

# Annual Report 2023





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## Acknowledgement Traditional Owners

We respectfully acknowledge the Southern Yamaji people who are the traditional owners and first people of the land on which we meet. We pay respect to the elders past, present and future as they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of the Southern Yamaji people.

## Mission

- To work to empower people with disabilities to engage in leisure and sport opportunities within a community that promotes and proactively engages in equitable inclusion of all people.
- To act as a community voice as a means through which action for change can be directed.

## Vision

The empowerment of people with disabilities to engage in leisure and sport opportunities within a community that promotes and proactively engages in equitable inclusion of all people.

## Values

1. **Inclusion:** we are committed to building communities that are welcoming, inclusive and encourage health and wellbeing for all members.



2. **Accessibility:** we want to create communities where all people are able to access opportunities for development, fulfilment and citizenship.
3. **Diversity:** we appreciate difference as an integral part of our society and value the unique contribution of individuals and communities.
4. **Equity:** we value fairness and openness in the decision making and the allocation of advocacy, supports and information.
5. **Dignity:** we support the rights of individuals to make choices and be empowered to make decisions about their own lives.
6. **Respect:** we value practices that uphold individuality and personal and community choice.



## Chairpersons Report

ATLAS offers a unique approach to building an accessible and inclusive community to be enjoyed by all. This past year has seen some exciting developments in several areas but particularly within our tourism strategy. ATLAS continues to consolidate partnerships with several business and sports clubs resulting in worthwhile strategies in both





Community Education and Community Development including the installation of a passenger lift in collaboration with Geraldton Air Charter.

Over the 2022/23 financial year, the Board consistently monitored both operational and financial aspects of ATLAS to maintain long term sustainability. It was pleasing to see the financial position as of 30 June 2023 return a small profit as compared to the previous year despite the turn over being substantially reduced.

We are confident that the organisation remains well placed to continue the delivery of quality services. Once again, this past year has not been without its' challenges due to changes to some core staff combined with staff shortages across the region along with impacts from COVID and NDIS on the entire workforce.

The 'Access All Areas' service, which commenced almost five years ago, continues to make a positive impact within the community by allowing for improved access to activities and events hosted by various organisations based both within the city as well as regionally. Several other innovative pieces of equipment have been procured by ATLAS to address access to the Abrolhos Islands and the Kalbarri Loop Walk as well other outdoor activities. This strategy has been resourced by profits of the business arm and successfully obtaining other small grants.

Other highlights this year include:

- Winner of the Australian Enablement Award towards the end of 2022 as well as winning the Global Award in the same category which is to be presented at a ceremony in London in November 2023. These awards recognise the advocacy work undertaken by ATLAS to enable inclusion at all levels.
- The development of new partnerships with New Leaf Connect, Geraldton Yacht Club and Champion Bay Surf Club.
- The commencement of the Sailability Program (with support from Geraldton Yacht Club, other donations and small grants) culminating in an order for two yachts being placed.
- Launch of the Bush Walking Project and the Mellenbye trip.
- Various research projects undertaken by Practera and a Masters UWA student.
- Traction with Tourism WA and Midwest Development Commission (MWDC) to develop tourism marketing and business plans for ATLAS through DTM Tourism and the Prime Mentoring Program.

ATLAS has worked consistently over a substantial period to develop key partnerships with a range of groups and organisations over the years. The value of these relationships within the community cannot be under-estimated and contributes greatly to the overall success of ATLAS and to improvement in the quality of life for people with disabilities. We are truly grateful for the collaboration and acknowledge and thank our partners as follows:



- The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries for accommodation and infrastructure support in Geraldton and accommodation access in Perth.
- The Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation (GSAC), and particularly to Adrian Bartlett and his team, for continued and ongoing assistance with 'Spin Out' wheelchair basketball.
- The Geraldton Amateur Basketball Association (GABA) for support with running the Spin Out basketball competition and facilities.
- Andrew Crothers of Mint Construction for the building services in domestic and commercial building access improvements.
- Revolutions Geraldton for their ongoing support through adaptive cycle hire out, repairs and maintenance and development of new offerings.
- The City of Greater Geraldton (Peter Treharne and team) for continuing support and their own commitment in making Geraldton an accessible and inclusive community for all.
- Geraldton Air Charter for assisting with the prototyping of our passenger lift.
- Ultimate Water Sports, 1000 Mile Travel Group, Coral Coast Mobility, Geraldton Golf Club and Champion Bay Surf Club for their various contributions to and support of our inclusive tourism strategy.

The achievements of ATLAS this year would not be possible without the efforts of our strong and cohesive team. I sincerely thank every ATLAS staff member and the ATLAS Management team for your dedication and work over the past year. As a Board we are truly proud of, and very grateful for your efforts.

