

Annual Report 2022 – 23



Embrace every opportunity,
challenge, and experience with
an open heart and a curious
mind. We encourage everyone
to “get MORE out of life.”





Since 1964, when founder Garnet Rundle instilled the still current philosophy of recognising the need for housing and quality services, we have gone from supporting ageing war widows, to become a modern, inclusive, and culturally diverse group of clients and residents (and employees!)

ECH has evolved, however, one thing has remained constant, and that is our unwavering commitment to ensure people are able to live life well, no matter their age, or stage, in their life's journey.

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2023 ECH Employee of the Year Charmaine Totani

Our 'Employee of the Year' was recognised as part of our newly launched MORE ECH (ME) Awards program. This person is someone who consistently shows care for clients, residents, and colleagues.

They provide high quality services and work in a safe way and look out for the safety of others. They show initiative in their work and always look for improvements and give more to others through all that they do.

Charmaine Totani went out of her way to ensure that a client was safe and calm, in what was described as, a very stressful situation. On this day, Charmaine put the safety and comfort of the client ahead of her own. She enacted the ECH safe employee process so that assistance could be provided. She then stayed with the client, beyond the end of her shift, until the situation was resolved.

Charmaine has been with ECH for just over six years, commencing as a Domestic Assistant and then moving into a Home Support Team Member role.

We congratulate Charmaine on being awarded our 2023 Employee of the Year.



“Our unwavering commitment to community and caring for our residents remains as strong today as it was nearly 60 years ago.”

Rosina Hislop

Chair’s Message

To think, our organisation is nearly as old as most of our customers!

At ECH, our absolute commitment is to ensure our clients and residents, who have lived through the same experiences as our organisation, are at the centre of our decision-making.

As a board and executive, we are compelled to listen and evolve as the needs and wants of our clients change – this is done to not only match expectations but to exceed them each time. As an organisation, and for that matter as an industry, we should never assume, we should always be looking to improve and always ask questions. This is central to the values and culture of ECH and something I am personally very passionate about.

As the saying goes, with change comes opportunity, and we have been setting the foundations for the years to come under Claire’s new leadership. We have never been more united in our collective vision, and we are thrilled to be on this journey.

We have continued to dedicate our resources and time to providing support, fostering social connections, and ensuring that people have choices around the way they continue life’s journey.

Our connection to the community and ensuring that we support our residents and clients is no different today, as it was nearly 60 years ago.

On behalf of the board and myself, thank you.



“Leading ECH, an organisation that I had admired from afar, I remind myself daily that we can’t just embrace change, we must predict and be ready for it.”

Claire Scapinello

Chief Executive’s Message

This year we have laid the foundations for future success with a new five-year strategy, ‘great by 28’, focusing on supporting people to ‘get MORE out of life’.

Strengthening our community is one of our priorities in the 5-year strategy. Other key areas are our long-term sustainability, continued reinvestment into our property and independent retirement living villages, as well as supporting quality services through our home care, day programs and wellness centres. We are extremely focused on financial sustainability, essential for growth, reinvestment, and being able to enhance the impact for our clients.

Our financial results, speak to a story of continued growth and further strengthening of our balance sheet, with a total surplus of \$29.2m that will be re-invested back into longer term sustainability of the organisation, our customers and our employees.

Our team are at the heart of all we do, and this year I was proud of the way we provided more services and social support, than previous years, while continuing to support and encourage one another.

As a profit for purpose organisation, we need to ensure that, at a minimum, we are covering the costs of doing business, while also continuing to reinvest, develop and improve our teams and facilities. Our industry is changing.

As we set a vision focused on our customers’ needs, supported by financial prudence, balanced with investing in innovative tools and technologies we will create better experiences for our employees and our customers.

I am excited about what the future holds.

ECH Directions

An introduction to our ECH 'Great by 28' Strategy.

Our five-year strategy is focused on helping people to get more out of life, both physically, mentally, and socially. We will help people by providing a wide range of options with easy access to information, that helps them to define what 'more' means for them. We aim to be their trusted partner along their life journey and will ensure that everything we create is centred around consumer choice. We think about delivering this strategy through the auspices of three broad pillars:

Connected communities Fostering a sense of belonging and purpose

This pillar fosters the development of connected communities, where people feel a sense of belonging. We will focus on creating an inclusive, safe, open organisation bound together by a common purpose, and commit to engagement programs that purposefully join people within all settings.

