



Respond to the complex needs of young people with disabilities and their families through high quality and innovative supports to live an everyday life in the community and in the home.

Foreword



How do you write about an organisation to bring to the page what makes it so truly special? Do you speak to the history that spans more than 40 years, or do you start with the selflessness and passion for supporting young people and their families that established an Interchange support service, which was replicated across both Victorian and interstate communities.

I was 'handed the baton' of caretaking Interchange Inner East (IIE) when it was at a difficult time of its existence. It had farewelled its previous, long-term and much-loved CEO, and was struggling to deal with the impacts of the pandemic and the significant financial consequences that accompanied that time. However, it was quickly apparent, that this was no ordinary organisation - the exceptional people and families IIE supported viewed it as an essential element and extension of their family's structure, and the extraordinary staff and volunteers had an unwavering dedication and commitment to ensuring that they responded to this.

It was my privilege to work with the IIE Board, staff and volunteers to turn the situation around and then ensure that IIE would have a future and be positioned to overcome whatever challenges might lie ahead. Through merging it with the larger, customer-focused Multicap organisation, it has not only safeguarded support being available into the future, but expanded this future with new and innovative opportunities. And importantly, it also ensures that the remarkable story of Interchange Inner East, and the legacy of the very special history that makes it so unique, is kept alive.

Annie Revell

Chief Executive Officer (2020-2023)

Introduction

In August 2022, Interchange Inner East merged with Multicap. It was a partnership that brought together two organisations with similar histories and similar drivers - to support people with disabilities to live their best lives.

This booklet serves to honour the legacy of Interchange Inner East and records the significant impact its services and people had on the lives of people with disability since its establishment in 1979 until the merger with Multicap.

Interchange Inner East has a long and proud history of providing care and support to people with disability.

From humble beginnings in 1979 when Maureen Crawford, a mother of a young son, James, with disability, first began her efforts to establish respite for her son and others needing support, to 2019, when the organisation celebrated 40 fabulous years of supporting people with disability through a variety of services.

So much happened in those 40 years and there is so much to be proud of. The growth of the organisation mirrored the growth in demand, which never slowed.

A family-centred organisation, Interchange Inner East began as a host program offering respite to families of children and young adults with disability.

While IIE's beginnings focused on providing support to children and young adults, over the years the organisations began providing support to people of all ages.

IIE worked hard to listen and understand the individual needs of its participants and families in order to develop responsive and meaningful respite and recreation opportunities for people living with disability. This includes providing greater choice and flexibility for individual support and planning. And over the years, the service offering grew to include getaways,

weekend camps, family camps, support coordination, support workers, music programs, Christmas parties, social evenings including the much loved After 4 program, and so much more.

And with the introduction of the NDIA, IIE became a registered service provider, offering a wide variety of services to people with disability, and their families.

Predominantly operating within the local government areas of Boroondara, Manningham, Monash and Whitehorse, IIE prided itself on being a family-focused community organisation.

The birth of Interchange

By Maureen Crawford

"The Idea for an Interchange Program ... was brought about by a personal and family crisis. My son James has an intellectual disability. James was five years old in 1979. The extraordinary demands of caring for him were increasing. As my other children were growing older, I realised that not only was I unable to help him to develop outside interests, but that the locked doors, gates etc, were isolating them, and James to an unnatural degree. This led to the realisation that relief was not available on a regular basis, I, and consequently the rest of my family, would disintegrate. I cannot stress how important this feeling of impending disintegration was in the motivation behind Interchange. There was not one community body in our area able to offer respite care on a regular basis. On 3 December 1980, a meeting of professional workers and parents overwhelmingly supported the establishment of Victoria's first Interchange Program and recognised that an effective program should be managed by combining the skills of both parents and professional workers."

(Reference: Interchange brochure, 1980 - 1990, 'A Decade of Sharing in the Caring of Children with Disabilities'.)

Interchange Inner East Timeline



IIE's annual Family Festival in December is supported by the Gippsland Monarchs Motor Bike Club who each year donate their time and motorbikes to giving children the ride of their life. For many years the Police Band graced attendees with their vibrant tunes.

