people with disability have the same opportunities as other citizens to live well and contribute

Pillars



Include



Support



Build

Objectives

Enabling people with a disability to live inclusive, self-determined lives so they can live the life they want

Continuously improving the quality of our support services so they are consistently safe, effective, person-centred & connected

Building a sustainable human rights organisation so we can continue to deliver participant outcomes

Step Change

We will...

Embed inclusion
across services & communities

Empower participants
to make their own decisions

Employ more people with disabilities
into decision making roles

Enable open employment
and fair pay

We will...

Do what works
effective supports and governance

Remove unnecessary restrictions
and barriers to taking risks by
promoting dignity of risk

Respond to feedback
and proactively communicate

Modernise
our homes, supports and businesses

Embrace reform
encourage, influence and implement

Improve participant health
access and wellbeing outcomes

We will...

Sustain finances & assets
by reviewing how we operate

Grow
and rebalance our portfolio

Be a great place to work
and build great culture

Adopt technology and innovate
to operate more efficiently

Pursue net zero emissions target
through our sustainability plan

pillar 1. Include



Objectives

We will enable people with a disability to live inclusive, self-determined lives, so they can live the life they want.

Why it is important

As a human rights organisation, it is our responsibility to support participants to make choices about their lives and to develop their potential. Participants should have the same choices as all other Australians, including the option to work in open employment, to participate in mainstream social and community groups and events, and to choose how and where they live. This extends to challenging assumptions about what people with disability can and cannot do.

What we will do

Embed inclusion: Across our services and the communities in which we operate.

We will expand options to participate in mainstream community settings, and lead attitudinal change for people with a disability to be valued contributors to local communities and activities. This includes actively engaging with local councils and community groups to address barriers to inclusion. We will create more inclusive homes and supports, and provide Therapeutic and Early Childhood Intervention services in mainstream settings.

Empower participants: To make their own (supported) decisions.

We will develop or source tools and training for participants, our staff and family members and carers to support participants to make their own choices. This includes planning for life stage transitions, with a focus on the transition from Childrens' Services to adult support services.

Employ more people with disabilities at all levels of decision-making at Aruma.

Persons with disabilities will be actively engaged in key decisions and projects, including participation at the Board and executive level and co-design of new or renewed services across Aruma.

Enable open employment: By renewing our employment services.

We will establish services financially capable of supporting pay parity, develop the skills of our supported employees, provide more role options for variety and more meaningful employment, and create pathways to open employment.

pillar 1. Include



What we will deliver

Key outputs of our initiatives include:

- New Community and Employment Services frameworks implemented
- Partnerships in the community, particularly in local areas
- Renewed inclusion-related processes, procedures and training
- Supported Decision Making training
- Aruma Quality of Life measure/s developed

What we will achieve (3 year outcomes)

Key outcomes of our initiatives include:

- Higher participant satisfaction and quality of life
- Continued growth in participant numbers and inclusive programs
- Increased number of people with a disability employed by Aruma
- Additional 800 people with disabilities in open employment across Aruma's footprint

What we will contribute to (Long-term social impact contribution)

Key outcomes of our initiatives as relevant to our wider social impact:

- Increased quality of life
- More choice & control, and feeling more valued & respected
- Increased social participation
- More in open employment

pillar 2. Support



Objective

We will continuously improve the quality of our support services so they are consistently safe, effective, connected and person-centred.

Why it is important

Our participants rely on Aruma to provide quality supports to achieve their goals and safeguard their wellbeing. A focus on quality support services ensures we uphold the rights, safety and dignity of our participants, foster trust in our capacity and capabilities, and adhere to regulations. This means ensuring we have appropriate and consistent models of care in place. We will report our progress against these quality goals of safe, effective, connected and person-centred publicly.

What we will do

Do what works: Embed evidence-informed practices and integrated quality & practice governance.

We will ensure our services and their underlying systems are evidence-informed, whilst continuously improving based on feedback from participants, family members and carers. We will continue to build a culture and mindset of continuous improvement through the provision of tools and support to staff. We will implement and continuously review our quality and practice governance framework to ensure consistent and robust oversight.

Phase out restrictive practices: Phase out restrictive practices and barriers to self-determination.