Finally, I extend warm and grateful thanks to all Board members, past and present for your vision and endeavours. We farewelled Joanne Brown some months ago, acknowledging her valuable contributions made within the tourism space and recently welcomed Barbara Thompson and Renee Marchetti. We will farewell Tim McAuliffe at the 2023 AGM after serving 3 years on the Board in the position of Treasurer. Over this time, Tim has made a substantial contribution, particularly his regular year on year 'at a glance' financial comparisons and projections at our monthly meetings. Barbara brings a range of skills to the Board including tourism, small business operation, as well as a focus on training and regional employment. Renee comes to us with a financial and banking background and will transition into the position of Treasurer as we move forward this coming year.

As a Board, we look forward to continuing to make a difference in 2024 and beyond.

**Jenny Rolston**



**Chairperson**  
**12 September 2023**



## Service Report

### Leisure Buddy Strategy

This is a generic strategy that allows us to provide a customised service for participants that is informed by their personal decisions and aspirations. We use the strategy across several programs.

ATLAS provides services using leisure, sport and recreation as a tool for engagement. We have a wide range of Leisure Buddies that participants can choose from to ensure the best chance of an enjoyable and successful experience. This strategy provides a





foundation upon which ATLAS works systemically to improve access and inclusion in the community. We use the learning gained from providing Leisure Buddy support for our work in community education, law/ policy and rule reform, and community development.

Number of Leisure Buddies on staff: 34

## Research

This project was initiated in September 2020. It is an extracurricular activity for university students to gain connection with industry in the progress of their study. Project are usually high intensity research of a specific problem to do with organisational sustainability.

### Status of project

In progress and ongoing

Studies have been completed with a focus area on innovation and entrepreneurship. We had students from UK Kings College, Practera (International Team), and a Masters student from University of WA. Key learning has been derived from looking at comparable organisations delivering in the area of access and inclusion.

This project has been instrumental in developing ATLAS's thinking about innovative and alternative methods (non-NDIS) to deliver its mission effectively and efficiently. The learnings are now being implemented through the organisation.

Studies completed: 3



## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS launched in the Mid West in July 2019. The ATLAS Leisure Buddies provide personalised supports and services under this program. Activities are chosen by Participants in alignment with their own personal plan, and support to achieve the plan goals is provided by ATLAS Leisure Buddies (also chosen by Participants from the ATLAS staff pool). Their choice of activities is as broad as they wish. As long as it is legal, ATLAS can assist.

### Status of program

Embedded within ATLAS operation.

This year saw a continuation of our efforts to align services with our mission. Several participants were assisted to transition to more suitable providers for services that were solely home based. Most change related to the continued transition of Participants toward self or plan managed methods of managing their funds. This has meant that a trend of moving to independent (non-NDIS registered) service providers has continued.

Number of participants served (Geraldton):

51



Number of participants served (Perth): 4  
Number of participants served who require NDIS registered provider: 13







## ATLAS Organisational Development Strategic Thinking and Positioning

The ATLAS strategic plan is an iterative live working document. Strategy is still a standing item on the Board agenda and an ongoing agenda item at team meeting level. All ATLAS work is founded on the Lean Entrepreneurship philosophy and tools. This sees the main initial return on effort as knowledge and learning. This allows ATLAS to position strategically to capture a range of unannounced resourcing opportunities.

We continue to explore the use of economic levers in tourism to create a more accessible and inclusive community. This provides us with alternative non-traditional resourcing options to carry out our work. Partnering with operators in the private sector is a key strategy and a new enabler for ATLAS. This year further work on identifying the tourism value chain and key players in this has allowed us to realise the full potential value of this strategy. We also took out memberships to key state level peak bodies to connect in new ways to these valuable information sources.

The innovative development of access equipment has been a fantastic spin off from the learnings generated in the Access All Areas and ATLAS Tourism services. At the years end we were nearing completion of a prototype light aircraft passenger lift in collaboration with Geraldton Air Charters. This product has been proven also have utility for accessing high vehicles and helicopters. We are currently developing a prototype for a platform lift for use with high vehicles and light buses and have a portable boat passenger lift in the pipeline.

### Strategic Partners

We have been utilising a key strategy of identifying key businesses in the community and adding ATLAS's capabilities to their operation as a method on increasing access and inclusion through the community sustainably for some years now. This year we are excited to bring on several new businesses as well as continuing our relationship with our longer-standing partners.

- ✓ Revolutions Geraldton- Inclusive cycling through bike sales and service as well as bike hire



- ✓ Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corp- Inclusive sports, Spinout and community health.







- ✓ Mint Construction- Building and constructing access into the community.



- ✓ Coral Coast Mobility- retail and hire of disability equipment and servicing.



- ✓ Ultimate Water Sports- Inclusive action water sports



- ✓ 1000 Mile Travel Consultants- Inclusive and accessible travel and holiday planning and booking



- ✓ Champion Bay Surf Life Saving Club- Accessible beach and inclusive surf life saving.



