

## **Frequently Asked Questions re Karden's merger with Melba**

### **Why have you chosen to merge with Melba Support Services Incorporated?**

In short, the Board and our senior management believe Melba is an excellent organisation that shares our values and approach to delivering disability support services. The merger is an exciting development for us.

Melba and Karden both have a vision of a society that is inclusive and values the individuality and rights of all citizens. By design, both agencies have built their services with a strong commitment to human rights, values-based leadership at every level - this embedded approach underpins all organisational activities, including decision making and service operations. Both Melba and Karden share a commitment to see that these services are not only consumer driven, flexible and tailored to the individual, but are also of the highest quality.

When conducting comparisons between high level documents, such as the Values, Mission and Vision of each agency, it is very apparent that multiple similarities exist; both agencies have a commitment to:

- Human rights
- Consumer driven services
- Quality
- A strong emphasis on customer service and customer experience
- Community capacity building.

### **What else can you tell me about Melba?**

Melba Support Services was founded in the early 1970's by families who wanted an organisation they could trust to provide much needed support services to their sons and daughters. Over its 45-year history, Melba has grown and established a reputation for delivering high quality support services to people with disability. Melba is the only organisation in Australia and one of only seven in the world that have been accredited for person-centred excellence with distinction by the U.S.-based Council on Quality and Leadership.

Following a successful merger with Impact Support Services in 2014, Melba currently delivers services to some 300 individuals in metropolitan Melbourne, principally in the eastern and southern suburbs. An additional 100 individuals from across Melbourne and Geelong are participating in Melba's Social Impact program (originally developed by Impact Support Services). The certificate 1 program supports individuals to acquire new skills and knowledge in the area of relationships and friendships.

Like Karden, Melba was among the first to provide individualised services based on funding allocations made to people with disability, rather than block funding provided to organisations. This occurs through Melba's Individualised Support Arrangements, providing services to people at times and locations of their choosing. Melba's Community Connections services provide support to individuals during the working week from three locations in Lilydale and Mt Evelyn. Community Living Support Services at Melba provides

accommodation support to people who live in group homes and in their own units. Following two successful tenders, Melba receives funding from the TAC and from DHHS for these services. Melba also provides respite, leisure, and recreation services.

Melba's model begins with planning that focuses on the person, their goals and staff flexibility. From the very beginning, as part of transition planning, Melba is focused on understanding each person, their aspirations and their needs.

### **Why merge? What are the benefits of a merger?**

The merged organisation will offer an expanded suite of services providing potential benefits to people supported.

The Boards of both organisations are also very mindful of the changes the NDIS is bringing to the disability sector. Greater competition, a drive for efficiency and the requirement to strengthen 'back-of-house' functions and systems mean that scale is important. Both Boards are determined to ensure that mission-based, not-for-profits with a fundamental commitment to quality can survive and thrive in the future.

As part of their strategic planning, both boards see the benefit of collaborating and merging with like-minded organisations to grow, take advantage of the benefits of scale to improve their financial sustainability and deliver the high quality services people with disability rightfully demand.

### **Will a merger change the services I receive?**

No. Karden and Melba will continue to provide the same services, using the same support staff.

The merger will, however, allow a broader array of services to be offered in the future drawing on the particular expertise of each organisation. For example, Melba has particular expertise in the provision of accommodation support services and through the Social Impact program, while Karden has particular expertise in delivering visual and performing arts programs following its previous merger with Arthur.

### **Will all existing service sites remain in operation?**

Yes. **All** existing sites in Ballarat and Melbourne will continue.

### **Will quality suffer as a result of being part of a larger organisation?**

No. Karden and Melba are both award-winning disability service providers, among the very best in Victoria. In fact, Melba is the only organisation in Australia, and one of only seven in the world, to be recognised for person-centred excellence at the distinction level.

Karden and Melba plan to take the very best practices from each organisation, learn from each other and deliver even better services in the future.

**Will my job at Karden change as a result of the merger?**

No, major job changes are not envisaged. **All** existing support staff will continue to deliver ongoing services. It has been agreed to adopt the Council on Quality and Leadership's quality framework as part of Melba's international accreditation. Karden staff will be trained and supported to learn about the framework including its focus on personal outcome measures. The framework aligns with Karden's existing approach to service delivery.

**Will the terms and conditions of my job change as a result of the merger?**

No, employment terms and conditions will not change as a result of the merger. Karden (and Melba) staff will continue to be employed under existing Enterprise Agreements. If or when EBA's need to be re-negotiated, that will occur following discussions with staff and their representatives. Both Karden and Melba value our staff and understand the critical role they play in delivering quality services. We will seek to provide the best terms and conditions possible under the NDIS and continue to be an employer of choice.

**What management arrangements are planned?**

A management structure for the merged entity is being developed and will be communicated in the coming weeks. Rachael Jones will continue to work as the senior manager responsible for all Ballarat services while Glenn Foard will be Chief Executive Officer of the merged entity.

**What governance arrangements are planned?**

Some existing Karden board members will join the Melba board. Other Karden board members will join a local committee in Ballarat as part of future governance arrangements.

**Will my donations be used for the same purpose?**

Yes. Any donations made to either Karden or Melba will be used for the purposes agreed with the donor to benefit individuals supported by the organisation that received the donation.

**When will the merger occur?**

It is intended the merger will be completed by 1 July 2017 through a formal agreement executed by both boards. It is proposed that Karden's services will continue to be delivered under its existing trading name, although legally it will become part of Melba Support Services Incorporated.