# ANNUAL REPORT FY2019-20

# breakthru

# OUR VALUES



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We work cooperatively with our local communities and each other to achieve our vision



## RESPECT

We champion diversity, each other and the right of everyone to be able to make informed choices



## INTEGRITY

We do what is right by our customers and each other, every day



## RESILIENCE

We display courage in the face of adversity and challenge

## EXCELLENCE

55.72

We achieve success through innovation and leading practice, ensuring breakthru achieves high performance and sustainability

## OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to promote the unique value & inclusion of our customers in the life of their community.

## OUR VISION

Our vision is that people with disabilities experience seamless inclusion.

# [breakthru]

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SUMMARY OF THE YEAR 2019-20

Together we supported

Australians on their journey toward better inclusion and independence



## We made an impact by supporting:

**National Disability Insurance Scheme** (NDIS)



**Customers** across 27 locations

## breakthru Community College (RTO)

279

Students enroled in further education

**Family Mental Health Support** Services (FMHSS)



Families and youth across NSW & VIC

## Allied Health and Clinical Services

175

Customers with specialised services Disability **Employment** Services (DES)



Individuals to find suitable employment

## PARC, EIPSR, **Pathways and Other Programs**



200+

At-risk individuals in VIC & NSW

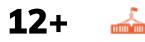
# This was achieved through:



Dedicated staff members



Generous volunteers



Government departments













**Diverse** locations

**Community partners** 

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & CEO

No one could have imagined just how extraordinary 2019/20 would be. Despite everything that has occurred – fires, floods, drought and COVID-19, we are pleased to advise that breakthru Limited ended the financial year positively.

In a year where many organisations faced immense challenges, we're proud to say breakthru still managed strong and sustainable progress toward our strategic objectives.

With a new location in Townsville and expansion to Coffs Harbour, we are now able to support even more customers across the east coast. The 2019/20 financial year also saw growth in our service offerings - with Exercise Physiology now available to our customers in Queensland.

In October 2019 we had the pleasure of welcoming John Tucker and Matthew Mackay to our Board of Directors, both of whom bring deep healthcare knowledge and experience to our leadership team.

On 3rd December 2019 we also celebrated International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) with our cornerstone annual event "FOCUS".

As part of the celebrations, we saw close to 100 staff, customers, guests and dignitaries attend our photo exhibition in Parramatta, where everyone witnessed the great talent and inspiring stories of our wonderful customers.

Looking back at our activities, we wanted to say a resounding thank you to all breakthru staff, volunteers, family and stakeholders for their hard work and support over what has been a challenging and tumultuous period.

When COVID-19 restrictions came down hard, we saw our teams quickly transition to online and phone supports to ensure our customers remained safe, connected and supported. We saw great compassion and sacrifice from all our staff this year, and for that we are truly grateful.

With support from our dedicated COVID-19 Task Force, each of our locations were able to rapidly adapt to the changing restrictions and ensure our staff and customers remained safe during the peak of the pandemic.

We wanted to acknowledge and give special thanks to our team in Victoria, all of whom demonstrated amazing resilience and flexibility through what was one of the harshest lockdowns globally.

Although we achieved many great successes this year, we sadly said farewell to Paul Stiff (Chief Executive Officer) as he embarked on the next journey of his career.

Whilst the lessons we learnt will inform us as we enter the new financial year, it is our core values that guide our work – Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Excellence and Resilience. These are the cornerstones that have guided breakthru - and have stood the test of time.

As we wrap up the financial year, we wanted to extend our gratitude

to our funding bodies – the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Employment, Small Business & Training (QLD) and Training Services NSW.

We sincerely thank our Board of Directors for their time and expertise. As always, your knowledge, advice and support has been invaluable.

We also extend our thanks to our front-line staff for continuing to provide exceptional support to our customers, and to the Executive Team for their steadfast leadership and strength. Together you have all been paramount to the success breakthru has seen in the 2019/20 financial year.

To our community partners and local councils - thank you for your continued support as we strive toward our goal of seamless inclusion.