Volunteer program develops beyond Host program, offering nine separate respite and recreation options.

First Camp Recharge Special Needs Family Camp (Licola) is held. Active Days Program begins as an alternative to the traditional day program. Participants are better included in the community - in work, volunteering and leisure.

IIE moves to its new location, 1/437 Canterbury Road, Surrey Hills.

IIE merges with Multicap

1998

2010

2016

2018

2022

2000

2011

2017

2019

Interchange Inner East relocates to 2 Kendall St, the grounds of the Canterbury Bowling Club. The club house is restored and grounds landscaped, a new home for Interchange and Burke and Beyond.

Support Coordination is established as a new stream of NDIS service, supporting up to 190 families. In addition, a Behaviour Support stream is established. NDIS transition commences as government block funding is replaced and allocated to individual participants and their families. IIE continues to provide high quality support to participants who purchase the type of support they require. Our Jean Simpson memorial site is built at 2 Kendall St.

Geri Baker and Kathy Hewitt, poet laureates in residence, write the winning poem for Aldi's \$10,000 prize.

Music in Me is established. Planning commences for the Canterbury Community Precinct redevelopment



About Interchange Inner East

Focus

Interchange Inner East provides children and young adults with a disability and their families options for recreation, community activities, respite and support.

The programs offered by IIE are responsive to requests for individual, group, in-home and in community disability support. Fundamental to our reputation is the calibre of the highly skilled staff and volunteers we attract and retain.

Our vision

Supporting young people and their families to live an everyday life.

Our Mission

Respond to the complex needs of young people with disabilities and their families through high quality and innovative supports to live an everyday life in the community and in the home.

“It was an honour to be part of the IIE Board in its final years. After dealing with the challenges presented by the pandemic, we wanted to ensure IIE was well placed to continue to support participants and their families, and with the support of an amazing Board, and the skill and dedication of Annie, our CEO, we found a like-minded organisation in Multicap, and the merger has ensured families will continue to be connected to IIE for years to come.”

Sally Bradley
Board President (2017-2023)

Marie Lugg

Executive Officer, 10 years

When Marie Lugg took over as Executive Officer of Interchange Inner East (IIE) in 2011, it was a 'small family agency'.

When she left 10 years later, the organisation had quadrupled in size to a 'professional business'.

But despite the growth, Marie says the heart and soul of IIE remained the same.

"We still kept the support needs of our participants and their families at its heart and soul," she said.

Marie accepted the role of Executive Officer at a time in her career when she was looking for a creative and meaningful opportunity to help shape and grow a community organisation into the future.

"I was very impressed with the foundational ethos of Interchange HOST Program, which basically involved families volunteering their skills, time and loving support to children with disability, providing much needed respite to the families of children living with disability," she said.

"I saw great possibilities for innovative and creative respite options for families as there were already fledging programs in 1:1 respite support and group programs also designed to offer respite to these families."

Over time and through many challenges, Marie established a solid governance foundation from which IIE could not only flourish but remain stable through the impacts of the transition to the NDIS and through the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was a rich and exciting time of applying for and receiving funding for small pilot projects, which we trialled and leveraged into the future."

These programs included After 4, Camp Refresh at Licola (special needs getaways for families), Twilight Cinemas, Kris Kindle stalls, Carers Treat nights at Warrandyte Hotel, Music In Me, and Youth initiatives at Council Offices.

"Special mention to General Manager Travis van den Berg for his unwavering support, innovative commitment and expertise in supporting Interchange Inner East at this time," Marie said. "We were a formidable team when we set our minds to implementing an initiative."

Marie was instrumental in advocating and planning for IIE as the Canterbury Community Precinct was designed and opened, to ensure the organisation's needs were met into the future, and transitioning IIE from its 'dated and small' premises at Kendall Street to our Surrey Hills office.

While there are many highlights from her time at the helm of IIE, Marie says the people are at the top of the list.

"I loved working with the Interchange families and participants - they empowered and inspired me and the team," she said.

"Mostly I loved supporting and growing staff. I used to laugh with them as I repeatedly lifted the bar higher, and they kept growing and achieving."

