



# GOULBURN OPTIONS Annual Report 2023



Live your  
***"Biggest Life Possible!"***



Goulburn Options  
is a Registered  
NDIS Provider.









# BOARD CHAIR REPORT

During 2023, I have had the privilege of serving as Goulburn Options Board Chair, and am pleased to report to our Association Members and wider community on developments made by the Goulburn Options Board, and the Goulburn Options organisation through the year.

Our participants have this year embraced the opportunity to use the Participant Voice Group as a forum to raise issues and help improve Goulburn Options. Meeting bi-monthly with participants rotating through the role of Chair, this group has shared their views on what is great about Goulburn Options, what can be improved, and advocated on behalf of both themselves and their peers. Based around our Literacy Group, CEO Melinda Burgess and I have learned much from these group discussion, and been able to offer immediate responses to any issues raised.

The GO Board has spent a significant amount of time developing the 2023-26 Strategic Plan with input from participants, staff, families and carers. This process began with a review of what we had previously accomplished under our last plan, and in-depth discussions regarding our future -- how the GO Board can make the most of our resources to ensure each and every one of our participants can live their 'Biggest Life Possible!'

Our review included consideration of an Options Paper present by our CEO, brainstorm, surveys, and face-to-face meetings with a range of stakeholders. We thank everyone who shared their thoughts for participating.

The Goulburn Options 2023-2026 Strategic Plan includes work to expand our accommodation options, enhance our programs, develop our staff, expand and improve our services, and ensure our community know who we are, what they can expect from us, and how to get involved. The 2023 Annual General Meeting marks the official launch of this new plan.



# BOARD CHAIR REPORT

In March of 2023, Goulburn Options had a positive outcome from a mid-stream NDIS Audit, which measures how organisations perform against NDIS standards. During my discussion with the auditor, she informed me that Goulburn Options was showing examples of best practice and was glowing in her assessment of the services we are delivering. The professionalism and performance of our management team, led by CEO Melinda Burgess was instrumental in our success with the audit.

To maintain success, we need to be continually assessing our performance and looking at opportunities to improve. To that end, the Board has this year devoted time to improving how we operate, and to meeting our governance responsibilities to the highest standards. Our meetings include feedback on effectiveness and education on topics ranging from Board Roles to NDIS policy and review developments. We will continue to work to improve outcomes for Goulburn Options participants and support our dedicated staff.

The GO Board has three committees which support the continued good governance of our organisation.

The Risk and Policy Committee has been focussed on policy development in recent years, and this year has finalised an updated approach to Risk Management.

The Business Development Committee was a key driver in the development of the Strategic Plan and will now oversee the implementation of those strategies from a Board perspective.

The Organisational Resilience Committee oversees our budgeting processes and financial performance. This group is working to ensure that as we grow, so does our sophistication in budgeting programs to ensure best and safe use of resources.





# BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Since 2022, the Board has farewelled long-time servant of Goulburn Options, Bob Edwards, dedicated director Raelene Eason, and our immediate past Board Chair Ewan McDonald. Each has made a significant contribution through their work, and absolute commitment to the vision and values of Goulburn Options. Their experience, leadership and willingness to put in the hours required have helped steer our organisation on a strategic approach to growth that maintains quality, personalised service.

We have also welcomed back to the Board another past chair, Trevor Harmes, who was so instrumental in ensuring our Station Street campus was fit for purpose by overseeing quality renovation works. We currently have two Board Vacancies open to people with the right skill sets, who support our values, and are committed to working cooperatively to achieve our vision.

As a Board, we are very aware that our role is different to that of our staff. We are most fortunate to have an experienced, dedicated and talented CEO and leadership team who are managing the growth in demand for our services and all that comes with it -- particularly maintaining quality and ensuring we have the right people working with our participants. Our workers are the cornerstone of our organisation in their daily interactions with participants -- we thank them. We also thank our generous and dedicated community partners, volunteers and supporters. I thank all Board Directors who have served during 2023. These volunteers have given their time and expertise with no agenda other than to support the people that make Goulburn Options.