Finally, and most importantly, we wanted to say thank you to all of our customers. We feel privileged to be a part of your lives and work alongside you each and every day.



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DIANA D'AMBRA CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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# HIGHLIGHTS & KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained essential supports during COVID-19, moving any non-esstential supports to our new remote servicing delivery model.
- Created pathways to employment for university students through student placements.
- Maintained positive customer sentiments, with over 85% of customers either 'very happy' or 'happy' with their supports and support worker.
- Despite forced temporary office closures, breakthru still maintained supports for customers in Victoria during COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Additional risk assessments were conducted for all at-risk customers to ensure adequate safety plans were implemented.
- Serviced 423 Allied Health customers since the service was launched (including 175 this financial year).
- Support Coordination grew from 500 customers in FY 2018-19 to 1,393 customers in FY 2019-20.
- Our Disability Employment Services (DES) team successfully supported both employers and customers through the COVID-19 downturn, ensuring employment outcomes were maintained where possible.
- Wallsend and Bankstown achieved 5-star ratings as part of the DES rating system.
- 63% of our DES contracts over the financial year achieved 4 or 5 star ratings.
- Received commendations from the Department of Social Services around the Quality Assurance audits.



Helping Joan achieve her goals Joan made incredible progress toward her goals this year, earning her child care qualification and starting her very own fundraising project.



Overcoming social barriers with Dean Dean overcame his social barriers, becoming one of the most active members in our weekly social groups - making many new friends in the process.

## COVID-19 HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR INDUSTRY

There's no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live. Whether it's simply dropping into the bank or visiting your favourite restaurant, restrictions have meant many businesses needed to close or drastically change their services in order to keep both their staff and customers safe.

Essential services like the disability support industry haven't been hit quite as hard compared to other industries like hospitality or tourism, but the changes are still significant and noticeable for everyone involved.

#### The Positive Changes

A focus on the safety and wellbeing of customers has always been the absolute priority here at breakthru. As steadfast optimists, we believe there have been some notable upsides to the recent restrictions.

#### Heightened focus on

customer safety and wellbeing All providers are required to take both customer and staff safety seriously by a variety of Government departments and governing bodies, but in the wake of a global pandemic, these requirements quickly became outdated. In the early stages of the pandemic, providers were forced to navigate uncharted territory and find their own way to safely support both employees and customers.

breakthru, alongside other providers, did this in a number of ways. Rolling out checklists to ensure both staff and customers are feeling well was a quick first step. Calling ahead before all face to face appointments was another control put in place to ensure we could stop the spread and keep our customers safe. Flexible working arrangements Alongside many businesses across the country, breakthru quickly implemented a work from home policy and rolled it out across all of our locations in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. This enabled staff to work remotely, and provided the flexibility to assist customers on a case by case basis.

Introduction of new online and remote support services Many providers have also been working hard to transition their services to a reliable online model to ensure customers are adequately supported.

With safe new online systems in place, many customers have found that they feel more supported now that they can access services how they want, when they want, from the comfort of their own home. The implementation of our telehealth system has enabled us to support more people in remote areas when they may not be able to otherwise access supports.

Increased financial supports for people with disability The introduction of both Jobseeker and Jobkeeper payment schemes has meant people with disability now have access to even more supports options when it comes to finances.

The Economic Support Payments of \$750 were also made available to anyone receiving an eligible payment, such as the Disability Support Pension (DSP) or Carer's Payment, which has also provided some muchneeded financial relief.

#### **The Negative Changes**

As much as we like to think every cloud has a silver lining, there are some very obvious downsides to the Coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions placed on our society as a result.

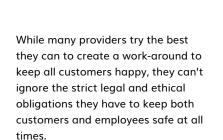
People with disability are an at-risk cohort COVID-19 is a highly contagious illness that is particularly fatal for people with pre-existing health conditions. This means many people with disability across Australia are more vulnerable than ever before.

The restrictions have also caused increased anxiety for all Australians, and even more so for people with disability and the providers/carers that support them.

