



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

**2019/2020
ANNUAL
REPORT**



We acknowledge and pay respects to the Elders and Traditional Owners of the land across Victoria where our services are located.

Inside Solve Disability Solutions

Since 1975, Solve volunteers have designed, developed and delivered over 18,000 custom solutions, helping people living with disability to live their lives without limits. Our customers' goals are our goals!

Solve's remarkable volunteers bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, experience and ideas impacting hundreds of individuals and families across Victoria, every year. Every innovative solution our volunteers deliver is an invaluable contribution to our customers, their families, communities, and the wider disability sector.

Our Patrons



Denis Napthine AO
FORMER PREMIER OF VICTORIA



Mark Dohrmann AM
SOLVE FOUNDER

Our Purpose

To solve equipment-related problems faced by people with disabilities, of all ages, through the design, construction or modification of equipment where commercial solutions are not suitable.

Our Values

Team

We are a team who engage through respectful communication and collaborative interactions.

Client Focussed

We are enthusiastic about finding solutions for our clients. We listen and are responsive.

Creativity

We value and encourage innovative thinking.

Supportive

We foster an environment that values and recognises contributions from all.

Expertise

We provide clever, high quality and cost-effective products.

Contents

President's letter	2
CEO letter	4
Mixed Reality makes a real impact	6
What's new	8
How we measure our impact	10
Cutting Edge AT	12
Our team	13
Our supporters	14
Volunteers & friends of Solve	16
Financial report	20

President's letter



Mark Howlett
BOARD PRESIDENT

2019-20 has been a successful year with over 600 people accessing our service to live their lives without limits. While delivering solutions to clients, we continue to strengthen our solid foundation with a clear future direction.

The culture at Solve continues to be one of amazing generosity. Volunteers and staff alike consistently enable client outcomes yielding the most inspiring stories, images and letters of thanks. This year has produced some unique and impressive technical solutions. Even in the latter half of the year, with our efforts impacted by COVID-19, we have seen volunteers designing, building and innovating as always.

In line with the Board's commitment to responsible governance, sub-committees led by individual Board members and supported by staff have met regularly throughout the year to oversee risk management, marketing and financial management. The combined expertise on each of these sub-committees has ensured Solve's compliance and diligence in these areas.

The Solve team has worked hard on several initiatives to secure long-term sustainability. As a not-for-profit organisation, Solve's financial objective is to achieve break-even results on average. We achieved this in the 2019/20 financial year through strong financial management. Solve, on behalf of TAD Australia, secured the My Active Life NDIA grant providing the national network with a great opportunity to assist many more people throughout Australia over the next three years. In addition to our outreach service, the relocation to state-of-the art premises in Abbotsford has also provided for more efficient and client-focussed provision of services from one location.

This year Solve has continued to explore, consider and recommend the merger of Solve and TAD – our sister organisation in NSW.

The proposed merger, to be voted on at the AGM this year, will provide an incredible opportunity to increase our reach and impact in the national disability sector, increase efficiency and secure financial sustainability. The proposed merger has been unanimously recommended by both state Boards and founding members, and staff from both states are excited at the prospect of working as one.

During the year, the Board welcomed Troy Upfield, a returning (past) Board member who brings expertise in fundraising and marketing. We also welcomed Michael Deighton-Smith, who, as a lawyer, brings a valuable legal lens to our diverse Board. Outgoing President, Felicity Isaac, resigned from the Board after 5 years of dedicated service, and we farewelled Dr. Lisa Chaffey.

We thank former CEO Doug Haig, who resigned after relocating to Queensland. His leadership built a sound foundation and team over the past 2 years, and we are fortunate to have been able to draw from within to see Rosemary Nolan take over as CEO.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Board President of Solve this year; to be surrounded by such innovative, giving people is truly an inspiration. I thank and congratulate all our volunteers, staff, members, Board members, patrons (Denis Napthine AO and Mark Dohrmann AM) and supporters for another successful year helping Victorians with disability to live without limits.

