

## **Chairperson's Report November 2017/18**

2017/18 has been a year of significant change and challenge for Workstar. We've farewelled our Manager Peta-Marie McLeod, as well as long-term employees Shelley Fleming and Andy Phippen. We welcome the promotion of Ben Harris into the Manager's role. We've employed new consultants, Kelly Rozier and Sam Mattos.

Our new staff members bring a fresh approach, a reinvigoration of the potential of Workstar to provide a high quality supported employment service, and considerable drive to expand the scope of Workstar's current service provision. In the context of this change, it is important that Workstar retains its emphasis on high quality service, and existing staff, Ben Harris, Elmarie Karg and David Barnes, bring significant skills and expertise in this regard.

The board of Workstar is also in the midst of significant change. We farewell long-standing board members John Jackson and Mike Stevens who have both made huge contributions to Workstar over the last eleven years. We welcome two new board members: Simone Newsham and Ben Crawford, who bring valuable experience and skills to the Workstar board.

Workstar has faced significant challenges during the 2017/18 year due to:

- The adoption of a new contracting arrangement with MSD
- Altered systems of payment under the new contract
- Changes in personnel
- Reduced numbers of client enrolments, particularly in the first half of the year, and
- A corresponding reduction in cash flow that placed the organisation under considerable financial pressure.

While Workstar is showing early signs of trading its way out of this crisis, funding remains the most critical priority for the organisation and Workstar must rebuild its cash reserves to at least, a twelve-month buffer. In the short-term this will be dependent upon an increase in client enrolments to ensure sustainable levels of income under the current MSD contract. In the medium-term, financial viability is dependent upon an increase in income streams, both contractual and non-contractual, based around a diversification of service delivery and a broadening of the client base of the organisation. The board and staff have begun the strategic planning process to support these developments.

Other challenges and opportunities in the medium term include:

- Enhancing the Workstar brand, including potentially changing the name of the organisation
- Developing our social media capability
- Improving Workstar's employment practice
- Relocating to a fit-for-purpose office space
- Building stakeholder relationships and developing more effective networks
- Exploring best practice opportunities for client support.

It is a privilege to lead the board of Workstar and to be at the forefront of a highly ethical organisation driven by a vision that all people can overcome barriers and contribute to the social and economic life of their community.

Helen Watson

Board Chairperson - Workstar Supported Employment - 14 September 2018