Increased dependence on community mental health support services very clearly indicates that the stress caused by COVID-19 is a serious issue that must be addressed.

Many people with disability feel isolated and neglected The nation-wide changes have resulted in some customers being unable to access the supports they need in a manner they're comfortable with.





## Financial supports may not be enough

With only 10% of people with disability receiving support through the NDIS, this leaves a further 90% of individuals – 50% of which are living on or close to the poverty line – without adequate financial support in this time of crisis.

## How we addressed these concerns

There are a number of new services, processes and procedures breakthru have put in place to protect both our employees and customers during these trying times.

Coupled with daily meetings by our COVID-19 task force, we developed some of the following changes. Roll out of online telehealth services & remote servicing

As soon as restrictions came into full effect, breakthru quickly moved to a more flexible service model. To ensure customers and employees were kept safe, all staff were directed to work from home as much as possible. Group supports and any non-essential face to face supports were also suspended until further notice.

The development of our online resources have helped many of our customers continue to stay connected and supported despite these changes, with many even preferring these new options.

#### Staff training and PPE

As soon as the pandemic became apparent, breakthru implemented its crisis response plan.

As part of this plan, we quickly arranged organisation-wide training for all staff to ensure safe work

"I really don't think I'd be where I am today if it wasn't for the staff at breakthru"

- Robert M, breakthru Maroubra

practices and new policies and procedures were being followed.

While access to the national stockpile of PPE was delayed for almost all disability service providers, breakthru staff came together and procured additional resources through their network of family and friends to ensure our locations were well stocked.

## Case-by-case assessment of customer supports

Case-by-case assessments of all our customers were conducted on a regular basis to ensure they're getting the supports they need in a safe and reliable manner.

Where we were unable to provide services like group supports, we arranged one on one visits coupled with group video calls to allow our customers to stay connected with their social circles.



# **CUSTOMER STORIES**

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Making a real difference in the lives of people with disability across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

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### NATHAN'S STORY A CLEAN NEW START

#### CUSTOMER PROGRAM: DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (DES)

Job hunting can be a struggle at the best of times, and given the current state of the Australian job market it can all seem just that much harder.

When Nathan first came to breakthru, he was feeling drained and demotivated. After losing contact with previous recruitment agencies and employment providers, Nathan was starting to lose hope that he would find a new job.

Fortunately, his hard-working personality and constant perseverance in the face of adversity meant that he kept looking forward to what was around the corner.

#### Searching for the right job

After speaking with Nathan, his consultant Shahil recognised that his experience as a tradesman would make him perfect for a job with one of our local employment partners.

A short while later he had pitched a car detailer position to Nathan who was interested, but still felt a little unsure given his time out of the work force. To curb his worries Shahil offered some job coaching and interview skill training to get Nathan ready to apply.

Fast forward a couple of weeks, Nathan spoke with the owner of The Spot Car Wash Sam who expressed a keen interest in taking Nathan on board.

To ensure both Nathan and Sam were comfortable, Shahil worked to arrange a 3-hour job trial that Friday to give Nathan an opportunity to see what the job is like and demonstrate his skills. Shahil attended the workplace for the entire shift to ensure Nathan felt supported, later hearing the fantastic news that Sam would like to offer Nathan paid employment at The Spot Car Wash.

#### Getting a clean new start

With his first official day just around the corner, breakthru consultant Shahil checked in with Nathan to ensure he had the uniform and equipment he needed.

Shahil then set some time aside to turn up on-site for Nathan's first day to provide continued help throughout his employment.

Employer Sam was thrilled to have Nathan on the team, stating that Nathan was a great worker that fit in well.

"It's only been a day but Nathan has shown us what hard work is all about. It looks like he's going to be a great fit for the team and he gets along really well with everyone, which is exactly what I need"

After several weeks of employment and continued encouragement from Sam, Nathan found his groove and began to feel comfortable working independently.