"It was a happy, vibrant and resourceful place to work and volunteer. And the staff really care for the families and participants - they listen and respond."



Interchange's major role in Luca's life

Interchange Inner East has played such an important role in Luca's life that he partly credits the organisation for the person he is today.

"We've been so lucky to be part of the IIE community," the 22-year-old said. "They've helped me to become who I am today."

Luca first joined the Interchange Inner East community at just eight years old in 2010 and says the friendships he has formed since then are among the best he has.

Luca spends time with his friends every Thursday night at the 'After 4' program and when they get a chance on the weekends, especially when his beloved Carlton is playing.

"I'm really into footy, Carlton is my team, but I also like to follow the local footy," he said. "My friend, Will, loves the Tigers, so we get together to watch the footy and have fun."

Luca joined 'After 4' in 2017 and says it's a highlight of his week.

"I love being able to socialise and have a chat with my friends about our week," he said. "I also like helping with the shopping and the cooking. Spaghetti Bolognese is my favourite meal to cook."

Luca not only loves catching up with his closest friends Ryan, Will, Timmy and Bri at After 4, but he loves to jump on the computer and play a few games. "It's a fun night," he said. "And it also allows me to be more independent."

He says the support workers who have supported him throughout the years have been the best. "They help me so much and do so much with me."

Along with the After 4 program, Luca says he enjoys the opportunities IIE has given him to explore Victoria through camping and getaways. A two-night camp at Mill Valley Ranch in Victoria and a local stay at Sage Hotel have been among his favourites over the years.

Since finishing high school, Luca has been studying at TAFE and now volunteers at a local gym every Friday. His goal is to use the skills he's learning at TAFE and through his volunteer role, to get a job in hospitality.

"I like being around people and think I would be good at a job in hospitality," he said.

Luca, who lives at home with his parents and twin brother Tommy, says outside of TAFE and Interchange Inner East, he is actively involved in the Special Olympics as a competitive swimmer and more recently as an athlete leader representing Victoria and Special Olympics Melbourne Inner East.

He says Interchange Inner East has helped him a lot with confidence and his swimming.

"Interchange Inner East has also given me so many other experiences like archery and horse-riding," he said. "But I think my favourite thing is hanging out with my friends, having fun and celebrating their achievements."



Interchange leads to career change

Travelling the Canterbury rail line each morning on her way to work, Belinda Ventrella would look down on the Interchange offices and wonder what it would be like to work there.

Having worked for a large corporate firm in the buying department, she felt drawn to an organisation that made a positive difference in people's lives, in particular people with disability.

"I'd been in my job for a while and I started thinking about a change," she said. "I have a son who is on the autism spectrum, and so the work of IIE resonated with me and my life experiences and I thought it would be nice to work somewhere that has a bit of meaning. When I saw that they were looking for a receptionist, I decided to apply and just see what happened."

Belinda was offered the job and never looked back. It was not only the beginning of her first experience working in the disability sector, but the beginning of what turned out to be a whole new career.

"It was different going from a big organisation to a small not for profit," Belinda said. "But I really enjoyed it. I loved the variety of the role and working with the people. Everyone was lovely and passionate about what they did and making a difference in people's lives. So, it was really fulfilling."

When Belinda returned to IIE after maternity leave to have her second child, she took on a variety of different roles and eventually landed in recruitment and human resources.

She enjoyed the work so much that she completed a Graduate Certificate in Employer Relations and ultimately became the People and Compliance Manager for IIE.

"That's the nice thing sometimes about working for a smaller organisation - they can see you have potential and give you opportunities," she said.

Belinda was also hands on helping with events for IIE clients and families.

"We did a lot of events for families, like the moonlight cinema and a Christmas festival for families and staff to come together and I really enjoyed being involved in the planning and helping at the events," she said.

Looking back on her seven years at IIE, Belinda says she loved seeing the positive impact the organisation had on people's lives.

"I really enjoyed pretty much everything about my time working for IIE, but seeing the positive impact that the work Interchange had on people's lives and the passion and thoughtfulness the team had towards making really great decisions for their clients would be my highlight."





