



# SOUNDFAIR

MAKING HEARING SEEN AND PEOPLE HEARD.

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2022-2023**





**OUR CORE BELIEFS HAVE GUIDED US FOR OVER 90 YEARS.**



**PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE ARE THE KEY TO CHANGE.**

**EVERY PERSON AND EVERY STORY, MATTERS.**



## THE PROBLEM WE ADDRESS

We know that stigma and invisibility of hearing conditions (hearing loss and tinnitus), alongside complex pathways and exclusionary service models both limit social connection and pose barriers to accessing support.

As a result, people who live with hearing conditions delay seeking help, are isolated, and have poorer mental health and wellbeing.

## OUR PURPOSE

To make hearing seen and people heard.

## OUR VISION

Life without limits for all people who live with hearing conditions.

## OUR MISSION

We champion lived experience voices to improve wellbeing, remove barriers to help-seeking while creating systemic change, so that no person who lives with hearing conditions feels invisible, excluded nor disconnected.

## SNAPSHOT OF SOUNDFAIR

### COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

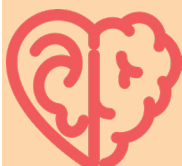
Tinnitus  
Australia



Soundmind  
Education



Hearing  
Wellbeing



### COMMUNITY SERVICES

Connection  
Coach,  
Hearing and  
Psychology  
Services



Hearing  
Bank



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Tea 4  
Tinnitus



National  
Peer  
Community





## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

**As a person living with hearing loss and tinnitus, I am reminded every minute of the invisibility of hearing conditions, barriers to social connectedness, and issues in getting access to support. The daily struggle to hear and to be heard can take a mammoth effort.**

I am privileged though – able to access assistive technologies, in a position to effect change, and have a supportive family. This is not the case for most people living with hearing conditions. There are considerable challenges that need to be tackled in creating better hearing equity in Australia – it's not just about access to devices (which is a serious affordability issue), but also mental health and social and emotional wellbeing support, appropriate hearing-friendly environments, and the reduction of stigma. Broad systemic change is required to improve access and mental health, underpinned by leadership and a vision for the future. That's what we believe at Soundfair.

### Making strategy happen

Being charged with the stewardship of a charity is an honour and privilege and one that the Board of Directors takes extremely seriously. After three years of focussing on re-building

Soundfair's offerings to create both impact and a financially sustainable future, this year we were able to make substantial decisions that cement our model going forwards. On behalf of the Board, I look forward to seeing the fruit of these decisions and the Soundfair team's work come to fruition.

The board are thankful to Dr Caitlin Barr, our Chief Executive Officer for leading Soundfair through our transformation years and for continuing to focus on building our future. We congratulate the Soundfair team on their successes this year and thank the community – people living with hearing conditions for engaging with our work.

As our positioning and needs as an organisation change, so does our Board composition. Alongside having a skills-based board, we are committed to embedding lived experience leadership at all levels of our organisation. In this year, we welcomed four new directors and said a warm goodbye to one. Mayada Dib and Soeren Iversen joined the Soundfair board in late 2022 bringing expertise and experience in law, business development and hearing care alongside lived experience. In early 2023, we

welcomed Jason LaBresh and Suzanne Waldron. Jason and Suzanne bring powerful knowledge of the shifting for-purpose sector and strategic perspectives on how charities need to evolve. In November 2022, our Deputy Chair Kim Turudia retired from the board at the conclusion of her term. I thank Kim for her wonderful contribution and commitment to Soundfair for the last six years, and for her leadership as Chair (2019-2020) and Deputy Chair (2020-2022). Suzanne has also retired from the board, and we thank her for bringing her expertise in thought leadership and look forward to having Suzanne contribute to Soundfair in a non-board capacity.

As I sign off, I share that I will be concluding my term as Soundfair Chairperson at the Annual General Meeting in November 2023. I will continue to be a strong supporter of Soundfair and our work into the future and am proud to have been able to help guide this 91-year-old organisation into its current form in my tenure as Chairperson.