Consistent with government-led reforms, we will implement a program that will provide for the safe and effective phase out of restrictive practices. We will also remove barriers to taking risks, as appropriate, to allow greater flexibility in how participants live their life and make decisions.

Respond to feedback: Implement responsive, trauma-informed communications and feedback mechanisms.

We will actively communicate with participants and family members/carers and proactively seek feedback. We will implement a transparent complaints-handling process, publish our complaints and resolutions online, and improve the speed and effectiveness of complaints resolution.

Modernise: Our supports and services across all lines of business. We will modernise our services, with a particular focus on the provision of contemporary home and living options and a reset of our employment programs and their aspirations.

Embrace reform: Encourage, influence and implement reform. We will support the voices of people with disability to influence policy reform, and use our experience as a human rights organisation to inform policy decisions. We will deliver the benefits or external reforms in response to the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review.

Improve participant health: Improve healthcare access and wellbeing outcomes. We will improve healthcare access and wellbeing outcomes through our preventative health approach and Clinical Governance initiatives.

pillar 2. Support



What we will deliver

Key outputs of our initiatives include:

- A consistent standard of evidence-informed practices
- Contemporary housing and home and living support and employment options
- Up-to-date publishing of complaints
- New Behavioural Support Plan (including Restrictive Practices) monitoring system implemented
- New preventative health strategy implemented
- Effective quality governance fully implemented

What we will achieve (3 year outcomes)

Key outcomes of our initiatives include:

- Wind down of restrictive practice use
- Person Centred Active Support (PCAS) in at least 80% of services
- Increased participant satisfaction (NPS) and Quality of Life score
- Elimination of sheltered workshops

What we will contribute to (Long-term social impact contribution)

Key outcomes of our initiatives as relevant to our wider social impact:

- Increased quality of life/life satisfaction
- Reduced number of NDIS complaints of abuse/neglect
- Decreased incidences of violence
- Improved medical facility accessibility
- Improved average life span

pillar 3. Build



Objective

We will build a sustainable human rights organisation so we can continue to deliver participant outcomes.

Why it is important

Disability service providers are confronting sustainability challenges with the current NDIS cost model and practical operating costs. We will align more closely with the NDIS cost model and build on and leverage our asset base to deliver a financial surplus and secure Aruma's future.

What we will do

Sustain finances & assets: Implement a sustainable operating model, and grow and leverage our assets.

We will align our cost structure more closely to the NDIA Disability Support Worker cost model. By January 2026 we will have an adjusted service model in our Victorian homes to meet government changes. We will more actively manage our balance sheet for financial benefit, which includes investing cash, optimising fleet utilisation and leveraging our property assets. We will also pursue philanthropic contributions for projects.

Grow: Rebalance our portfolio, implement our local area growth strategy, scale through strategic acquisitions, and explore new cohorts and non NDIS-funded services. Currently our portfolio of services is heavily weighted in Home and Living, which we will reconfigure. We will rebalance our service portfolio through growth in Early Childhood Intervention, Childrens' Services and Community Participation in particular. We will develop and implement our local area strategy, and investigate options to provide therapeutic services to regional and remote areas through mobile and telehealth services. We will also explore non NDIS-funded disability services such as Foundational Supports.

Be a great place to work: Support and develop our workforce, deliver on our Employee Value Proposition (EVP), and build a more empowered and accountable culture and an environment where people feel culturally and physically safe.

Our people are at the heart of everything we do. We will find and retain great people, and support our staff's professional development so they can build capabilities and career pathways. We will develop an empowered culture which is person-centred at its core, whereby inclusion and participant choice and autonomy, are at the forefront of every employee's mind. Aruma will be a culturally safe environment where First Nations people and staff / participants with diverse backgrounds, identities and worldviews are respected and valued.

continued...

pillar 3. Build



What we will do

Technology adoption and innovation: Upgrade core technology, & leverage AI and other innovative technology

We are committed to our technology roadmap which includes essential improvements to our Community Care system and our rostering and workforce management systems. We will also explore how newer technology can enable us to operate more efficiently and deliver a seamless participant experience

Pursue net zero emissions target: Progress towards net zero carbon emissions.

