



STRATEGIC
PLAN 2019–2023

REVISED IN 2021

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to be a unifying voice for those living with significant mental disorders, giving them the voice, choice and support to thrive in a vibrant supportive community.

OUR VISION

At **ermha365** we believe in the potential of everyone. Our vision is for progressive reform, advocating for all people living with significant mental disorders to be able to reach their personal potential.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to work side by side with our clients, providing them with the compassion, care, advocacy and support they need to live the lives they want within a supportive community.

OUR WORK

ermha365 works with people living with mental disorders and mental illnesses who present with complex needs. People living with complex mental disorders, co-occurring cognitive disabilities and challenging behaviours often have extended histories of self-harm, property damage and violence, placing staff, family members and the wider community at risk.

These clients with multiple, complex and challenging needs (Complex Care needs clients) are at significant disadvantage due to a combination of the nature and severity of their mental illnesses, disability status, persistent criminal offending behaviour, traumatic backgrounds and social isolation, and require multi-agency support. Many of our clients will transition from lengthy stays in hospital wards and prison, as well as having ongoing involvement in the criminal justice and mental health service systems, into our support in the community.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

ONE

Become a “go to” National provider of programs for Complex Care needs clients.

TWO

Develop infrastructure and new and innovative solutions that support our programs in the community for Complex Care needs clients.

THREE

Position **ermha365** as a thought leader and innovator, helping to raise the voices of the voiceless.



OUR STORY SO FAR

The early days

Established in 1981 by a small group of volunteers whose lives had been touched by mental illness, together with staff from the Dandenong Hospital – the idea of **ermha365** was born. Their original vision was to create support for families impacted by a loved one's mental illness as there was little support that could be found. Their first support group was established and ran for several years.

ermha365's Op Shop opened in 1983 and helped build some funding. **ermha365** first received grant funding in 1984 and employed 2 part time support staff and a researcher to build the case for psychosocial rehabilitation programs in the community. **ermha365** gradually grew through the 1980s, establishing its first office and a home-based outreach service. The first residential service was set up in Keysborough, providing accommodation for six people between the ages of 18 and 45. Both of these service types, in outreach and residential support, have become the cornerstones of **ermha365's** work today.

Growth of **ermha365's** community-based outreach and residential programs

By the late 1990s **ermha365** has begun to grow and offer its community-based outreach and residential programs to more people living with mental illness and mental disorders. This included State funded Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Services and Mental Health Community Support Services where staff provided both intensive inreach and outreach support for people in the community with psychosocial disabilities.

In addition, **ermha365** offered increasing numbers of therapeutic group programs for consumers, families and carers. More residential programs emerged as step-downs from acute hospital settings. In 2005 **ermha365** opened its first 10 bed women only Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC) in Springvale: a step-up step-down model in partnership with Monash Health.

Today **ermha365** offers two more; 10 beds in Clayton and 8 beds in Geelong, both for adults. **ermha365** also partners with local councils and community organisations to work with rough sleepers experiencing mental illness, helping them to connect to services.

The NDIS and changing Mental Health and Disability Sectors

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has created a radically new disability service sector since it first began in 2013. The largest social reform since Medicare, the NDIS is being implemented at a rapid rate right across Australia today. This implementation has seen a fundamental shift, disrupting existing operating models from a welfare, to a market-based system where people with disability can choose their supports through individualised commissioning. The inclusion of community based mental health services has added to the challenges clients and organisations face.

ermha365 began delivering NDIS programs at the Barwon trial site in Victoria, which included several outreach and residential disability support programs focused on a person’s functional ability, including support that enables a person with a mental illness or psychiatric condition to undertake activities of daily living and participate in the community and social and economic life.

During this time **ermha365**’s 360 program began to work with a range of Complex Care needs clients, many of whom had been in hospital or prison for lengthy stays. The “**ermha365** way” was developed, and from this our practice governance model emerged. We worked with increasing numbers of Complex Care needs clients with very challenging behaviours to achieve outcomes in the community – including those who had been placed in the “too hard basket”.