During 2023, we at Goulburn Options have embraced our growth, striven for quality and looked ahead to a promising future. We look forward to implementing our Strategic Plan, and both the challenges and opportunities of the coming new year.

**TONY GOODEN**

Goulburn Options Board Chair







# CEO REPORT

In 2023 Goulburn Options has grown across all organisational support areas. This has included a large growth in staffing numbers and the support hours we deliver to participants both under the NDIS and TAC funding streams.

In 2022, Goulburn Options commenced a traineeship program, which saw students completing their relevant qualifications whilst gaining valuable hands-on experience across all GO services. This round of the traineeship has now been completed with great success and staff retention. In these closing months of 2023, we have taken on a new round of trainees with GOTAFE who will continue their studies with GO into the new year.

Our administration team has once again grown as the organisation continues to expand alongside service delivery. This year our team welcomed Anna Lindsay, Bridget Shields, Suzanne Hunter, Brylie Bittles and Siobhan Thornberry to our numbers.

Due to our considerable growth we have also made changes to our organisational structure. I am pleased to announce Megan Montgomery, previously Outcomes Manager, will now be stepping into the role of General Manager. Moving forward, Megan will be overseeing our organisation's operations, allowing myself to concentrate on GO's strategic planning goals.

In preparation for the new year ahead, the Goulburn Options Board has been hard at work developing our next three-year strategic direction with input from key stakeholders.

This year, Goulburn Options has received grants from the following organisations:

- Cherry Tree Wind Farm - \$5,000 to assist in the set up of our Artist's Gallery located at the front of Goulburn Options Station Street
- Mitchell Shire Council Volunteer Grant - \$500
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions - \$5,000 Flood Relief Grant



# CEO REPORT

Goulburn Options also formally accepted a \$44,000 Community Grant from Norcen, and a generous donation from Seymour Toyota, Kilmore Toyota, and Central Ford Kilmore towards the purchase of two Kia people-movers. Hume Employment and Training also put forth a generous donation toward our vehicle fleet.

To all our community partners, Goulburn Options offers our thanks for another great year. To our staff and volunteers, I'd like to offer my thanks for your dedication and commitment within your roles. I would also like to thank our volunteer Board of Directors for their hard work, commitment, and above all, support of me within my position.

I look forward to another fantastic year ahead, focusing on our new strategic goals and our vision of supporting our participants to live their 'Biggest Lives Possible!'

**MELINDA BURGESS**

*Goulburn Options Chief Executive Officer*









# Strategic Direction 2023 - 2026

## **Goal 1: Maximise Our Assets**

- Develop a future use strategy for Delatite Road
- Develop our spaces to enhance our programs

## **Goal 2: Invest In Our People**

- Train and develop our staff to build capability
- Create and enable career pathways for staff
- Involve all participants, carers and staff in designing and improving our services

## **Goal 3: Build On Our Strengths**

- Deliver services to younger people
- Grow participant numbers across service types
- Investigate opportunities for service provision in the southern parts of Mitchell Shire

## **Goal 4: Promote Our Brand**

- Grow our programs and services through marketing and branding activities
- Strengthen Goulburn Options as a household name in the Mitchell Shire