We will implement our sustainability actions, which set us on a path to achieving net zero by 2034. A large contributor to this target will be the replacement of non-renewable energy with renewable energy..

What we will deliver

Key outputs of our initiatives include:

A more balanced portfolio (by revenue) of service lines

A position on the tender panels for Foundational Supports in ECI and relevant Therapeutic services

Local Area Growth Plans implemented

Childrens' Services expansion into NSW

Financial performance of services addressed

Enterprise technology applications upgrades and replacements completed

Key data reporting available

Implementation of Aruma capability and L&D frameworks, Employee Value Proposition, and employee culture roadmap

pillar 3. Build



What we will achieve (3 year outcomes)

Key outcomes of our initiatives include:

- Financial surplus
- All Aruma services represented in each location (subject to demand), operating at a critical mass
- Increase in employee engagement and participant satisfaction (eNPS and NPS)
- Staff and leadership KPIs achieved

What we will contribute to (Long-term social impact contribution)

Key outcomes of our initiatives as relevant to our wider social impact:

- More choice and control (by creating more options for participants via our local area strategy)
- Increased social participation (through growth in Community Participation)
- Increased participation in mainstream education/training (through growth in ECI/therapeutics in mainstream settings)
- Improved average life span

our target cohort

Aruma predominantly provides supports to participants with intellectual disability, autism and global developmental delay as primary disabilities. We provide services to siblings and family members, and to employers, to foster inclusive, supportive environments where people with a disability can thrive.

Aruma looks outward. We want change in community attitudes, promoting not just inclusion of people with disabilities in everyday activities, but genuine appreciation of the contribution people with disability make in the lives of others and the communities within which they live.



our theory of change

As one of the largest disability providers in Australia, supporting over 4,000 participants, Aruma can significantly and positively impact the lives of people with disability, and the communities within which they live. Below is an overview of our theory of change:

We will:

- Enable people with a disability to live inclusive, self-determined lives
- Continuously improve the quality and safety of our support services
- Build a sustainable human rights organisation

So that:

- People with a disability can live the life they want
- Our supports are consistently safe, effective, person-centred and connected
- We can continue to deliver participant outcomes

To achieve our desired social impact:

Choice & autonomy	Social inclusion	Economic inclusion	Safe people & places	Long & healthy lives
Contributing to:				
Increased quality of life	Increased quality of life	Increase in open employment	Reduction in complaints of abuse/neglect	Improved life satisfaction
Increased self-advocacy	Increased social participation	Wage parity	Decreased experience of violence	Improved medical facility accessibility
More choice & control	Increased participation in mainstream	Increase in economic independence	More freedom from discrimination	Increase in good health, and long-term well-being
	Feeling more valued & respected	Decrease in unemployment gap	Reduction in housing stress	

how we will do this

Successful implementation of our strategy will set Aruma apart from other providers through establishing us as a provider of; genuinely inclusive services, genuine choice and control and a whole of life service offering.

We will support participants from early childhood right through to older age, as they navigate living, learning, working, social and healthcare challenges and opportunities. This will include support for participants as they experience key life stage transitions, and advocacy for systemic change to prevent children and adults with disability from slipping through the gaps as they navigate different life stages and support systems.

Our strategy addresses our challenges and opportunities over the next 3 years, and allows for our longer-term social impact.



our social impact

From:

To:

A lack of agency and choice, and others making decisions and speaking on behalf of people with a disability



Choice & autonomy

Having genuine choice of services and supports, and being empowered to make both day-to-day and key life decisions

Exclusion and segregation in education, employment, social and community settings



Social inclusion

Inclusive and accessible schools, workplaces, homes, supports, and social and community events and places

Lower expectations and opportunities to learn and work, resulting in limited home, living and lifestyle options



Economic inclusion

Being valued in mainstream employment, and enjoying equitable economic outcomes and quality of life

Increased rates of violence, abuse and neglect, and a lack of security at home, in the workplace and in the community



Safe people & places

Safe environments, with minimal restrictive practices, as well as safe and reliable supports and personal networks

A complex and inequitable healthcare system, poorer health outcomes and quality of life, and reduced life spans



Long & healthy lives

Access to inclusive health services and early intervention, and healthier, happier participants and engaged families/carers

Aruma's strategic plan 2025-2027



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