**CHRISTOPHER CARTER**  
**GAICD, FIML**

## OUR BOARD



**Mayada Dib**

**DEPUTY  
CHAIRPERSON**



**Samantha Bartlett**

**BOARD  
DIRECTOR**



**Dianne Semmens**

**BOARD  
DIRECTOR**



**Christopher Carter**

**CHAIRPERSON**



**Scott Fisher**

**BOARD  
DIRECTOR**



**Soeren Iversen**

**BOARD  
DIRECTOR**



**Jason LaBresh**

**BOARD  
DIRECTOR**

WE EXTEND OUR SINCERE THANKS TO PAST BOARD DIRECTORS ACROSS 2022-2023 KIM TURUDIA AND SUZANNE WALDRON



## CEO'S REPORT

**As evidence mounts to support the critical role that hearing plays in maintaining social connection and protecting mental, physical, and cognitive health, we are reminded that there are barriers to accessing help and gaps in the types of support available for people living with hearing conditions in Australia. There is much work to be done, and at Soundfair, we are driven to really make our contribution count.**

The 2022-2023 year was punctuated with several notable achievements which highlight our evolution and impact. We were delighted to be win the non profit category of the Monash Business Awards which reflects our growing roots in Mount Waverley and the value of our work to the community.

From an advocacy perspective, Soundfair is proud to continue to represent the voices of people living with hearing conditions on the sector peak body, Hearing Health Sector Alliance. This alliance, with membership across the hearing health sector, advocates for policy and systemic changes where the sector has a shared opinion. This alliance has seen success in advocating funding and in influencing government priorities in the hearing health space with a current focus on improving equitable access for vulnerable people across Australia.

We attended the Audiology Australia national conference in May this year where our team met hearing care professionals and promoted the need to be focussed on more than ears; that is, the importance of social and emotional supports. I was delighted to present the findings of our project work supported by the Department of Health, sharing how hearing care can be more accessible to culturally and linguistically diverse people.

To make hearing seen, we piloted a new awareness and funds raising campaign, Tea For Tinnitus in Tinnitus Week 2023. This campaign invited the community to register and organise a morning tea, and then to take the time to talk tinnitus. We were humbled to see morning teas pop up in homes and workplaces across Australia in support of funding our free tinnitus and hearing helpline. In 2024, we look forward to growing Tea for Tinnitus in June and seeing even greater engagement with the community.

Our core initiatives of Hearing Bank, Tinnitus Australia and our Hearing Wellbeing Program go from strength to strength as does our clinical arm, the Hearing Centre, which has been embraced by the local community. A warm thank you to the Soundfair team who are devoted to this work and our community.

This year we also said farewell for now to several key staff as their projects finished or shifted focus. As a small charity, each team members' contribution becomes intertwined in our DNA. I share my heartfelt thanks to Jessica Vitkovic, Melissa Chandler, Lourdes Zamanillo, Rosey Cooke, and Claire Aldham who headed to new adventures this year. Both Jessica and Melissa provided critical leadership within Soundfair over the last four years, and their contributions have set the path for our future Jess' impact on setting up our research, innovation, and education offerings and Melissa in transformation and growth of our Hearing Centre. Lourdes, Rosey, and Claire brought diverse skills and experience across storytelling and policy-influencing, community facing clinical administration and lived experience informed marketing and communications. They made a powerful impact on this organisation and hundreds of people.

As we look ahead, it is pertinent to acknowledge and thank our supporters for their valuable contribution to our work. We are grateful to our volunteers who donate their time and to the audiologists and community members who generously donate hearing aids to support us

to provide no cost hearing services through our Hearing Bank. Thank you to our granting supporters, the Department of Health, the Colliers Charitable Trust, the City of Monash, and Equity Trustees. Thank you to Twinings, Sonova, Oticon Australia, Tinnitbot and The Tinnitus Clinic for sponsoring our work across professional education and our community campaigns. Our heartfelt thank you to members of the community who made donations to Soundfair this year. This support allows us to champion lived experience voices to improve mental health, remove barriers to help-seeking while creating systemic change, so that no person who lives with hearing conditions feels invisible, excluded nor disconnected.

In the year ahead, I look forward to working with the Soundfair board to reveal our next strategic step forward. The Soundfair board continue to be incredibly bold and supportive, and I thank them for their stewardship. Importantly, I look forward to making hearing seen and people heard.