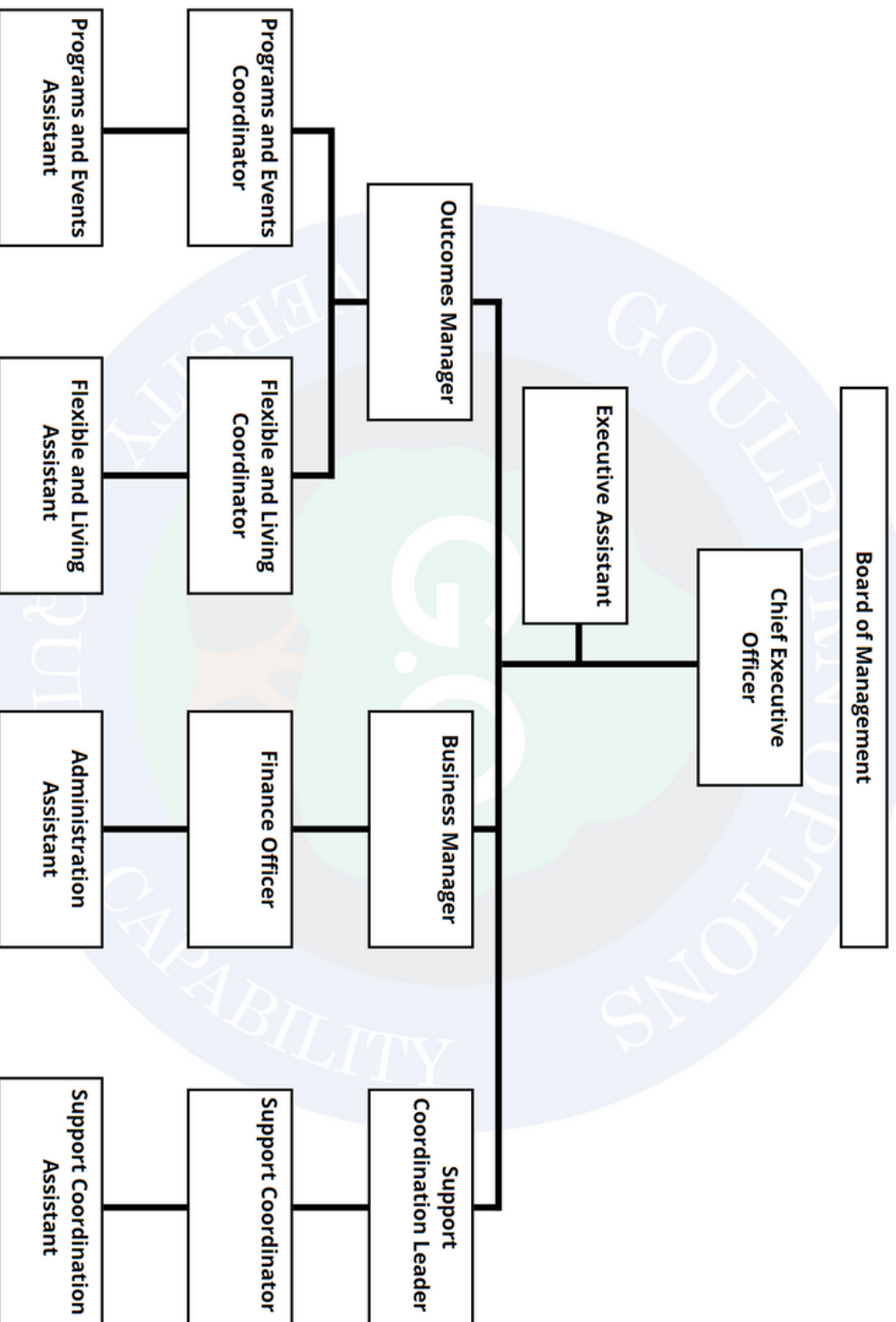
## **Goal 5: Engage With Our Community**

- Create and foster community and sector connections for the benefit of participants and programs