Making a real difference

Maurice Walters considers the 16 years he spent at Interchange Inner East to have been a privilege.

“The participants, the families and the people I worked with,” he said. “They were beautiful years of my life.”

While Maurice first joined the organisation in 2004 as a support worker, his creativity and passion saw him initiate a number of programs over the years including the popular ‘After 4’ group, ‘Music in Me’ and ‘Star Group’.

“I wanted to start something that was meaningful and that had a social aspect around food and that’s where After 4 came from,” he said.

“And over the years we formed a great culture and a real family. It really brought everyone together and they had so much fun, but they were learning life skills in shopping, cooking and cleaning at the same time.”

To see the program continue to this day, does not come as a surprise to Maurice.

“I could see it going for a long time,” he said. “It was really special.”

A muso by background and having worked alongside music therapists at his previous job in education, Maurice had seen the therapeutic benefits of music and introduced the music program – Music in Me – for IIE participants.

“It started with six participants and grew to 90 in six months,” Maurice said.

Using colour and music together, Maurice developed the unique program that gave participants the opportunity to be part of a choir, a band or to play percussion.

“You put music together with the social element and the learning and it was an instant hit,” he said.

Maurice was also integral in running the Star Group for 14 years for participants with behaviours of concern. The group was all about giving the six participants ‘experiences they would find hard to do with their families’, like camping or hiking.

“We built trust and were able to minimise any behaviours because they felt safe with us,” Maurice said. “Consistency in support workers was key to that and because we got to know the participants so well, we could pre-empt what might happen, which allowed us to plan ahead to make sure they got the most out of the experience. It was always about outcomes and it was beautiful to see what they could achieve.”

Looking back on his almost two decades with Interchange Inner East, Maurice said it was the people that he loved the most.

“The families are beautiful and I have lifelong friendships with some of them,” he said. “And it was an absolute privilege to work with the participants and make a difference in their lives. They were absolutely wonderful years of my life – I loved it so much and feel very privileged to do what I do.”

One of a kind 'close-knit community'



There was so much that Travis van den Berg enjoyed about his work at Interchange Inner East, but the standout was the 'close knit community'.

"I really liked that it was a small community organisation, very grass roots, with very, very close ties with the local community," Travis said. "It was important to me because you could actually see the impact of the work you were putting in. Sometimes when you work for bigger organisations you miss that level of interaction with the people and the families you're supporting."

Travis was IIE's program manager and credited a great deal of the organisation's community focus to then Executive Officer, Marie Lugg.

"Marie drove a lot of the community engagement," he said. "Now we're in NDIS world, everything is focused on the person with the disability. And as important as that is, I think the difference with Interchange is that it recognised that the rest of the family still needs to be looked after and supported. A strong and robust family

will also ensure that the person with disability has a better life. Interchange really prioritised that as a key outcome."

As program manager, Travis was responsible for overseeing all of IIE's programs from camps and one-on-one support at home, to the volunteer host program that gave families respite while their child stayed with a host family.

Travis also initiated the organisation's successful outdoor cinema for participants and their families.

"I really wanted it to be for families who couldn't normally participate in a family outing because their young person's behaviour or communication challenges wouldn't allow them to do that," Travis said. "The big thing was putting time into sustaining families, so these kinds of initiatives were based around giving families something to do together in an environment where their young person could run around. It was about practically supporting people in this space."

Travis said he worked side by side on most major events with Marie who was 'very invested and delivered quite large-scale family camps' that were also about supporting families.

Working with Marie was a highlight of Travis' seven years with IIE.

"I wouldn't be in the position I'm in now as an executive with a larger organisation, if Marie hadn't pushed me. She's an unbelievable leader and she has a massive impact on people's lives.

"Marie and IIE really gave me a professional platform to build on. It was a time of professional and personal development, and it gave me an opportunity to explore things outside the box and really focus on community engagement and activities. It was a great organisation."



Testimonials

What makes Interchange extraordinary is the sense of community that it offers families who have a child with disability. A “community” cannot be manufactured; it happens through valued, personal involvement with a network of friends, and that is what Interchange can provide.