**DR CAITLIN BARR**







## OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Dr Caitlin Barr**

**CEO**



**David Rischbieth**

**CFO**



**Bianca Potenta**

**OPERATIONS  
LEAD**



**Anushka Vallabh**

**CLINIC  
LEAD**



**Dr Emma Laird**

**PROJECT  
LEAD**

WE EXTEND OUR SINCERE THANKS TO OUR PAST TEAM LEADS ACROSS 2022-2023 MELISSA CHANDLER, JESSICA VITKOVIC AND TO OUR CURRENT AND RECENTLY DEPARTED TEAM

# COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

## TINNITUS AUSTRALIA

**Tinnitus Australia provides a central place for people living with tinnitus to navigate management pathways, receive personalised support and advice, and to raise awareness of the importance of taking care of your ears.**

Tinnitus Australia have continued to provide support and non clinical advice to thousands of people across Australia through our online resources (812 visits per month) and national helpline (with over 100 calls). Additionally, we have had hundreds more who contact us via email seeking guidance for living with tinnitus. We have

been able to connect people to the information, services and management options they have not been able to locate themselves.

Dr Emma Laird was invited to talk to host Brent Bultitude on radio station 2HD Newcastle about the causes, research and ways that tinnitus can be managed, after he recently started to experience tinnitus himself.

Tinnitus Australia also released a new online, on-demand course, the Tinnitus Masterclass, to provide essential training and education for healthcare professionals. The Tinnitus Masterclass was developed by experts in the field, Myriam Westcott, Dr Susan Tegg-Quinn and A/Prof Helmy Mulders, and provides an understanding of the neuroscience, theoretical models, causes and risk factors of tinnitus, as well as an in-depth understanding of best-practice approaches to



the evaluation and treatment of tinnitus. We would like to thank Phonak for sponsoring this wonderful course over the year.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank Tinnitus Australia's Expert Advisors for their work across the year: Victoria Didenko, Myriam Westcott, Dr Chris Hogan, Steve Power, Dr Grant Searchfield, Dani Fox and Dr Susan Tegg-Quinn.

**DR EMMA LAIRD**

## SOUNDMIND EDUCATION

**More Than Just Ears education for hearing healthcare professionals.**

Key to improving the social and emotional wellbeing of people living with hearing conditions, is investing in the skills, knowledge and confidence of hearing health professionals.

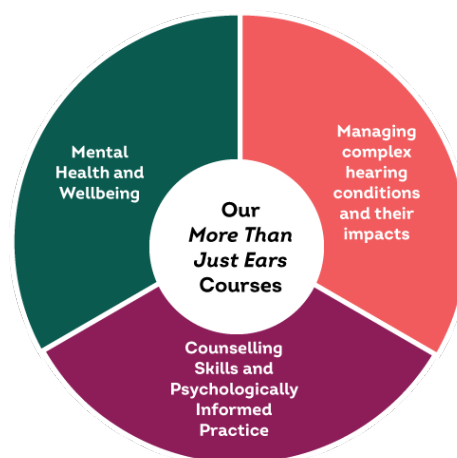
In August 2022, Soundfair released Soundmind Education, our healthcare provider learning platform. Soundmind Education provides courses that are about more than just ears, from communication strategies to whole-person

hearing care, our courses contribute to a world where all people with hearing conditions live well.

The platform is currently home to eight courses that focus on hearing conditions and their impacts on social, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Our inaugural course, Applications of CBT for Audiology, recieved exceptional feedback from the students who participated in the 20 hour, practical course. We would like to thank Oticon for sponsoring the course throughout 2022-2023

**DR EMMA LAIRD**



*"A very informative course and it has definitely changed my way of talking and interacting with my clients during the clinic."*

- Applications of CBT for Audiology participant



## HEARING WELLBEING

### Co-designing a hearing wellbeing digital experience.

In 2019, we commenced a collaborative co-design project seeking to create a way to address the social and emotional impacts of hearing conditions, alongside the physical impacts. This project has led to several outputs, including development of a Hearing Wellbeing Support program. This program was a paper-based set of self-guided modules, that provide guidance on the social and emotional challenges associated with hearing conditions. Preliminary feedback revealed that people desired an online version of the Hearing Wellbeing Program to improve access and affordability.

Soundfair, in collaboration with the University of Melbourne, was awarded a National Health and Research Council (NHMRC) grant to transform this program into a personalised

digital experience and determine its impact on wellbeing.

A lived-experience Consumer and Community Advisory Committee have participated in two co-design workshops to help us understand their preferences and requirements for this digital experience. The co-design team generated over 100 ideas and we gained incredible insight into what makes an accessible and engaging digital platform, and how they imagine the Hearing Wellbeing Program online.

We are now in the process of engaging a digital developer to transform these co-designed ideas into an initial prototype. People with lived experience of hearing conditions will continue to guide the iteration and development of the program.