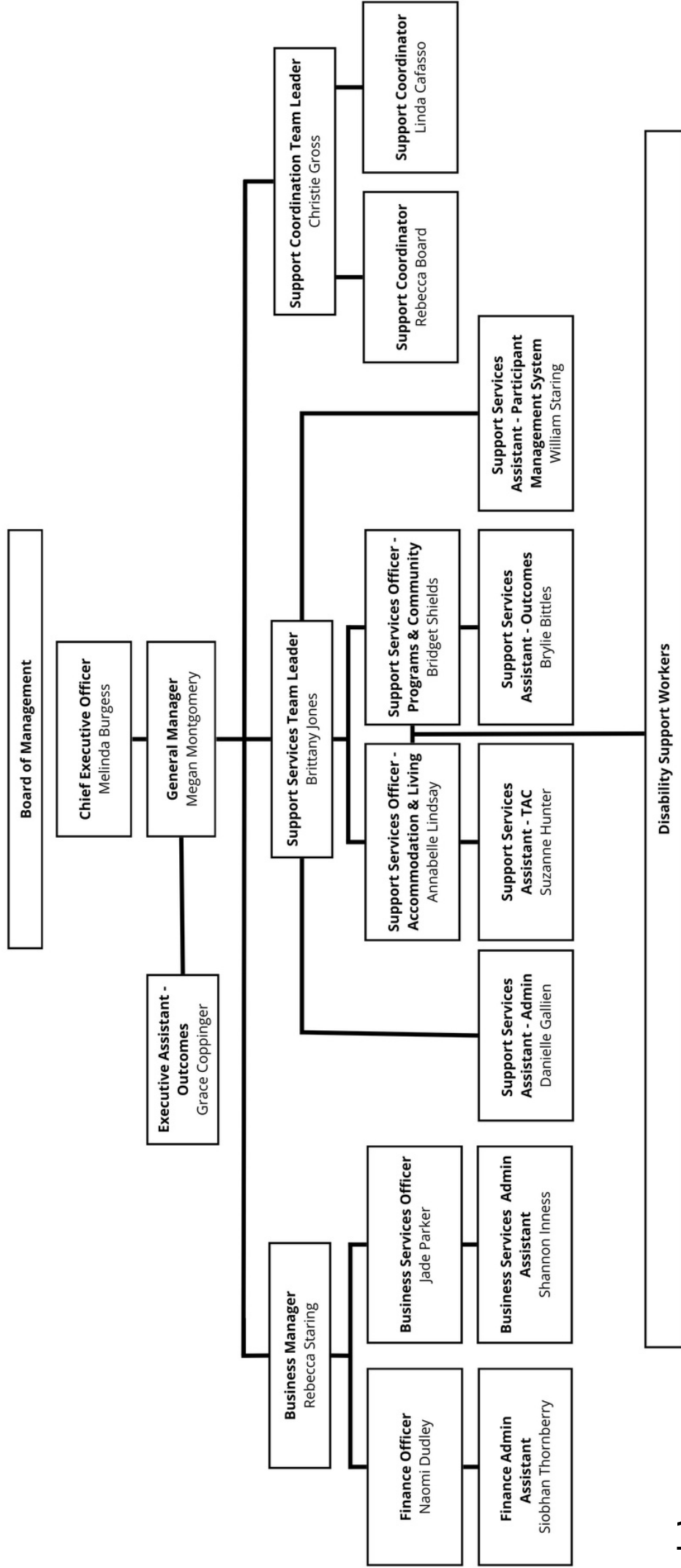


# OUR ORGANISATION - NOV '22





# OUR ORGANISATION - NOV '23









# SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

Goulburn Options programs and supports are tailor-made for our participants. In weekly group programs, and during flexible/in-home supports which run 24/7, 365 days a year, our participants are supported to achieve their personal goals, engage their individual capabilities and strengths, and follow their specific interests, hobbies and passions.

Our dedicated team of support staff bring their diverse range of skills and experience to GO to help facilitate these supports -- in each of our program spaces, in the community and in-home, our staff work to provide active, capacity-building support each and every day. This is Goulburn Options' tried and true recipe for success, and 2023 has been no different.

After the knock of last year's October floods, we came back better than ever thanks to the generous support of our extended community. Since that time, we have watched our participant numbers, and our programs flourish. Our popular GO ART program grew once more, and completed some wonderful projects and exhibitions through the year. Our Key Word Sign Group almost doubled in size, and moved from Station Street to High Street, so everyone who wished could be involved -- new songs were learnt, and much fun was had! GO Woodwork had an absolutely fantastic year also, taking on a new community partnership with Southern Cross Gold, and producing masterpiece after masterpiece, as always. Our Literacy Group participated in dozens of awesome excursions, GO Eat produced delicious food week after week, and our Swimming Program made some serious waves at the Seymour Leisure Centre! And that's just to name a few! Every day, there are amazing achievements occurring right across our Centres and supports.