Proactive wellbeing Supporting people to be stronger, healthier and well for longer

This pillar aims to encourage a proactive approach to wellbeing. Early intervention, responding to both cognitive and physical decline, helps people to maintain quality and longevity of life.

Changes may be gradual or could be driven by an 'event' such as a stroke or life-altering incidents, from any age! An individual may need a combination of services, or simply a single service, such as speech pathology, dietetics, or physical rehabilitation. It is about looking at the individual, the stage they're at in their health journey, and then the way we strategically design our organisation to deliver remarkable results for the person.

Supporting enablement Tailoring care so people can remain independent

This pillar is focused on supporting enablement, recognising a client's 'stage' not 'age', in terms of what they might need. Whether someone needs a home to live in, or support with their day-to-day life or health, our team are there to put things in place, that in turn ensure people are getting more out of their lives. Our goal is to give our clients options and the information to help them to maintain their independence, and to be with them every step of the way.





Highlights of 2022 – 23

ECH has been a South Australian organisation since the 1960s, focusing on real people, solving real problems, and advocating for the diverse groups who are typically marginalised in our community. Some of the highlights of this year include:

Wage increase for our frontline employees

In 2023 ECH passed along a historic wage increase to frontline care workers, in line with the outcome of the Fair Work Commission, Work Value Case. This was extremely well received by the recipients of the increase. It also improves the ability of ECH to attract and retain the best people to provide care and services to our clients.

Supporting our community to be active and social with SANFL & ECH Walking Footy

Tackling loneliness and social isolation is a major factor in enabling confidence and helping people remain connected to their communities. ECH's community connections team facilitates a range of activities aimed at improving physical and psychological wellbeing, as well as creating opportunities to establish meaningful social connections between participants.

One such program is Walking Footy, developed through a partnership between SANFL and ECH, a first of its kind in Australia. The 2023 season comprised of four terms with six games in each (24 games total). In addition to our community playing footy and being active, we also gave away 48 AFL, Crows and Port game tickets to residents, as well as 380 SANFL minor round tickets and 80 SANFL finals tickets to clients, residents and staff.



“Our impact goes beyond the day-to-day, and into the heart of our clients, residents, and employees.”

Claire Scapinello

Bush Tucker Garden

Formally opened on 1 June 2023 to mark National Reconciliation Week, the ECH Bush Tucker Garden embraces cultural knowledge, diversity, and social connections. The garden is part of our ongoing reconciliation commitment through our reconciliation action plan and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The garden was formally opened by Buandig woman Leanne Williams to mark National Reconciliation Week.

Customer Participation & Engagement

At ECH we welcome and encourage feedback, information, and ideas from the clients we work with concerning a wide range of services, as well as our residents who reside in our retirement living villages. It is important to us that we know what we're doing well, and what areas we might need to consider for review.

How do people share their ideas?

There are several ways, including;

Reference groups

Our Consumer Reference Group is made up of 20 people representing clients and clients' carers or family members. They meet several times a year, alongside representatives from ECH's executive team, to discuss customer experience and feedback. This helps us to identify projects and processes that support continuous improvement. This group is pivotal in driving change within ECH.

Resident Advisory Groups

For everyone living in one of our retirement living villages, a Resident Advisory Group, consisting of 21 residents and up to four employees, meets throughout the year representing their ideas and voice. The group is made up of people from different geographic regions, who live in a range of village sizes, and who have a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.





Client & Resident Surveys

Annual surveys with clients and residents provide the opportunity for every ECH customer to give us their views. This year we had 1,680 clients who receive home and community services respond to us, and over 1,000 people participated in our Retirement Living Experience Survey.

Thank you to everyone who shared their ideas, and constructive approaches to how we can continue to improve! One area we heard we need to focus on is to be more responsive, so we are testing ways of ensuring we respond to your queries more promptly.