**DR EMMA LAIRD**

***"My journey was lived through the physical lens alone and I missed out on the emotional and psychological lens. I had no idea how much this was going to impact on my life."***

**- Lived-experience co-design participant**

**\$496,104**

**NHMRC Hearing Health Evidence Based Support Services Grant**



# COMMUNITY SERVICES

## HEARING, WELLBEING

## AND PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

### Unique range of whole-person supports, connecting the dots between audiology and psychology.

This year was a time of continued momentum for the hearing centre, as we continued to expand and develop our service offerings. Focus on the whole person impacts of hearing conditions is highlighted by our Connection Coach approach and wellbeing service. Co-created by people living with hearing conditions, this consultation provides time and an opportunity to build a personalised plan based on individuals social, emotional, and audiological needs. We have received such positive feedback on this service and look forward to expanding it further. Growing from our Connection Coach approach, we were excited to launch tinnitus counselling and our pilot psychology services, addressing the psychological impacts of hearing conditions. We have quickly learned that there is a significant demand for this service, and we look forward to its growth.

The growth of our services has enabled us to continue to serve those most vulnerable in our community through our Hearing Bank program.

This year, we were exceptionally fortunate to receive philanthropic support from the Collier Charitable Fund for the first time, which allowed us to provide whole person focussed audiology services. This allowed us to provide services to an additional 40 people who might not have otherwise received this support, bringing our total to 78. The success of the Hearing Bank relies on the generous donations of time from our dedicated volunteers, the contribution of pre-loved hearing aids from thoughtful families, and even the supply of new devices from one of our generous hearing aid suppliers, Bernafon. Words cannot express our profound gratitude to all those who continue to make this program possible.

We were also fortunate to receive ongoing funds from the Commonwealth Home Support Program so we could continue to serve the frail older population with hearing loss and support them in living independently at home. We were delighted to present to many Aged Care Assessment teams as part of their continuous professional development to support them to identify hearing conditions and refer these people to receive the appropriate supports to enable them to live well with their hearing conditions.

Immersing ourselves in the local community was

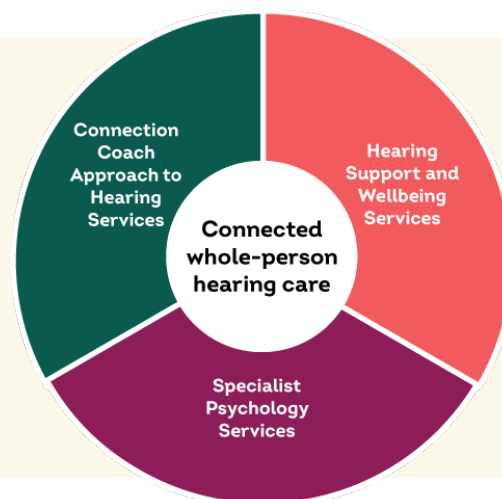
a key focus of the 22-23 year for the Soundfair Hearing Centre. We actively participated in events such as the Monash Seniors Expo, where we shared our message with fellow exhibitors and the local community. We engaged with our local Positive Ageing and Lifestyle groups in the City of Monash and talked about how broadly hearing can impact us all. We featured in the BeWell news, distributed to 2400 Monash residents over 65 years, to support the education and empowerment of older people living at home. With the support of the Monash city council, we delivered several Active Communication and Education programs to support people and their significant others to live well with their hearing loss. We also featured in a Mens Shed webinar to talk about the importance of hearing protection and early action with all 'shedders' who traditionally can be amongst a more reticent group of individuals seeking help.

As we look to the future, we have exciting plans for the hearing centre and the expansion of our services, and we eagerly anticipate sharing these with you. In the meantime, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been a part of our incredible journey.

**ANUSHKA VALLABH**



We have supported  
**1,696**  
people in  
2022-2023







## PATRICK'S CONNECTION JOURNEY

***“Before coming to Soundfair, I had experienced hearing care that was limited to hearing tests and technical support, and now instead I’m living with the foundation of a network of care that helps me live and work the way I want to and as a proud deaf person. Soundfair’s Hearing Wellbeing service has made a profound difference to my life.”***

I found Soundfair while I was in a bit of a limbo with my hearing care; (I was) looking for a reliable and safe Audiologist who could understand what I needed and wasn't focused on upselling devices. Through a recommendation from a friend, I found Soundfair.

