



Empowering People: a Strategic Plan for Mambourin's future 2008–2012

Introduction

This is Mambourin's second strategic plan for the twenty-first century. Its predecessor was launched in late 2003 and provided a powerful guiding strategic framework that saw Mambourin become and establish itself as one of Victoria's leading disability service providers. In the five years from the start of 2003 to the end of 2007, Mambourin grew by more than 86%, with an offering of different, expanded or diversified programs for existing and new service recipients.

As a part of the production of this new strategic plan a new tag line was developed for our organisation: *Empowering People*. This strategic plan has been given the same name. *Empowering People* builds upon the consolidation and growth provided for in the previous plan. The new plan strives for service innovation and diversification, but also seeks to refine and add to existing program infrastructure.

Empowering People is the result of the work of a planning group. This planning group included the full Board and the Management team. Each of these planning group members in various ways consulted with our broader stakeholder groups including people who use Mambourin's services, family representatives, and staff at all levels and in all areas. The group undertook a facilitated planning process that provided the foundations upon which *Empowering People* is built. This process drew on existing knowledge and research, but also encouraged free thinking about what would make Mambourin a better, more responsive service provider, now and into the future.

Empowering People represents the shared vision of what we must do to learn and grow. By delivering against this plan, we will meet or exceed the expectations of those to whom we provide our services.

Mambourin's Vision, Mission and Values

Mambourin's Vision and Mission statement have been modified and condensed to *Empowering People*, the statement of *The Principle*

Result reviewed and only modified slightly, and the statement of Values have been rewritten following extensive stakeholder consultation.

How Empowering People is constructed

Empowering People is deliberately different from the previous plan. It is simpler to read because it has far less detail. Because the future is not precisely known, the aim was to write a plan which gives a set of broad strategic directions so that we know clearly where we are going, but have some flexibility as to how we will get there.

In order to be crystal clear about what we want to do and why, the plan itself is essentially limited to five key result areas (KRAs) for the organisation; a set of goals; and a set of strategies designed to achieve those goals.

All goals are separate, but linked to each other and to Mambourin's Mission and Values.

Linkages

Empowering People is a purely strategic document. As such, it needs to sit within a broader planning and control framework that includes management, governance, accountability and quality assurance.

A strategic plan with a life of five years, *Empowering People* will be supported by operational plans. Each of Mambourin's service divisions will write a business plan each year and work plans will be developed by key Executive team members to deliver each of the agreed strategies.

However, all strategic and operational planning has to sit within a quality framework. Both the State and Commonwealth Governments have prescribed minimum quality standards and systems of accountability. Mambourin's quality management is further enriched by its ongoing commitment to occupational health and safety, which will be the continuing focus of stringent development during the life of *Empowering People*.

With its overarching responsibilities, Mambourin's Board holds management accountable for the achievement and maintenance of excellent service systems. Accordingly, *Empowering People* will be reviewed annually as part of a structured process that involves the Board and Management team. Minor and major directional changes can and will be debated and implemented in light of the

circumstances and new insights as the picture of the future becomes clearer.

The KRAs and goals within *Empowering People* have been imported into the position descriptions of the CEO and all other Executive team members and in time this will be rolled out into the position descriptions of all other staff members. In this way, we aim to ensure that every intention and action within the organisation is with our strategic directions clearly in mind.

The important place of service recipients

Human service organisations in the twenty-first century must be accountable to their service recipients. They also have a responsibility to engage with them in the planning process. Ongoing involvement of service recipients is equally important. When service divisions develop their annual business plans, service recipient advice and opinions will be seen as critical components.

All of Mambourin's quality systems require service recipient input and this informs a cycle of continuous improvement. Mambourin is confident that its overarching system of management, governance, accountability and quality assurance properly values and recognises this input, but we always aim to do even better.

Determined to place service recipients at the centre of the planning process, Mambourin nonetheless recognises that in the case of adults who need significant levels of guidance and support to make key decisions, parents and other carers play a critical and legitimate part. In these and similar circumstances, parents and carers are as much service recipients of Mambourin's services as their children, and, from time to time, the same will hold true for a wider group of family members (siblings for example) or other caregivers. Accordingly, the term service recipient is used broadly.

The planning process

Empowering People has been more than 12 months in the making. The major steps that were undertaken during this time were:

- The Executive team members, through consultation with staff and service recipients, wrote the KRAs and goals and had these ratified by the Board
- New position descriptions were written for the CEO and all other Executive team members based on these KRAs and goals. The CEO's position description was ratified by the Board.

- Several important areas of enquiry were identified as requiring investigation and research. Each of these was assigned to an Executive or Board member who wrote a paper on it. These papers were distributed to the planning group prior to meeting.
- Over two days in November 2008, the planning group met to discuss and debate these papers, and to agree conclusions, implications for Mambourin, and strategic decisions based on them.
- These investigations started at the highest possible level, including
 - An analysis of disability and the political landscape in Victoria and nationally
 - A review of the Commonwealth Government's Intergenerational Report which provides a 50 year forecast of the Australian population
 - An investigation of some specific pieces of research including *Life Expectancy and Disability in Australia 1998 to 2003* and *Current and future demand for specialist disability services*, (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare); *Challenges faced by providers of disability services in Victoria* (National Disability Services) and *What strategic challenges do non-profits face and how can we work together to meet them?* (EW Tipping)

and then moved to focus on Mambourin:

- Commercial focus—how can we [continue the] trend towards being more business like whilst still being true to our purpose?
- Finance: How big do we need to be? How quickly do we need to get there? How will this be achieved? What is our attitude to risk?
- We reviewed our previous strategic plan, revisited previously agreed KRAs and Goals, discussed our ends policies, values and vision/mission
- We explored the future possibilities in the broad areas of Business Services and Day Programs
- We commenced exploring possible strategies and populating the strategic directions document but ran out

of time, and so completed this work at an all day session in February 2008.