Mark Howlett
Board President

CEO letter



Rosemary Nolan
CEO

15 years ago, I joined Solve for what I thought would be a stepping-stone back into the workforce. The years rolled on and my role grew. This year I was proud to take on the role of CEO of this amazing organisation.

We are moving into an exciting time, thanks to the focus and energy of the staff, the board, and volunteers. I don't think any of us could have predicted the enormous amount of change 2020 would bring to Solve. Despite COVID 19 making its unwelcome debut, there are two words that capture the last year – Teamwork and Growth!

Our commitment to active community engagement and partnerships continues to consolidate our place and strengthen our profile across the disability sector. We have seen steady growth in referrals, up by another 20% on last year. We continue to drive key stakeholder relationships within State and Federal Government, Universities, peak bodies and providers.

Customers receiving NDIS support have grown steadily, now accounting for 80% of requests for our service. Improved (NDIS) recognition of the value of fit-for-purpose assistive technology in building capacity is helping participants access Solve solutions in a timely way.

From mixed-reality technology supporting employment for people with disability, to custom scissor mounts enabling independent recreation, our solutions build capacity across a variety of life domains and activities. We couldn't achieve such incredible outcomes without the skills, ingenuity and generosity of our volunteers across Victoria.

Our therapy team have been at the forefront of delivering our essential service throughout COVID-19. Their proactivity in adopting telehealth (technology) and implementing COVID-Safety Plans has enabled us to respond quickly, and pivot our service throughout the turbulence of the pandemic.

Our collective efforts have highlighted the true value of teamwork and the agility of staff and volunteers as we adapted to conduct business from home and find new and ingenious ways to meet customer needs.

In May we were thrilled to receive a substantial NDIA grant to lead expansion of a 3-year national sport and recreation program into 18 regions across Australia. Collaborating with the wider TAD Australia network, our project teams and regional branches will drive and expand our reach, impact and outcomes for people with disability across the country.

Lastly, with growth comes change and opportunity, and after 23 years based at the Royal Talbot Rehab Centre, we have relocated to new premises to accommodate the growth and development we have achieved over the last 45 years. Solve is the sum of many parts - a multidisciplinary team of staff, volunteers, board, clients, partners and supporters – all bringing unique and valuable perspectives and skillsets. Abbotsford is our new home base, and foundation of our vision to bring these people together in a multi-purpose hub. With its state-of-the-art Maker Space, dedicated cycling centre and space to offer on-site therapy services, we are ready for the next 45 years!

Rosemary Nolan
CEO

Mixed Reality makes a real impact

In 2019, Solve was approached about a project idea like nothing we had ever done before – using ‘Mixed Reality Training’ technology.

In partnership with RMIT 3rd year biomedical engineering students, Solve Engineer, Hassan Malik (pictured) lead a collaborative project to identify the

use of *Microsoft HoloLens* technology to assist with training people with disability in their repetitive, manual work tasks.

Our client, *Ability Works*, jumped at the chance to test the technology in a real-life situation at its manufacturing facility in Kew. Ability Works – a not-for-profit social enterprise based at Royal Talbot employing people with intellectual disabilities in various manufacturing jobs.

“This project was one of the most innovative projects Solve has ever worked on.”

-Hassan Malik, Engineer





The student team was allocated a Solve mentor/technical volunteer. To demonstrate the value of this highly innovative concept of mixed reality, the team selected a wire bending machine at Ability Works that bends a straight piece of wire into a 'U' shape in six steps.

The final working prototype design was facilitated by the RMIT students using a mixed reality tool – a Hololens headset/glasses, that overlays instructions including text and audio prompts, visual animations, and positive reinforcements to congratulate the operator on reaching a personal milestone.