Anushka helped me with my NDIS application from start to finish. I was successful in accessing the NDIS thanks to her hard work and effort to gain a true understanding of what hearing care and supports I needed, and since then I've been able to access a huge range of supports, I didn't have previously, such as psychological care and funding for learning Auslan, as well as new hearing aids. I've also been able to start with Soundfair's psychology service and have benefited greatly, especially being able to see a clinician with lived experience as a deaf/HoH person.



## HEARING BANK

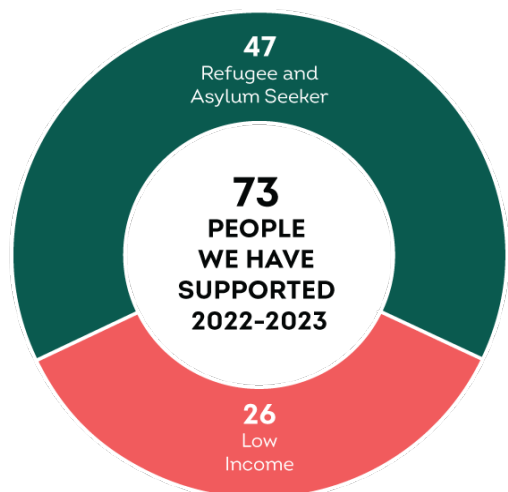
***"I can follow my English teacher's instructions and  
I'm part of my family conversations again."***

### **San's Hearing Bank Journey.**

San is a newly arrived refugee from Burma. San arrived in Australia with a strong desire to become a part of her new community; however, San's journey was impacted by her hearing condition. Hearing loss affected San's self-confidence and ability to participate in English classes, ultimately isolating her from the community and her new life in Australia.

San was referred to Soundfair's Hearing Bank through which she received donated and refurbished hearing aids and support to re-engage with her community. Through San's tears of joy, she shared with us the immediate and vast impact on her life.

San has a brighter future filled with opportunities and confidence. The Hearing Bank service has opened doors for her, enabling her to seek employment, engage more fully in her community, and connect with friends and family.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## TEA FOR TINNITUS

### Connection, down to a Tea.

Without the right support - tinnitus and hearing loss - cause disconnection. What better way to overcome this disconnection, by inviting people across Australia to sit down for a cuppa and conversation about tinnitus and hearing health. In 2023, we piloted the Tea for Tinnitus campaign where we invited the community to organise a tea

party in the name of tinnitus awareness and to raise funds to support our Tinnitus Helpline.

In Tinnitus Awareness Week 2023, we were delighted to see Tea for Tinnitus morning teas take place, with photos shared across social media. Thanks to the generous donations of those involved in tea parties, and to our supporters, Tinnitbot and Tinnitus Care Clinic, we raised close to \$10,000 which has kept the helpline staffed for

2023.

In 2024, Tea for Tinnitus will be bigger and better - and will take place in June. Join our newsletter list or socials to make sure you get updates to get involved.