"Nathan is a real asset to the team" Sam said. "He's always putting his hand up to help wherever needed. His enthusiasm and work ethic is always refreshing to see"

#### The COVID-19 curveball

Luckily for Nathan he had found work before COVID-19 became a global pandemic, which gave him some sense of job security. When the restrictions came down hard however, business owner Sam was left with no choice but to shut his Café and reduce hours at the car wash to keep everyone safe.

"I wasn't confident I could give Nathan the hours he needed, so I spoke to both Nathan and Shahil to see if we could work something out"

Knowing just how hard Nathan had worked to secure this position, we didn't want to see all that effort go to waste simply due to the unfortunate circumstances.

After discussing it with the team at breakthru, Shahil was able to coordinate with both Sam and Nathan to offer financial assistance for 8 weeks that ensured Nathan could work his full hours until the restrictions eased.

"I was thrilled to hear I'd be able to keep all of my hours" Nathan said. "I thought for sure I was going to have them cut right back or worse, so it's a relief to know it's business as usual for me despite all the recent uncertainty"

"This job has been great for both my mental and physical health. I feel like I've hit the jackpot with Sam and The Spot Car Wash"

Sam was also relieved, stating he was surprised he even had access to financial assistance.

"breakthru have gone above and beyond anything I've ever experienced before, and I'm so relieved I can keep a hard worker like Nathan on-board"

### ETHAN'S STORY CENTRAL COAST CHAMPION

#### CUSTOMER PROGRAM: SCHOOL LEAVER EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS (SLES)

Meet Ethan - a wonderful, extremely hard-working young man from the Central Coast. Ethan was born with a rare genetic condition called Cerebellar Hypoplasia, which meant he had developmental challenges growing up. After he was diagnosed, doctors told Ethan that due to his disability, he may never be able to walk or talk.

Not one to be discouraged, Ethan faced the challenges head-on and started a journey to transform his life and become more independent with each passing day.

#### Taking the first step

With such a fun-loving yet highly motivated personality, Ethan knew he wanted to do something more after school.

As he approached graduation, Ethan began to look at what options were available to him, which is what lead him to breakthru.

After hearing about the School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) taster program, Ethan quickly made an appointment and started attending year-end supports.

For 2-3 days each week, breakthru staff members Kim, Donna and Katrina helped Ethan improve his employability skills so that he can gain work experience and eventually find secure, paid employment.

#### Getting a foot in the door

To get started, Ethan first put his hand up for any opportunities he could get. His incredible work ethic and fun-loving personality saw Ethan and support worker Kim working together every day to find work experience opportunities. Fortunately, the two reached out to Wyong Neighbourhood Centre who were more than happy to provide Ethan with a work experience opportunity.

As an organisation that assists youth with emergency relief, referrals and advice, Ethan started work at the customer service desk where he greeted his peers and helped them access any services they needed.

After a short few weeks working in the customer service team, the Neighbourhood Centre asked Ethan if he could help them roll out some website updates. It was at this point that Ethan realized he absolutely loved web design, coding and all things tech – and from this moment his new career goal was born.

#### Switching careers

With his foray into the working world a great success, Ethan now turned his attention toward finding a job that truly aligned with his passion for web development.

Having completed his work experience at Wyong Neighbourhood Centre, Kim and Ethan went back to the drawing board to look for more opportunities – this time in the web development space.

After reaching out to a number of employers locally, Kim was eventually introduced to Darren (CEO at OneBlink) through a mutual acquaintance. Darren and his team loved the idea of having some fresh new perspective and agreed to sit down and meet Ethan.

After a brief chat about his skills and experience, the OneBlink team were quite impressed with not only Ethan's knowledge for a beginner, but more importantly his attitude and enthusiasm towards work.

Having acknowledged he would be a great fit for the team, Darren offered Ethan a work experience opportunity at OneBlink to help build his skills.

#### Securing employment

After a short period of time in the work experience program at OneBlink, Ethan quickly started to integrate with the team. Not long after, Darren and his team decided to offer Ethan a paid permanent part-time position.

"The work experience program was basically designed to help Ethan get some experience related to his TAFE course in a real company environment" **Darren said**.