Here's some things we heard we're doing well:

- You're satisfied; Clients rated us 'Customer Satisfaction' 89% and residents 91.3%
- You trust us; 91% feel we are a trusted brand
- You feel like you're kept in the loop; 90% of customers feel informed about what's going on



“We encourage our clients and residents to thrive as they age.”

Sally Sobels

Home & Community Services

Quality in aged care begins at home, where compassion, support, and well-crafted care creates a nurturing environment for our people who need that extra support. ECH and the home care industry has continued to see reforms as a response to the aged care royal commission. This includes the new “support at home” funding changes that are aimed at improving customer centred care, tailoring services offered to individuals, and the combining of the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home Care Package funding into a simplified offer.

It is important for us to continue to remain adaptable and forward focused to ensure a smooth transition for all our clients. Collectively we have visited people’s home a staggering 207,164 times, to provide a wide-range of care, including personal care, nursing care, support for social outings, making a meal, or mowing a lawn. We also have over 600 people that participate in our day programs on a regular basis.

Community Gardens

ECH currently has community gardens at the ECH Henley Beach wellness centre and Fairfield Lodge retirement village, as well as being heavily involved in the garden at the Cumberland Park Community Centre.

Encore Apartments at Modbury has a community garden and is also the location for the new bush tucker garden.

Living Well

The ECH Living Well program was developed to connect our clients to a range of social activities to meet like-minded people, learn new skills and re-engage with their community. ECH Living Well Consultants work with our clients to link them with an activity that helps improve wellbeing and their physical and mental health.



Wellness

Every day we enable people in the community to live safely and independently in their own homes.

Our wellness programs, encompassing our allied health services, play a pivotal role in the aged care industry, offering a wide array of services that enhance the well-being and quality of life for older Australians. Allied health is a profession that offers the opportunity to make a tangible and lasting difference in the lives of individuals facing challenges.

Our top five services requested in clinic, include:

1. Podiatry
2. Physiotherapy
3. Exercise physiology
4. Massage therapy
5. Speech pathology

We maintain five wellness centre locations, comprised of Henley Beach, Encore (at Modbury), Victor Harbor, Morphett Vale and College Grove (at Walkerville), and four-day programs, comprised of College Grove, Henley Beach, Smithfield, and Happy Valley.

Our team saw 5,347 people who had their feet checked, their posture reviewed, or their rehabilitation program designed to ensure they remained as strong and healthy as possible.

For all our fun, fit, and recovering clients, they did tai chi, balanced on the beams, and exercised their way through 124,851 sessions with our wellness team.

We had 20,000 more attendances than last year.



Our Impact at a Glance



207,164
home service visits



3,214
home service
clients who received
personalised care



789
clients who attended
Day Programs



18,262
attendances at
Day Programs



124,851
of attendances
at individual and
group sessions at all
Wellness Centres



5,347
attended individual
and group sessions
at Wellness Centres



242
clients ECH supported
to die at home



86
bus trip
attendances



74,303
hours spent on social
support group visits



61,435
hours spent on social
support individual visits



437
clients who stayed
in Care Hotel



2,936
attendances in
Care Hotel

Retirement Living

ECH is also proud to have been the first South Australian independent village operator to attain the Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) accreditation; meeting the standards set by the international retirement community accreditation scheme. These standards include elevated levels of safety and quality, good governance, environmental sustainability, and a genuine commitment to continuous quality improvement across all retirement villages.

“We know that making strong connections within the ECH villages, creates a supportive and connected community, where residents are there for each other.”

Alan Johncock

ECH retirement villages Warradale Estate, Penneys Hill Estate and Encore Apartments are the only independent retirement villages in South Australia to be awarded the Liveable Housing Design Australia gold accreditation. LHA awards builders and designers who provide truly liveable homes that respond to the changing needs of people now and into the future. It is testament to the in-house expertise ECH has for defining new benchmarks in retirement living design.

This year 155 people chose to move into a home built by ECH.

These ‘155 new neighbours’, joined our 2,070 strong community who already live in one of our properties. Day to day, the support people offer one another in our villages is heartening and a true expression of community.