As **ermha365**’s reputation to get results grew, so did referrals to the 360 service right across Victoria. At the invitation of the Community, NDIS and Providers, **ermha365** expanded its 360 services to the Northern Territory in 2018.

OUR STRATEGY

We're excited to be collaborating with Government, Community, Stakeholders and our Board, Staff and Clients to implement **ermha365's** strategic plan over the next 3–5 years.

Our Chair

Back in 1981 Dandenong (in Victoria) had no community-based support for people experiencing mental illness and psychosocial disability. A small group of volunteers whose lives had been touched by these issues decided to do something about it. Together with several staff members from Dandenong Hospital they formed the services and support groups that became **ermha365**. Almost 40 years later, **ermha365** has become one of Victoria's leading providers of community-based services supporting people living with psychiatric disabilities, mental illnesses and psychosocial disabilities. Over the past few years we have become increasingly known for our work with Complex Care needs clients, supporting people living with multiple, complex and challenging needs to thrive and become part of their community. This has seen **ermha365** offer its programs and services to a larger number of people in Victoria and into the Northern Territory.

As a Board we have developed a bold strategy to gradually expand these services over the next 3–5 years providing a specialist response for the most

complex client cases across Australia, in many cases as the provider of last resort. Not only will we offer our programs to more people, over the next 3–5 years, we will build a strong platform on which the stories of Complex Care needs clients can be heard as we aim to influence social policy and service design. We will also look to increase our community services programs offering support for people in new communities in Victoria, the Northern Territory and into other states as they come on line. This includes developing new and innovative residential models of support in the community for Complex Care needs clients.



Agata Jarbin





Our CEO

The Disability and Mental Health sectors have seen significant changes since the concept of the NDIS was first discussed back in 2007. Over the past few years we have worked hard to transition a large number of our clients into the new NDIS scheme and develop our service offering to the community. As Agata says, **ermha365** has increasingly become the ‘go to’ provider of last resort both here in Victoria, and now in the Northern Territory, for some of the most complex and challenging cases. This has seen **ermha365** grow. The number of staff we employ has increased to over 400, and the number of Complex Care needs clients accessing our programs, is also rising.

This Strategy, developed with our Board, Staff, Stakeholders and Consumers, will see ermha continue to embrace the NDIS scheme and lead work for the most complex client cases across Australia. We will increase our work with people who have found themselves in prison or hospital for lengthy

stays, often as a result of their disability status and lack of suitable accommodation – people who have often been placed in the “too hard basket”, supporting them to thrive in the community. Safe and affordable housing as well as specialist purpose-built accommodation are critical for our work, and increasingly challenging to find. Our strategy focuses on partnering to develop new and innovative housing models in the community as we re-imagine residential support services for those most vulnerable.



Karenza Louis-Smith



STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Become a “go to” National provider of programs for Complex Care needs clients.

OBJECTIVE

ermha365 will expand and offer our services for Complex Care needs clients across Australia

TARGET OUTCOME

ermha365 will be sought after to deliver outcomes for very complex people, who without our support would most likely fall through the cracks in the service system.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- We will gradually expand our intensive wrap around 24/7 services providing a specialist response for the most complex cases across Australia enabling more people to access our programs.
- We will sustainably grow our community services programs for people with complex presentations in Victoria, Northern Territory and other states. Our services will include clinical and community mental health services, a range of specialist disability programs, housing and residential programs.
- **ermha365** will successfully expand our services and expertise into new markets including Justice, Youth and Aged Care for complex needs clients.

ermha365's services will be widely known to achieve lasting positive client outcomes

ermha365 is the first choice as a reliable, safe and supportive pair of hands for people experiencing the most complex and challenging situations.

- Specialist behaviour support is a pivotal component of our service delivery model and underpins everything we do. Our team and their work will ensure a safe work environment for our people, the community and our clients.
- Our specialised services are underpinned by the “**ermha365 way**” our philosophy; practice governance frameworks and practice models which are evidence based and outcome focused.