“This technology is impressive on many levels but what it really provides is greater independence for the user, where previously they were reliant on ongoing supervision to perform tasks, now they can do it on their own – it’s empowering!”

In mid 2020, six *Ability Works* employees with varying abilities and experience of the wire bending machine tested the *Hololens* headset following the overlayed instructions, text, audio and visual animations in their daily tasks.

The employees all mastered the task quickly and appeared to enjoy the visual prompts and positive reinforcement imagery (pictured).

Solve Engineer, Hassan Malik was excited to lead this project as this was the first time mixed-reality (AR/VR) technology had been used in Australia.

“The results were amazing and exceeded all of our expectations.”

What's new



Solve University

This year Solve Engineer, Hassan Malik and Marketing Manager, Nick Warren teamed up with the University of Melbourne's School of Engineering and Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) to co-design a lecture series for the first *Human-Centred Mechanical Design* course, highlighting Solve's co-design approach, the emerging AT marketplace, and the role of engineers in developing the future of innovative, fit-for-person assistive technologies.



Virtual OT Exchange

This year Solve OT, Melissa Thai teamed up with our sister-site, TAD (NSW) to deliver a joint, virtual presentation on, 'Co-design: An opportunity for life-long learning and exchange', at Occupational Therapy Australia's first national Virtual OT Exchange conference. Additionally, Solve and TAD Australia were featured in Occupational Therapy Australia's *Connections* magazine Winter 2020 edition, 'Connecting, collaborating and adapting OT practice in a COVID-19 world'.

[WATCH PRESENTATION](#)

[READ ARTICLE](#)



Solve in the news

This year Solve was featured across multiple print and online publications including two features in Occupational Therapy Australia's *Connections* magazine and a coveted spot in Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre's *Volunteers of Boroondara* featuring Solve's own Adam Trudgen in a collection of 12 stories highlighting the unique contribution volunteers make to our community.



Adaptable Solutions

Like the Freedom Wheels customised bikes, we know if one clever solution can help one person, there's probably others who would benefit from the same or similar adaptable versions. This year we have explored markets and opportunities where more streamlined production and adaptations of our innovative solutions can support more people with disability to achieve their goals such as accessing beaches and playing para-ice hockey (pictured).



Freedom Wheels

This year Solve collaborated with the wider *TAD Australia* network to develop a new national promotional resource to promote the Freedom Wheels cycling service across Australia.

[WATCH IT HERE](#)

How we measure our impact



Our Customers

Consumers are
delighted



Our People

The workforce is
engaged



Our Business

The business is
sustainable



Innovation

Change is managed

This year Solve proudly supported

**600+ Victorians living with disability &
88 people over the age of 65, with...**



318

Assistive
Technologies



199

Freedom Wheels
Bikes



78

Therapy
Services

thanks to the generosity of

150 active volunteers and **5K+ volunteer hours**
\$4.5M in grants and fundraising (including national grants)
and a dedicated staff of **14**

Google:



Solve's solutions had improved their quality of life, health and fitness and independence



Increased social inclusion and community participation



Services and solutions delivered to Victorians since 1975

National leadership

Former Solve CEO, Doug Haig continues to support Solve and the wider TAD Australia as President of TAD Australia.

Leading the consortium – for the second year in a row Solve has lead the TAD Australia consortium in acquiring over \$4M in national grants and managing National Readiness and Economic & Community Participation projects.

University Partnerships

Throughout the year Solve worked with Deakin, RMIT and Swinburne and TOM@Universities to deliver presentations, lecture series and co-design projects supporting future Designers, Bio-Medical Engineers, and Occupational Therapists.

Supporting Older Victorians

Solve supports people of all ages living with disability. This year, in addition to children and adults, Solve supported 88 people over the age of 65 with subsidised and free services and technologies enabling greater independence to Victoria's ageing population.