Another form of the community can be seen with our visionary intergenerational connections initiative, which continues to grow through our co-located SA Montessori early learning centre. Another example of our unwavering commitment to nurturing a sense of community and social cohesion. The benefits of intergenerational living demonstrate it’s far more than a buzzword; they are vast, including learning and practicing new skills, gaining an improved sense of purpose, sharing ideas and strengthening social connections, which in turn, enhance wellbeing.

ECH Encore Apartments continues to promote and enhance the accessibility, adaptability, and inclusivity of residential living spaces. This modern retirement living setting stands as a model for others.



Our People & Culture

ECH stands at the threshold of a transformative journey. Now with 840 dedicated employees, and a commitment to leadership development, we aim to drive sustainable growth, inspire innovation, and foster collaboration. As we embark on this visionary path, we are poised to define our values, invest in our people, and lay the foundations for remarkable growth.

“The dynamic nature of the aged care industry presents both opportunities and challenges.”

Matt Mulvihill



We're listening to our team

As part of our commitment to hearing firsthand from our employees about their experiences at ECH, we disseminated an employee survey, asking them about what we are doing that is working well and what we could do better. This year 519 people completed our survey, representing a 65% of our employees – a wonderful result. We learned from our team that they feel a sense of accomplishment in the work they do and believe that ECH fosters cooperation and builds trusting relationships. They feel they are treated fairly and with respect.

Some of the opportunities for review and improvement we heard about, include, communication, professional development, and employee recognition. As a result of this feedback, we have launched the ME Awards program, focusing on exemplary employees. We have introduced town hall meetings and are also planning to renew our intranet. All of this aims to boost our communication and engagement with our team. Other initiatives, that support employee engagement during the year include:

A new set of values

We are now set to further define who we are and what we stand for through a new set of clear values, investing in the early experiences of our people and establishing foundations for growth.

Leadership development

This year marks a significant milestone in our commitment to learning and development as we proudly launched our leadership development strategy. We recognise that generative and adaptive leadership is crucial for driving sustainable growth, inspiring innovation, fostering collaboration, and ultimately delivering on our purpose to enable people to “live life well”. With the aim to foster great leadership that enables ECH to achieve its strategic objectives, our leadership strategy sets out a vision for the future of leadership and management at ECH, and the approach needed to build core leadership and managerial capabilities.

ECH continued its involvement in the ‘Road to Employment’ Community of Practice supporting and enabling people living with disabilities to undertake training and find employment within ECH and across the aged care sector.

Diversity & Inclusion

This year we embarked on part two of our reconciliation journey by commencing our ‘innovate’ reconciliation action plan and continuing our involvement in the road to employment disability employment program. This sees us working with partners across the aged care, disability, employment, and the education sectors to support training and employment for South Australians who are living with disabilities. Throughout the year we regularly celebrate and add our voice to acknowledge causes of importance to our diverse community and we make it clear that ECH welcomes everyone.

- ECH successfully underwent Rainbow Tick reaccreditation, with assessors saying, “Since its last Rainbow Tick assessment in 2020 ECH has continued to integrate respectful and inclusive LGBTQI+ practices across all its programs and services”. Clients were extremely positive of ECH and LGBTQI+ Connect, with one client saying “There is not enough paper to write down all the praise about the ways ECH has helped me”;
- The Rainbow Social Program had 199 people attending monthly, going to an amazing array of places including Lot 14 Space Agency, Foodbank and the Holocaust Museum;
- ECH became a member of Equal Opportunity SA’s ‘We’re Equal’ campaign. ‘We’re Equal’ identifies businesses committed to treating everyone equally, supporting people of all ages, abilities, gender identities, sexual orientations, relationship and reproductive status, races, religions and cultures and make sure their premises are a safe space for all people.

Reconciliation Action Plan

ECH successfully completed its second RAP, Innovate. The education of our staff was the main driver of the Innovate RAP, with Evolve Communities, Kuma Kaaru, Emu Consulting and John Briggs Consulting providing cultural awareness training to our workforce, including our Board members, Executive Committee and Diversity Reference Group. Our Aboriginal Advisors provided guidance in the development of our Aboriginal Protocols booklet, Aboriginal Engagement Plan and Aboriginal Recruitment, Retention and Professional Development Guideline. Buandig woman Leanne Williams imparted her knowledge about the culinary and medicinal uses of indigenous plants, being instrumental in the development of our Bush Tucker gardens at our Henley Beach and Encore Apartment sites. ECH will undertake a second edition of the Innovate RAP, with connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities being the main focus areas.