To keep up with our large growth in participants and programs, our staff has also steadily increased. In both our admin and support staff teams we have welcomed new members, including a new group of trainees just this month! We have also continued to dedicate time to development and training, engaging various Allied Health professionals and



# SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

practitioners to upskill our staff and provide us with the tools to continually provide the high-quality service we are known for.

Our program spaces have grown along with us also -- our shed has expanded, as well as our use of our gallery space, and our High Street sensory room, which is now kitted out for both engagement and relaxation. We have expanded our ongoing STA programs, alongside our accommodation spaces, and have big plans for even further development in the new year.

This extensive growth in our services, and in the organisation as a whole, is a testament to the quality of our staff and their dedication to our mission, to support GO participants to live their 'Biggest Lives Possible.' It also could not have been possible without our various community partners, volunteers, families, and public supporters. We thank each and every one of them for their involvement with GO over the last twelve months, we thank our staff, and more than anyone else -- we thank our participants. Your choice to engage supports with Goulburn Options, your participation in our programs and events, and your feedback on our service is integral to our success as an organisation.

Thank you for a wonderful 2023 -- we look forward to all that 2024 will bring.

**BRITTANY JONES**

Goulburn Options Support Services Team Leader









# SUPPORT COORDINATION REPORT

Support Coordination is capacity building support that assists participants and their families to understand, implement and utilise their NDIS plans. Support Coordinators work with participants to ensure a mix of supports are used to maintain relationships, manage service delivery tasks, encourage independent living and community access as per NDIS plan goals.

Support Coordination has been a part of Goulburn Options for nearly six years now, and continues to grow and expand. Currently, our Support Coordination team is providing services to close to one hundred participants -- an increase of over 30% since this time last year. Goulburn Options' pool of Support Coordination participants range in ages from 5 to over 65, with a base stretching throughout the Mitchell, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Greater Shepparton and Hume Shires. We are very proud to say that we have a 90% participant retention rate.

Our Support Coordination Team this year remains as three: Christie Gross, as Team Leader, and Support Coordinators Rebecca Board and Linda Cafasso.

Our team continually strives to build on our foundations of knowledge to ensure we are meeting and exceeding industry standards. This includes the upskilling of staff with intensive training courses. This year, those courses have included: DSC Support Coordination Induction Course, Flexible Plan Variation Process, Improving Support Coordination for NDIS Participants, and Restrictive Practice & Positive Behaviour Support.

The Goulburn Options Support Coordination team looks forward to the next twelve months, in which we will continue striving for amazing outcomes for our participants, enabling each to live their 'Biggest Life Possible!'

**CHRISTIE GROSS**

*Goulburn Options Support Coordination Team Leader*







# GOULBURN OPTIONS IN A SNAPSHOT

Goulburn Options support Services are provided at our various Seymour locations, and throughout the broader Goulburn Valley Community.

## AGM 2022

**Participants: 105**

**Staff: 78**

**Volunteers: 35**

## AGM 2023

**Participants: 138**

**Staff: 95**

**Volunteers: 31**

**We provide:**

### Support Coordination

Level 1 Support Coordination  
Level 2 Coordination of Supports

### Capacity Building Supports

Skills development and training  
Individual social skills development  
Assistance with decision making, daily planning and budgeting  
Individual skill development and training -- including public transport

### Assistance with Daily Life

Assistance with Self-Care Activities in the home (including sleepover)  
Short Term Accommodation (STA)  
Medium Term Accommodation (MTA)  
Supported Independent Living (SIL)  
Assistance with household tasks

### Assistance with Social, Economic and Community Participation

Group and 1:1 Activities in a Centre/Community







# GO AGAIN OP SHOP

Once again, due to the hard work of Deb Williamson (Op Shop Coordinator), the dedication of our volunteers, and community donations to our store, significant revenue was generated by the GO Again Op Shop in 2023 -- a total of \$176,380 before expenses. These funds contributed to the redevelopment of our Delatite Road warehouse, as well as the purchase of our transport van and the purchase of a replacement Wheelchair Hiace, the original of which was lost in last year's floods.