Deborah, Parent

Interchange gives a great deal to everyone involved with it, but we feel more so to a host family than anyone else. We feel so fortunate to be a host family.

Host family

Volunteering with IIE is not only about caring for young people with disabilities but about learning many new things from participants, like what they enjoy and how they look at life.

Volunteer

“The Interchange Youth Group has made a tremendous difference to my son and us. He has something to look forward to and we have time for our other children. I don’t know how we managed before it started.

Parent

There are a few opportunities that come by in life where you are not quite sure what to expect going in but leave profoundly changed on the way out. This was one of them. The weekend I spent volunteering with Interchange for the Licola Camp was a rewarding, fun and touching experience. I feel extremely privileged to have been part of it. From the dedication and good humour of the staff, to the welcoming and warmth of the families, I feel less like I volunteered and more that I had an amazing weekend away with friends.

Hugh, Volunteer

Office Bearers

Year	President	Vice President	Treasurer	Secretary	Executive Officer
1979/1980	Maureen Crawford				
1980/1981	Maureen Crawford				
1981/1982			Records incomplete		
1982/1983	Maureen Crawford		Libby Kinross	Judi Jackson	Fiona Lindsay / Carol Mathew
1983/1984	Anne Conochie	Sally Trumble	Alison Jones	Cheryl Mason	Maureen Boaler / Marsha Rosenbaum
1984/1985	Anne Conochie / Sally Trumble	Bernice Bray	Cheryl Mason	Mary O'Bryan	Marsha Rosenbaum / Joy Ritchie
1985/1986	Sally Trumble				Marsha Rosenbaum
1986/1987	Sally Trumble		Cheryl Mason	Mary O'Bryan	Marsha Rosenbaum
1987/1988	Sonja Spicer	Sally Trumble	Norm Whatmore	Denbigh Richards	Marsha Rosenbaum
1988/1989					
1989/1990	Sonja Spicer				Jane Stickels
1990/1991	Sonja Spicer	Robert De Biase	Wayne Box	Sue Kemp	Jacinta Bleeser
1991/1992	Sonja Spicer	Trish McAvaney	Charlene Gehrig		Jacinta Bleeser
1992/1993	Trish McAvaney	Anje Thorburn	Sue Rodwell	Leonie Brasier	Jean Simpson
1993 /1994			Records incomplete		
1994/1995			Records incomplete		
1995/1996			Records incomplete		
1996/1997			Records incomplete		
1997/1998			Records incomplete		
1998/1999			Records incomplete		
1999/2000			Records incomplete		
2000/2001			Records incomplete		

Year	President	Vice President	Treasurer	Secretary	Executive Officer
2001/2002			Records incomplete		
2002/2003			Records incomplete		
2003/2004			Records incomplete		
2004/2005			Records incomplete		
2005/2006			Records incomplete		
2006/2007			Records incomplete		
2007/2008			Records incomplete		
2008/2009			Records incomplete		
2009/2010			Records incomplete		
2010/2011			Records incomplete		
2011/2012	Doug Maunder (May 2012) Julie Mitchell	Nora Sparrow	Marco Kohne	Ramona De Niese	Marie Lugg
2012/2013					Marie Lugg
2014	David Bailey	Michael Summers / Fraser McLisky	Marco Kohne	Jocelyn Geary	Marie Lugg
2015	Michael Summers	Carolyn Rowe	Marco Kohne	Jocelyn Geary	Marie Lugg
2016	Michael Summers	Carolyn Rowe	Marco Kohne	Jocelyn Geary	Marie Lugg
2017	Michael Summers	Carolyn Rowe / Janine Wan	Marco Kohne	Eric Lassen	Marie Lugg
2018	Michael Summers	Janine Wan	Marco Kohne	Eric Lassen	Marie Lugg
2019	Sally Bradley	Janine Wan	Marco Kohne	Eric Lassen	Marie Lugg
2019/2020	Sally Bradley	Dimi Boubalas	Marco Kohne	Heidi Mitchell	Travis van den Berg
2020/2021	Sally Bradley				
2021/2022	Sally Bradley				Annie Revell



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