Diversity Reference Group

The group continues to learn about and engage with a diverse range of communities, with learning the basics of AUSLAN, visiting Buddha House and building our understanding of a respectful Aboriginal acknowledgement of country being highlights.



Volunteers

Volunteering brings people together; it builds communities and creates a better society for everyone. At ECH our volunteers have provided tremendous support since ECH was established back in 1964. Thanks to the ongoing commitment from over 130 volunteers, ECH has been able to offer our clients and residents additional support and benefits such as increased independence and the opportunity of building long-lasting friendships.

Wellbeing

We kicked off our employee wellbeing program with a pilot program supporting 90 staff to join teams and compete in a fun and interactive step challenge. The pilot was enjoyed by all and provides the foundation to run a larger scale program next year.



“We continue to showcase our clients’ stories, to share relevancy and create meaning.”

Carolyn Dawkins



Partnering for Success

Forming partnerships with organisations like the State Theatre of South Australia, the Adelaide Botanical Gardens, the Adelaide Festival, Council of the Ageing (COTA) and Feast, is key to keeping the wisdom of experience alive in our vibrant community. Through these collaborations, we breathe life into the timeless stories and insights that enrich our cultural and diverse heritage, ensuring that every stage of life remains meaningful and connected. As social and community connections remain a key focus for our work, so do our corporate sponsorships which we believe form an important platform to enable community engagement. Here’s a couple of our sponsorships and the activities of this year in focus:

Adelaide Festival

Cementing a partnership that allows ECH to position itself alongside a strong and reputable South Australian brand, ECH is proud to be able to offer our customers benefits, including our tailored experiences. During these, clients hear directly from authors or attend events with exclusive access, hosted by our CE, Claire and other members of the executive team. This year we hosted four tailored experiences: two for Writers’ Week events, one Andy Warhol exhibition and one concert. We were also thrilled that many of our community were able to take up tickets with a discount we had secured on their behalf. Given there were 258 tickets sold to ECH members this year, compared with 50 in the year prior, the word about the discount has been well received.

Botanical Gardens

ECH partner Adelaide Botanic Gardens offered ECH clients and residents a series of unique mindfulness classes, hosted by their horticultural therapist. The classes were held in the city Botanical Gardens and included hands-on gardening activities that aim to help reduce stress and boost positive mental health.

Research Partnerships

Partnerships in research such as with Community Neighbourhood, Goldilocks, and the Registry of Senior Australians (ROSA) have allowed us to build on the current knowledge and adapt the technology to meet the needs of older people. The projects we align to have shown ECH’s commitment to empowering older people to remain living independently at home and have all been an invaluable experience.



Keep Connected Survey

To ensure we are staying connected to our community and listening to the needs of our clients, a survey was sent out with the March issue of Keep Connected to over 8,000 readers (with 6,000 sent to clients and residents). It was also made available online, giving our readers the opportunity to give feedback on our quarterly magazine.

We received 736 responses (12% response rate) and the overall feedback was very positive. The majority said they enjoyed reading the magazine, with features people were particularly interested in including community news, resident and client stories, technology, and financial scam advice, as well as lifestyle tips. The survey identified several opportunities for improvement, including the thickness of the paper!

Our ability to connect with our clients and listen to what they wish to hear from us, will continue to differentiate us and ensure we're continuing to put them at the heart of all that we do.

Media Coverage

The ability to share our information has drastically altered in the past two years (indeed for everyone across South Australia, and in some respects also Australia). The explosion of (online) social networks and the ever-increasing sophistication of smartphones, has transformed communications and radically altered the landscape of traditional media channels.

ECH is committed to discussing and responding to issues and topics that matter to our community. This year we featured prominently in the media, appearing 66 times across TV, radio, print and online publications.