Grants

This year Solve received a substantial grant from the NDIA – Information, Linkages & Capacity Building (ILC) Economic & Community Participation (ECP) grant round, to lead TAD Australia's *My Active Life* – Recreational Participation and Freedom Wheels Regional Development project into 18 regions across Australia.

The Ian Potter Foundation and Gandel Philanthropy have partnered to fund our *Pathways to Employment* project.

Cutting Edge AT

Brodie is a 23-year Geelong woman with cerebral palsy. Brodie enjoys making neck scarves, which she sells to family and friends. She has very minimal control over her movements and previously relied heavily on her carers to help her with this activity (with the exception of selecting the material colour). Brodie's mother contacted Solve to see if we could come up with a powered scissors device to allow her to have more input and control while making neck scarfs.

This complex project took many months for Barwon volunteer, Laurie, to build, trial and refine.

When using the powered scissors, Brodie is assisted to position her hand in the hand guard and the powered scissors are turned on. The material is firmly secured by drop-down securing levers so that the scissors can make a clean cut. Brodie then pushes the scissors along the tracker to cut the material to the correct dimensions.

There are very few times in Brodie's life where she has an opportunity to participate in activities independently. Watching Brodie become more and more excited about this device as the development process progressed and actually start to learn how to push the device was simply magical. Her smile says it all!

This device also acts as a therapeutic tool to assist Brodie to generate controlled movement and enjoy recreational activities, independently.



“She made three scarves and was very excited. Thanks so much for all your efforts - they are really appreciated. It is so amazing to see Brodie be able to do this on her own.

Thanks heaps!”

- Mum

Our team

Our Board



Mark Howlett
BOARD PRESIDENT

Ian Picken
VICE PRESIDENT

Philip Wright
SECRETARY

Mark Eldridge
TREASURER

Barbara Doyle

Troy Upfield

Michael Deighton-Smith

Dr. Lisa Chaffey (resigned)



Welcome, Michael Deighton-Smith, Board Member

Michael is a lawyer with a double degree of Arts and Law with honours from Monash University and a Diploma of Legal Practice.

Working with Ashurst legal firm, Michael focuses on regulatory investigations and litigation.

Michael's legal expertise adds an incredible value to the diverse skill-set and experience of the Solve Board.

Our Staff



Rosemary Nolan
CEO

Patsy Moloney
MANAGER – THERAPY & BUSINESS SERVICES

Jenny Stephen
MANAGER – WORKFORCE & INNOVATION

Nick Warren
MANAGER – MARKETING & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Jennifer Ma
ALLIED HEALTH ASSISTANT

Joanne Grigg
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Johanne Walker
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Taryn Muller
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Melissa Thai
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Liz Doyle
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

Hassan Malik
ENGINEER

Sunny Mellor
FREEDOM WHEELS COORDINATOR

Sue Hall
ACCOUNTS & NDIS ADMINISTRATOR

Chee Lai
FINANCE OFFICER

TAD Australia



Doug Haig
PRESIDENT – TAD AUSTRALIA

Our supporters

Our service delivery is supported by the funding of state and federal governments, and the generosity of our corporate partners, private donors, foundations and trusts. We thank you for your ongoing support of our service, and people with disability!

Our Community and University Partners



Our Government Supporters

State



Federal



Our supporters

Trusts

Chain Reaction Challenge
Foundation
Collier Charitable Fund
Danks Trust
Gandel Philanthropy
Give Where You Live – Geelong
The Ian Potter Foundation
Perpetual (Impact) Philanthropy
Marian & EH Flack Trust
The Pierce Armstrong Foundation
The Sentinel Foundation
The Springwaters Foundation

Corporate

Active One Group P/L
Deutsche Bank AG
McDonald Upton
National Australia Bank Ltd
Saward Dawson
Sun Metals Corporation Pty Ltd

Workplace Giving

Deutsche Bank Employees
JB Were & NAB Employees
Sun Metals Corporation Pty Ltd
Telstra Employees