- ✓ Geraldton Golf Club- Accessible and Inclusive golf and social

- ✓ Geraldton Yacht Club- Accessible and inclusive sailing and social



- ✓ New Leaf Connect- Accessible and inclusive Mid West tours.





We also signed new memberships with:

- ✓ WA Disabled Sports Association- Inclusive recreation programmes and advocacy
- ✓ Rebound WA- Assisting people recovering from adversity (physical disability)
- ✓ WA Tourism Council- Tourism peak body





## Spinout Program

Spin out is a wheelchair basketball competition for all people. We also provide education and community awareness activities using the basketball wheelchairs in the community. The chairs and facilitation staff are available on a fee for service basis.

### Status of program

Significant expansion.

Knowledge of, and appetite for this product across the community is moving toward becoming embedded now. This return has taken years of effort to obtain and is now bearing the results. We are now moving toward the challenge of being able to provide appropriate staffing to cater to the requirements of the community sessions. The partnership with Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corp. to deliver the basketball competition continues productively. Thank you once again Adrian Bartlett, Lenelle Papertalk and team. We are very proud of the partnership with Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation.

We were very pleased to be able to purchase 11 new basketball wheelchairs with the able support of Variety WA this year. They arrived shortly after the year end.

Number of Spin Out teams:	8
Number of participants:	742
Number of Spin Out community sessions:	29
Number of Participants:	1215





## Access All Areas

This was initially a project developed to provide a mechanism for all people to attend and enjoy community events in Geraldton. The project stage of the strategy was to procure, design and build a range of equipment to cater for access and inclusion. It is envisioned that people planning, approving and running any event in Geraldton will see making their event accessible as standard practice. The outcome of this shift in attitude will be an improved quality of life for people in our Participant group and for others with mobility issues that limit them and their families and friends from participating in their choice of activities fully.

## Status of project

Ongoing

A steady year with several jobs completed. The City of Greater Geraldton had purchased beach matting to add to its beach wheelchairs. Our partner Champion Bay Surf Club continues to assist beach access as well with assets and assistance from us.







## ATLAS Tourism

ATLAS Tourism works with tour operators and their value chains and with tourists to build and develop inclusive tourism offerings and infrastructure.

A suite of services is offered including:

- Facility Audits
- Facility development
- Customer service training and development
- Just in time support and advice
- Marketing
- On tour personal support
- In community equipment

### Status of project

Ongoing

The procurement of a range of recreational and leisure equipment resourced by the WA government was completed and progress on this is continuing.

Work to identify and partner with key tourism businesses also progresses and the array of partners bringing their expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm into the relationship can be seen earlier in the report. I am pleased to inform that all of our partners have needed no encouragement in progressing to the formal agreement and working collaboratively to improve their offerings and the community more broadly.

Towards the end of the year, we were negotiating a potential mentoring project to improve ATLAS Tourism and develop our products and services to be “bookable”. This will mean that we can actively promote our offerings to travel agents and visitors’ centres, as well as market on a national and global scale. We are very keen to develop this infrastructure to improve our profile and activity.





## Labour Hire

The Labour Hire service continued strongly with continuity in the area of serving NDIS registered providers with staffing shortages and people self-managing their NDIS plans. The labour hire service outside the disability sector took a significant hit from the combined effects of Covid and NDIS resource pressures this year but things looked to be stabilising by the end of the year. Our offering simplifies the recruitment, employment, supervision and development processes and administration for people so they can concentrate on building their quality of life.

ATLAS will continue to specialise in human service rather than competing in mining or trades where there are existing mature labour hire companies serving sectors.

Apart from the objective of retaining our skilled Leisure Buddies several other mission related benefits are achieved through this activity.

- Improving consistency of services for other human service organisations
- Upskilling and retaining ATLAS work force through experiential training
- Improving access and inclusion awareness and practice in other human service organisations.



- Supporting people managing their own NDIS plans to achieve a reliable support team.

### Status of project

This offering has been heavily affected by both Covid and the requirements of being a registered NDIS provider. In particular our ability to offer services outside of disability work in the human services area has sharply declined. This is not all bad news however as it forces us to stay on mission more closely. The training and development staff in broader social issues connected to disability is a side benefit of this type of work that has been affected.



### Perth

ATLAS continues its presence in Perth this year. The case load has stabilised into several core Participants who have remained loyal based their experience of the provided services.





## Recognition

ATLAS was recognised nationally in late 2022 for its innovative approach to creating access and inclusion for people with disabilities. We attended a satellite venue in Perth for the Melbourne-based presentation ceremony and were very pleased to be nominated by a yet to be identified person. Thank you for noticing our work and well done team. Keep asking the unanswered questions and keep insisting on everyone being included.

**ENABLEMENT  
AWARDS 2022**

Most Outstanding Contributor to Social Connectedness