Strategic Projects

What emerged is that the KRAs and goals are sensible and consistently relevant in a variety of futures that we can envisage; but what also emerged is that a number of strategic projects need to be addressed in order to maximise the opportunities for success.

We must continue to analyse future service trends and service recipient characteristics to enable proper and informed decision-making about the sorts of programs that Mambourin should choose to offer. New approaches to service recipient funding, different ways of delivering services and changing service recipient characteristics all combine to create uncertainty. If funding approaches evolve in certain ways, for which groups of service recipients and in what program areas is Mambourin going to be able to offer excellent services and remain viable?

We must continue to focus on staff competencies, both for our present needs but also for the future. As we improve our understanding of future modes of service delivery, funding mechanisms and service recipient changes, so we will be able to better define the characteristics of a first rate work force. Where and in what measure will we require certain competencies? What will need to be done to recruit, train and retain future teams of workers that have or could acquire these competencies?

We are undertaking an investigation into Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), which is the planning of how business resources are acquired and managed. An ERP system maintains in a single database the information needed for a variety of business functions such as manufacturing, financials, projects, human resources and customer relationship management. An effective ERP will require the development of a sophisticated and reliable information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and will enable the tracking and managing of information about individuals for service monitoring and business purposes; yield timely data; and deliver reports that can serve not only internal purposes, but also meet external stakeholder requirements.

Separate from but linked to this ERP project is another investigation, which is concerned with the development of financial metrics that will better inform tomorrow's business decisions. Mambourin is part of a rapidly evolving and changing world in which we will have to

make decisions about the service recipients for whom we are best positioned to offer ongoing support and consequent upon these decisions will be issues to do with the recruitment and management of an appropriately skilled workforce. The metrics of the future will not be exactly the same as the metrics of the past.

We are also exploring the prospect of new strategic business partnerships. Mambourin acknowledges the need to work cooperatively with those who share our interests, vision and goals. We believe that sustainable, quality services are often more likely to be achieved in partnership with others rather than in a fragmented way, so we see a responsibility to identify those with whom we could engage in joint approaches. Partnerships and alliances have the capacity to enhance both efficiency and effectiveness—but only if the fit is right.

Another project that we have commenced underpins all others. It arose from our realisation that in order to be able to manage the ever increasing demands on our staff time in non-service delivery areas such as quality audits and other compliance, to deliver continuously improving quality of services to our current service recipients, and to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population in our region, we must increase substantially in size. In order to achieve this, the organisation is participating in a 12 month long intensive business development program. This will lead to us adopting a range of new business systems and processes and inculcating these throughout the organisation. The business development program called Executive Acumen.

Conclusion

Empowering People was not written to maintain the status quo, but is intended to generate change.

We want to be a learning organisation—indeed if we do not continue the search for new and better ways to do things we risk irrelevancy.

Comment on Mambourin's current and future performance will always be seen as helpful and can be lodged with any staff member. Such comment will be particularly welcome when coming from service recipients of Mambourin's services, their families and their carers.

In a world that is politically, economically, culturally and socially dynamic, change is not a risk, but a reality to be harnessed.

Empowering People charts Mambourin's course for the next five years and will assist in ensuring the organisation's success.

Key Result Areas	Goals	Examples of Strategies
<p>Positive outcomes for people with disabilities and families</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide support that optimizes the achievement of individual goals. 2. To ensure successful outcomes, freedom of choice and variety for all people with disabilities and families where appropriate. 3. To support people with disabilities to increasingly become part of the wider community. 4. To introduce continuous quality improvement in everything we do. 5. To establish a wider database of potential users of our services and enhance the range of services provided by Mambourin. 6. To increase the level of integration between Day Activities and Business Services. 7. To raise Mambourin's profile in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expand Day Programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop new supported employment opportunities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduce individualised funding and service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create an after hours service
<p>Governance & Management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. To comply with all relevant legislation. 9. To ensure effective governance and management practices. 10. To ensure that visionary planning underpins every key decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish a Risk Subcommittee <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish a Board Development Subcommittee <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board visits best practice organisations

Key Result Areas	Goals	Examples of Strategies
Partnerships	<p>11. To involve families, carers and significant others in decisions about services.</p> <p>12. As appropriate to involve the community in the provision of supports to people with a disability.</p> <p>13. To establish and maintain effective working relationships with key external stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop creative business partnerships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop Volunteers' Network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a strategic banking relationship
Organizational Development	<p>14. To develop staff skills and competencies.</p> <p>15. To develop and manage effective staff feedback and communication systems.</p> <p>16. To grow the organization.</p> <p>17. Provide infrastructure for future growth and expansion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grow Business Services—expand existing businesses, create new businesses <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encourage an enterprise culture throughout the org <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create the Mambourin Foundation
Finance	<p>18. To provide sound financial management.</p> <p>19. To meet budget.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve the strength of our balance sheet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Explore new business opportunities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve financial reporting and forecasting