Community Groups

Charity Drive Days
CWA Toongabbie
Rotary Kew
Rotary Geelong
Australian Lions Children's Mobility
Foundation
Whitehorse Cyclists

In-kind Supporters

Back2Bikes
Bike Vault
Fallshaw Wheels & Castors
John Sinclair
LINAK Australia
LME Pty Ltd
Maddocks Lawyers
Melbourne Bicycles
Mildura Powder Coating
Navascues Upholstery
North Fitzroy Cycles
Pickering Transport Group
Pista Bikes - Toorak
Plumtec Mildura
Rosta Australia
Sinclair + May Lawyers
Metalflex Air Conditioning
Reece Australia Ltd.

Volunteers & friends of Solve

Solve's Volunteer Program

The 2019 National Volunteer Week theme was - *Changing lives. Changing communities.*

This is something that is close to Solve's heart. At Solve, our volunteers bring this aspirational theme to life. Customer feedback we receive reinforces the life-changing impact of our service and volunteers.

“We are so appreciative of the exceptional support of these wonderful volunteers.”

The impact our service and custom solutions has on individuals, carers, families and the wider community is nothing shy of phenomenal.

We couldn't achieve such incredible outcomes without the commitment of our volunteer team.

For the third year running, volunteers have continued to mentor 3rd and 4th year mechanical, bio-medical and mechatronic engineering students at RMIT. This partnership is mutually beneficial for both students and volunteers, it's a two-way learning process. Students benefit from their interactions with their mentors who bring a lifetime of technical and industry experience, and volunteers are introduced to the latest technologies while helping the future innovators of the world.



Solve's nine Victorian branches and 150 active volunteers continues to grow. This year we welcomed 21 new volunteers with a diverse set of skills across Administration, Freedom Wheels, Peer Reviewing, Technical Teams and our Board.

COVID-19 has certainly presented us with challenges, however our volunteers quickly adapted and many have continued volunteering with safety measures in place. Volunteers have kept in contact using video conferencing, other volunteers have taken new approaches such as setting up their home workshops to build our Freedom Wheels bikes.

With our move to Abbotsford, it's been invaluable to have the help of volunteers to get the offices, workshop and warehouse ready. Without a core group taking on the majority of the responsibility we wouldn't have got to where we are today.

"I was particularly impressed by the creative way the volunteer provided a solution to my requirements and the skill with which he translated ideas to reality."



Vale Bill Morling

Innovator, dedicated volunteer and generous friend of Solve, since 1978.



Internal Volunteer Awards

We have a number of award categories that recognise years of service and individual volunteers in the following areas:

30 Years

Neville Waldron

25 Years

Merrilyn Shepherd
Sam Sirianni

20 Years

John Wilson

15 Years

Michael Bentvelzen
Ken Endacott
Bruce Young

10 Years

Stuart Anderson
Ian Cross
Richard Hart
Bruce Reynolds

5 Years

Michael Anderson
Owen Anderson
Jarryd Caruana
Grant Forest
Roy Galey
David Hubbard
Kirk Kratzmann
Michael Lavery
Max Lloyd
Geoff Payne
Lynton Roberts
Saeed Seifmohammadi
Frederick Syer

Quality Award (joint winners)

Bruce Haines, Metro Branch – Custom baby seat attached to a wheelchair

Peninsula Branch – Plucka Duck exercise bike with carousel for a client living with autism.

Innovation Award

Brian Catchpole, Metro Branch – Customised wheelchair for person of short stature

Value Award

Andrew Pettit, Metro Branch – Mount for a reversible umbrella to a wheelchair

Freedom Wheels Award

David Hubbard – Commitment to the delivery of the Freedom Wheels customised bike service

Ern and Les Rothschild Volunteer Award



Ralph Brown, 2019/20 Ern & Les Rothschild Volunteer Award Winner

Ralph has an excellent problem-solving mind and expert practical skills in both project work and bike building. Over the past nine years, as both a Freedom Wheels and Technical volunteer he has helped over 200 clients to achieve their goals. Ralph is a helpful team member and always ready to lend a hand.