The Goulburn Options GO Again Op Shop currently features 29 volunteers, many of whom have been with our organisation for decades!

GO Again is an integral part of our organisation, and services our Op Shop Program, where GO participants work to develop their customer service, money handling, and job ready skills. We thank all our volunteers for the immense benefit they bring to our organisation.





# Our Board

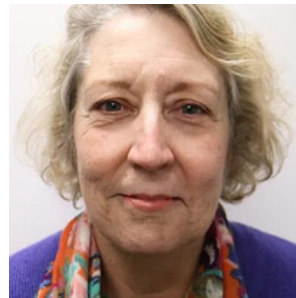
The Goulburn Options Board governs the organisation and is accountable to its members for its performance. The Board has seven members elected by the members of the association.



**Tony Gooden**  
*Board Chair*  
 Dates of Service:  
 2020 - Present



**Tracy Hynam**  
*Vice Chair*  
 Dates of Service:  
 2020 - Present



**Louise Byrne**  
*Secretary*  
 Dates of Service:  
 2020 - Present



**Louisa Munro**  
*Treasurer*  
 Dates of Service:  
 2020 - Present



**Sarah Coombs**  
 Dates of Service:  
 2021 - Present



**Helen Gwilliam**  
 Dates of Service:  
 2022 - Present



**Trevor Harnes**  
 Dates of Service:  
 2019 - Present

## Outgoing Members

Goulburn Options offers heartfelt thanks to each of our outgoing directors for their years of service to our organisation.



**Robert Edwards**  
 Dates of Service:  
 1988 - 1991  
 1996 - 1997  
 2003 - 2008  
 2009 - 2023



**Raelene Eason**  
 Dates of Service:  
 2017 - 2018  
 2019 - 2022



**Ewan McDonald**  
 Dates of Service:  
 2018 - 2023









# Service Awards

## Supporters of Goulburn Options

Goulburn Options is the recipient of wonderful community support through donations, in-kind support, fundraising and grants. Our supporters are of all ages and come from every corner of our community. We send our heartfelt thanks to every person, business and organisation that have provided encouragement and support throughout 2023.

## Service Awards

The Goulburn Options team is fortunate to include loyal staff and volunteers, who have contributed to the organisation over many years. The service awards celebrate each 5 years of service achieved.

### STAFF

#### 5 Years

**Paula Jones**

**Jacinta Kelly**

**Andrew Hubball**

**Christie Gross**

#### 15 Years

**Debbie Williamson**

### VOLUNTEERS

#### 5 Years

**Sophie Berens**

#### 10 Years

**Shirley Neal**

#### 15 Years

**Sharon Hazelden**







# Contacts

## Goulburn Options Seymour, Victoria 3660

<b>GO Centre</b>	28 High Street
<b>GO Station Street</b>	16-18 Station Street
<b>GO Again Op Shop</b>	Shop 4/115 Anzac Avenue
<b>GO Get Living Units</b>	22 O'Sullivan Road

<b>Goulburn Options Office</b>	5792 3192
<b>Programs</b>	<a href="mailto:programs@goinc.org.au">programs@goinc.org.au</a>
<b>Support Coordination</b>	<a href="mailto:supportcoordination@goinc.org.au">supportcoordination@goinc.org.au</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.goinc.org.au">www.goinc.org.au</a>
<b>Postal Address</b>	PO Box 345 Seymour, 3661

Goulburn Options is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission. **Donations can be made at [givenow.com.au/goulburnoptions](http://givenow.com.au/goulburnoptions)**



**Find us on Facebook!**  
Goulburn Options  
Goulburn Options GO Art  
Goulburn Options GO Woodwork  
Goulburn Options Support Coordination  
Go Again Op Shop





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