"That went very very well, so we made Ethan an offer where he can continue his studies at TAFE while working part-time with us here at OneBlink".

Ethan's job now involves a range of different roles and responsibilities, ranging from general administration to web development and more.

"It's great, because I get to work with a lot of new technologies that I didn't have exposure to 2 years ago" **Ethan said**.

As of July 2020, Darren and his team have worked with Ethan for just over 12 months and they couldn't be happier to have him on board.

"Ethan is very reliable, great at communicating and extremely attentive to his work" **Darren said**.

"He's a perfect fit from our side of things. It's a great role for him, and he's been a great help for us".





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### LINMEI'S STORY TURNING A NEW LEAF

#### **CUSTOMER PROGRAM: BREAKTHRU COLLEGE (RTO)**

Meet Linmei Bao, a middle school teacher who left China to start a new life in Australia with her young family more than 10 years ago.

Although Linmei was a qualified school teacher in China, when she arrived in Sydney she chose to stay home to look after her family as they settled into their new life in Australia.

Like many stay-at-home mothers, once her children grew up and became more independent Linemei began looking to re-enter the workforce in order to help her family financially and to re-gain a sense of purpose.

So, she reached out to a few friends who were working at the Chinese Australian Services Society (CASS), in the Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) at the time.

Through her friends she had heard all about CASS and the great work they did to support and care for elderly within her local community.

"When I was young, I was very close to my grandpa. He had dementia and at that time, I didn't know what dementia was. I could only see that he was not able to take care of himself and my grandma always had arguments with him for making a mess." **she said**. After expressing her interest in working work at CASS, she realised she didn't have the necessary qualifications for the role.

Luckily, she was referred to the Certificate III in Individual Support course offered by breakthru in partnership with CASS.

She enrolled as soon as she could for the course and upon completing her qualifications (after 6 months), she began working immediately as an Assistant in Nursing within the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility.

"In the course, I learnt about dementia and how to take care of dementia patients. During my work placement at RACF, I had the opportunity to take care of dementia residents." **she said.**  "My trainer Gil was a great teacher. His presentation is lively and he gave good examples. When we had trouble understanding, he would often use body language to help us overcome the language barrier."

For many students like Linmei, the breakthru college and courses offered have been more than just an opportunity to upskill or explore new career paths.

Gaining essential qualifications for in-demand industries has been crucial to the financial survival and stability of many families especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"I am very happy to have stable work, when I know many people have lost their jobs during COVID-19"





### FINANCIAL POSITION SUPPORTING THE FUTURE

Only through a strong financial position are we able to adequately support our customers and achieve our goal of seamless inclusion.

We strive to achieve clear strategic objectives every year in order to ensure breakthru can remain financially sustainable.

Despite a year plagued by floods, bushfires and a global pandemic, we're pleased to report a positive financial result.

#### Income

Revenue from continuing operations was \$31.3 million, which is a 15.8% increase from the result last year.

Service revenue saw a small increase to \$27.9 million, where the remainder was comprised of other revenue and income of \$3.3 million thanks to the JobKeeper supplement.

We thank our Government departments for their ongoing investment in our services. Without this much needed financial support, we would not be able to support our 3,748 customers or 431 staff this year.

#### Expenditure

This year's underlying expenditure was \$29.4 million, of which \$24 million was incurred as employee benefits expense. This expense is almost entirely comprised of wages and related workforce costs.

Other expenses totaled \$3.8 million, which includes expenditure on marketing, real estate, customer benefits and any other expenses not related to employee benefits, depreciation or amortisation.

#### **Overall Result**

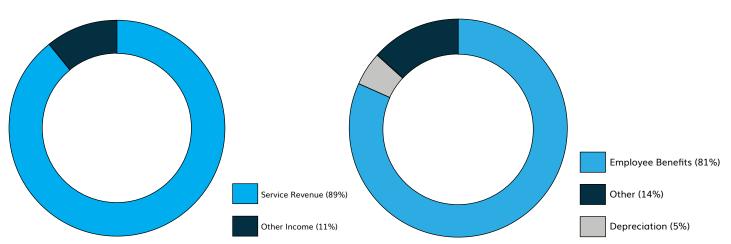
An increased net surplus of \$500,000 reflects a marginal increase in service delivery income over the course of the financial year.