Our workforce will have the skills and capability to work with complex care needs clients

ermha365 will employ a talented workforce who could work anywhere but choose to stay.

- We will ensure we attract and retain an engaged and committed workforce who are skilled and focused on practice leadership. Our specialist staff have been trained in our practice model and considered expert in achieving outcomes.
- Reflection, accountability and development (RAD) is embedded in the **ermha365** culture and the “way we do things around here.”

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Develop infrastructure and new and innovative solutions that support our programs for Complex Care needs clients

OBJECTIVE

Explore, pilot and evaluate new models of residential support for complex care needs clients in the community

TARGET OUTCOME

We will house our Clients in the community, as an alternative to prolonged and inappropriate periods in custody, in prison and in hospital.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- **ermha365** will develop a strong SDA strategy and partnerships that create a range of robust housing opportunities for our NDIS clients with complex needs
- **ermha365** will work with Federal, State and Local Governments and thought leaders to explore, pilot and evaluate a new therapeutic village model of residential support in the community. This first-of-a-kind village model will enable independent living within a community setting. The therapeutic village model will be both scalable and replicable across Australia
- More broadly we will develop a range of housing partnerships that can provide housing opportunities for the people we support.

Build a range of avenues through which industry and community can invest and partner in the work of **ermha365**

ermha365 develops a range of initiatives not funded by Governments that respond to new and emerging needs

- **ermha365** will explore a range of non-Government funded programs and initiatives that can provide support for people in the community who may not access Government funding sources for support. These would include fee for service programs and social enterprise initiatives
- **ermha365** will explore philanthropic support, grants, social impact investing, low-level loans and crowd funding strategies to raise \$2m to build the pilot model for our first therapeutic village.
- More broadly **ermha365** will develop longer term strategies to attract business, community and philanthropy to co-invest in **ermha365**'s residential models for Complex Care needs clients in the community.

Develop service delivery models that are flexible, innovative and respond to business continuity challenges

ermha365 will utilise technology and disrupt our traditional models of service delivery to deliver services over the next decade

- We will utilise technology and interface with funders to deliver a range of mental health and community services complimenting face to face delivery and supports
- We will reduce our reliance on large office locations; instead invest in creating safe and flexible options and places for working
- We will invest in technology that supports a mobile and agile specialist workforce.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Position **ermha365** as a thought leader and innovator, raising the voices of the voiceless.

OBJECTIVE

Actively influence the sectors in which we operate in order to achieve better client and community outcomes

TARGET OUTCOME

ermha365 is highly engaged and connected with government, clients, carers and other stakeholders, and leading, driving and influencing policy and strategy to meet the needs of Australia's most complex care needs clients.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- We will actively (and passionately) influence sector design and reforms that impact the quality of life for complex care needs clients ensuring their voices are heard.
- We will influence the National Disability Insurance Scheme to best respond to the needs of complex care needs clients in a win/win scenario.
- We will ensure we have the right mix of resources and staff expertise to deliver the highest quality services in a sustainable business model across all **ermha365** programs.

Build the **ermha365** brand as a thought leader, innovator and disruptor

ermha365's thought leadership and advocacy for complex care needs clients many of whom are "without a voice" will influence social policy and service design nationally.

- We will build a vibrant **ermha365** brand and external presence that builds our reputation as a nationally recognised "go to" provider for complex care needs clients.
- Our thought leadership and advocacy programs will influence social policy and funding models at both State and Federal levels in Australia.

Our information systems support **ermha365**'s ability to evaluate our impact

Our information and intelligence systems enable **ermha365** to demonstrate client, community and organisational outcomes.

- We will develop and invest in a systems architecture that supports an agile service delivery model and gives us access to live real time information
- We will leverage our data to tailor and stylise our advocacy work for maximum impact
- We will provide a platform upon which our clients stories are shared
- We will use quantitative data to support our work and build evidence that enables us to develop new and innovative programs.





ermha
365

Complex
Mental Health
and Disability
Services

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