What do you enjoy about volunteering?

I enjoy doing something for others. Working on Freedom Wheels and other projects never ceases to amaze me. Seeing the devotion of the parents... it is rewarding to do something that brings the client and their family joy and opportunities to do something they never thought they could do. Volunteering with Solve also provides diversity in my retirement, as well as more social contact with other volunteers and staff.

How do you fit in volunteering with your other interests?

Good question! I tend to drop other things for a chance to volunteer.

What project/s have you found most rewarding?

The cargo bike box, side by side bike...and years ago I built a frame for a girl in a wheelchair to hang her toys from.

What do you most like about Solve?

Solve is an inclusive organisation with professional staff who work really well with volunteers.

External Volunteer Awards



Liz Irwin OAM

This year we also congratulate Liz Irwin, volunteer Occupational Therapist for 27 years (Sunraysia Branch), as an Australia Day recipient of Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division (OAM) for her service to the Sunraysia community.

Dr. Denis Napthine AO

Our Patron, Dr Denis Napthine was also recognised for the Queen's Birthday Honours as an Officer (AO) in the General Division for distinguished service to the people and Parliament of Victoria.

Solve Volunteer Program

Solve was also honoured to be a finalist in the Volunteering Victoria Awards in the category of Innovation In a Volunteer Program.



Volunteer age range

23-97



Longest serving active volunteer

Brian Catchpole

Mechanical engineer and a founding member
of the organisation with 43 years' service.

Financial report

The audited consolidated financial report for year ended 30 June 2020 forms a separate report. These are intended to provide an overview of the financial report and not intended to replace or modify the content of the separate audited consolidated financial report. Overall, we finished slightly ahead of budget for the year.

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue and Other Income	1,081,683	1,044,640
Expense		
Employee benefits	761,122	779,193
Freedom Wheels	122,269	59,352
Volunteer and project	55,078	15,522
Computer and database	38,674	36,533
Publicity and marketing	16,704	11,370
Workcover	12,848	9,818
Rent, cleaning and relocation	10,975	14,826
Depreciation	9,861	8,846
Others	8,749	9,994
Travel	7,357	6,543
Telephone	7,303	6,985
Audit & Review fees	6,393	7,817
Consultants	6,296	-
Trade subscriptions	4,055	3,344
Meetings	3,764	4,929
Magazine and printing	2,791	2,743
ILC Grant expense	1,902	81,477
Accreditation, accounting and insurance	1,302	11,125
Bad debts	515	1,103
Surplus / (Deficit) from activities	3,725	-26,880
Total comprehensive income / (loss) available to members	3,725	-26,880

Balance sheet as at 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	1,633,586	65,698
Trade and other receivables	82,647	30,691
Inventories	47,121	28,631
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,763,354	125,020
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Financial assets	1,383,933	522,961
Motor vehicle, furniture and equipment	46,132	36,702
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	1,430,065	559,663
TOTAL ASSETS	3,193,419	684,683
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	274,895	38,949
Other liabilities	2,308,075	51,100
Short-term provisions	101,236	74,770
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	2,684,206	164,819
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Long-term provisions	3,537	17,913
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,537	17,913
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,687,743	182,732
NET ASSETS	505,676	501,951
EQUITY		
Accumulated surpluses	505,676	501,951
TOTAL EQUITY	505,676	501,951



TAD/AUSTRALIA

Phone	03 9853 8655 1300 663 243
Address	16 Harper Street Abbotsford VIC 3067
Email	info@solve.org.au
Web	solve.org.au freedomwheels.org.au tadaustralia.org.au
Connect	@solvedisabilitysolutions
ABN	16 294 381 734
NDIS Provider	405 0000 978
Published	November 2020