The overall net surplus of \$1.9 million includes a significant contribution from the Federal Government as part of the JobKeeper wage subsidy.

Thanks to the Government's support, breakthru was able to mitigate losses due to income reductions as a result of COVID-19.

Moving forward, we strive to continue our disciplined approach to financial stability, ensuring we have the resources needed to deliver exceptional services and supports to our customers across Australia.

## TOTAL INCOME \$31.34M



\$29.39M

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

## FOCUS 2019 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

International Day of People with Disability is an important event for all of us here at breakthru, and this year we decided to celebrate with a creative event in Parramatta.

#### Casting a light on disability

FOCUS - as the name would suggest - is an event designed to "focus" on people with disability, their wonderful personalities, talents and fantastic achievements.

Alongside partners, friends, family and colleagues, breakthru launched FOCUS on 3rd December as part of our celebrations for International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD).

The event showcased 13+ different stories, told visually using thought provoking photography that highlighted each customers incredible journey toward their individual goals.

#### Building up to the event

Prior to organising the event, breakthru put a call out to all staff and customers internally asking if there would be an appetite to participate in a creative exhibition on disability.

Unsurprisingly, we had an overwhelming response from many passionate individuals across all of our locations.

Having realised there was plenty of interest in the event, our marketing team quickly moved to source photographers capable of capturing the essence of our customer's stories and highlight the fantastic achievement of people with disability.

Over the course of the next 4 weeks, our photographers drove all across the east coast to capture the wonderful, unique story of each customer. From people like Amanda – a social media influencer with a learning disability to Tom – a young entrepreneur with Cerebral Palsy, we were delighted to see a wide range of different circumstances and inspiring stories that demonstrate our society's progress toward seamless inclusion.

#### **Revealing the exhibition**

On Tuesday, 3rd December 2019, we officially revealed the exhibition to over 100+ staff, customers, family, friends and dignitaries. After a short opening ceremony and a heart-felt speech from CEO Paul Stiff, the art gallery was officially opened to all in attendance.

Guests were able to see beautiful artistic renditions of each customers story. In addition to Amanda and Tom, attendees were engrossed in the stories Ethan, who was told he'll never walk or talk and now drives his own car.

Tom, who lives with Cerebral Palsy and achieved his goal of being a photographer and entrepreneur and Joan, who has a learning disability and now runs her own fundraising project.

#### **Special Thanks**

With such an incredibly successful event now behind us, we wanted to extend our sincere thanks to photographers Nick, Jasmine, Selina and Fiona for their amazing contributions.

A special thank you to our amazing customers Amanda, Ethan, Tom, Joan, Muhammed, Michal, Tobias, Quinn, Jordahn, Kayla, Nathan, Dean and Damien for so bravely putting yourselves out there and being advocates for people with disability around the world.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Rachael Field, who expertly helped our team manage and plan the event.





## THANKS TO OUR FUNDING **PARTNERS**

We extend our gratitude and thanks to our funding partners.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) In particular our account manager, who has been a valuable support to our customers, helping us solve NDIS planning and claiming issues.

The Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS)

DSS has granted us a number of Disability Employment Services contracts across NSW and QLD. These contracts are key for us and provided hundreds of job to our customers.

DSS has also granted us Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) contracts, which allow us to support children and their families in New South Wales and Victoria. **The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services** Which funds Mental Health programmes either directly or through Primary Health Networks.

#### The NSW Department of Education

For access to Smart & Skilled funding to enable us to train the next generation of support workers and carers in the disability, mental health and aged care industries.

**QLD Department of Employment, Small Business & Training** For access to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which partially funds our Registered Training Organisation courses who help hundreds of Queenslanders acquire the skills to work in the disability sector.













### THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY **PARTNERS**



## THANKS TO OUR LOCAL COUNCILS



## [breakthru]

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