Governance

Board

ECH has a board of directors comprised of experienced professionals from a wide range of business and community sectors. The board is responsible for setting overall strategic directions, in line with its constitution and for ensuring ECH complies with all regulatory requirements, including the aged care act, retirement villages act and the residential tenancies act.



Rosina Hislop
Chair (since Nov 2020)

Appointed March 2016



Cameron Bryson
Deputy Chair
Chair Audit & Risk
Management Committee

Appointed July 2015



Loewn Steel
Chair Technology &
Innovation Committee

Appointed March 2018



Jennifer Ma
Chair Capital
Management &
Investment Committee

Appointed April 2022



Marc Makrid
Board member

Appointed March 2018



Dr Stephen Christly
Chair Client Experience
& Service Quality
Committee

Appointed May 2017



Patrick Power
Board member

Appointed February 2023

Executive



Claire Scapinello
Chief Executive

Australian Institute of Company
Directors (GAICD)
M.B.A, Business Administration
and Management



Merrin Nancarrow
Chief Financial Officer

Bachelor of Commerce
(Accounting)
Chartered Accountants
Australia and New Zealand



Carolyn Dawkins
Head of Customer
Experience

Bachelor of Business
(Major in Marketing)



Matt Mulvhill
Head of People & Culture

Master's Degree in Leadership



Sally Sobels
Head of Home &
Community Services

B App Sc (Physiotherapy), Grad
Dip Health, Sc Prosci



Alan Johncock
Head of Property &
Retirement Living

Australian Institute of
Company Directors (AICD)
M.B.A, Business Administration
and Management
Master of Engineering



Sharon Paulson
Head of Digital
Workplace Services

Project Management, Business
Administration, Grad Cert
Business Administration

Financial Report

Driving our Strategy through Financial Sustainability

This year saw continued consolidation of our financial position, aligned to our new five-year strategy, 'Great by 28'. A key driver of this strategy is financial sustainability, and this year's results demonstrate a solid foundation to build upon.

Total Income was up 23.2% compared to FY22 with strong growth from In-home services due to the increased number of home care packages managed.

Our surplus for the year of \$29.2m was up 53.4% due to the revaluation of the investment properties and management of cost base during a period of growth.

Our balance sheet strengthened in FY23 with a \$30.3m (9.1%) increase in net assets, underpinned by uplift in our investment portfolio and our property portfolio. Debt levels were held flat - maintained due to increased levels of entry contributions from residents entering our Retirement Villages and additional home care package funds.

Income (000's)



24,168
Housing



59,860
Keeping
people at
home



4,090
Investments

Expenses (000's)



51,595
Labour



31,172
Operating
Expenses



6,925
Capital
Works

What We Owe (000's)



27,104
Borrowings



134,154
ILU Resident
Loans



48,960
Other
Liabilities

What We Own (000's)



411,328
Investment
Property



107,362
Cash &
Financial
Assets



53,836
Other
Assets

Surplus FY23 (000's)



29,237

\$M	FY23	FY22	Change \$M	Change %
Income				
Housing	24.168	18.716	5.452	+29.13%
Keeping people at home	59.860	45.490	14.37	+31.59%
Investments	4.090	7.301	-3.211	-43.98%
Total Income	88.118	71.507	16.611	+23.23

Expenses				
Labour	51.595	42.902	8.693	+20.26%
Operating Expenses	31.172	28.387	2.785	+9.81
Total Expenses	82.767	71.289	11.478	+16.1%

Investments				
Capital Works	6.925	11.603	-4.678	-40.32%

What We Owe				
Borrowings	27.104	27.441	-0.337	-1.23%
ILU Resident loans	134.154	130.608	3.546	2.71%
Other liabilities	48.960	44.411	4.549	10.24%

What We Own				
Investment Property	411.328	379.463	31.865	8.40%
Cash & Financial Assets	107.362	98.670	8.692	8.8%
Other Assets	53.836	56.309	-2.473	-4.39%

A full version of our detailed audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2022 are available at www.acnc.gov.au

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ECH is a leading profit-for-purpose provider of retirement living accommodation as well as services that promote self-determination, and enables people to have the best life possible as they age.

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