**DR CAITLIN BARR**



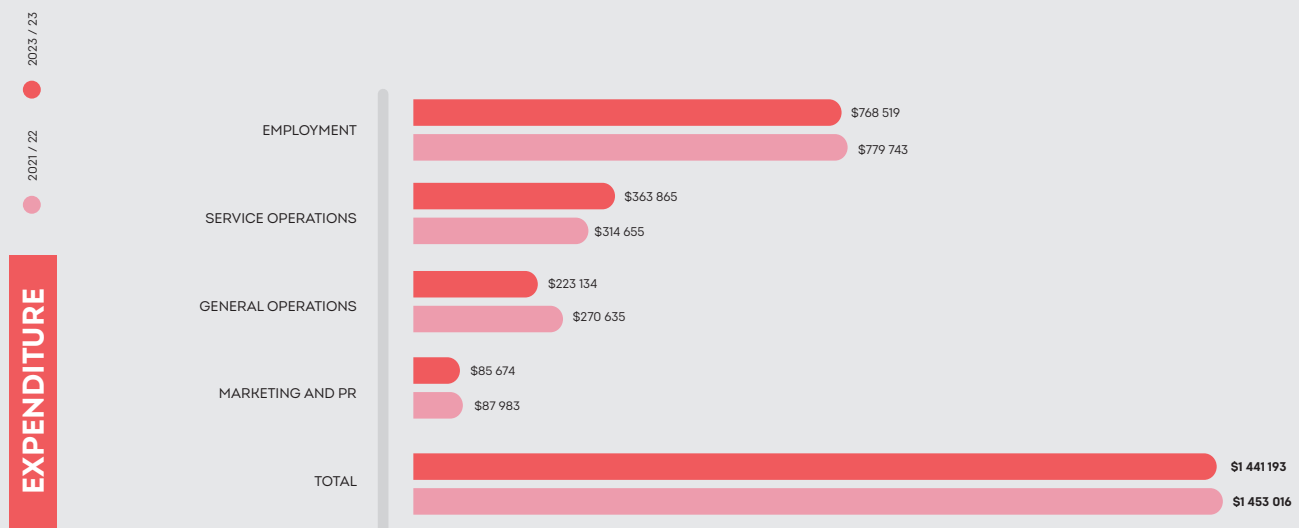
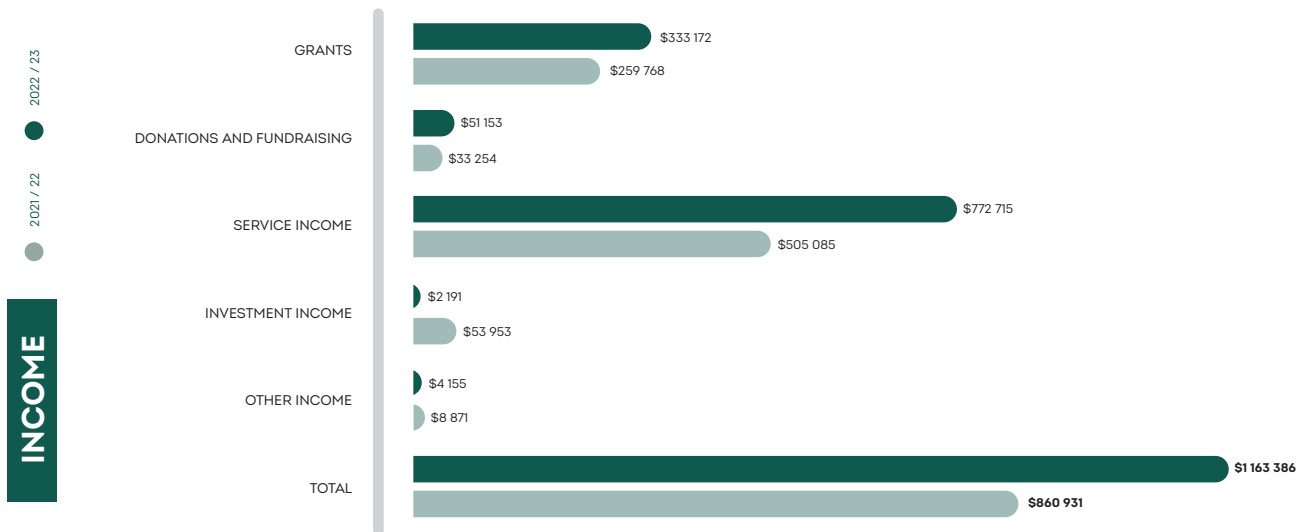
## NATIONAL PEER COMMUNITIES

### Overcoming isolation virtually.

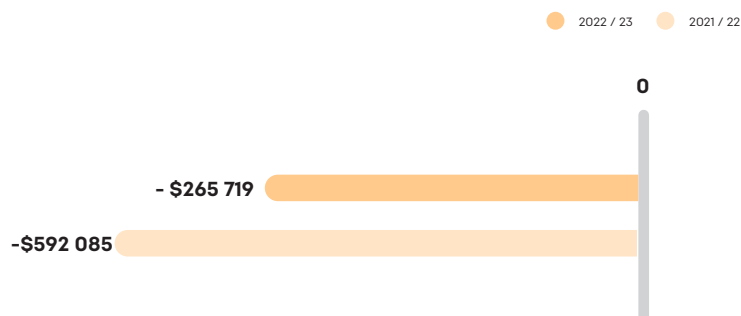
Did you know that we run two national online communities and a regular social gathering? These engaged Facebook groups are for and powered by Soundfair volunteers and are a safe place for social connection, information sharing and support.

The Soundfair Social is run virtually, monthly, by Soundfair volunteers. This supportive peer group of people living with hearing conditions, cover topics of belonging, identity, accessibility and personal experiences. New commers are always welcome.

## Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income



### NET RESULT FOR THE YEAR



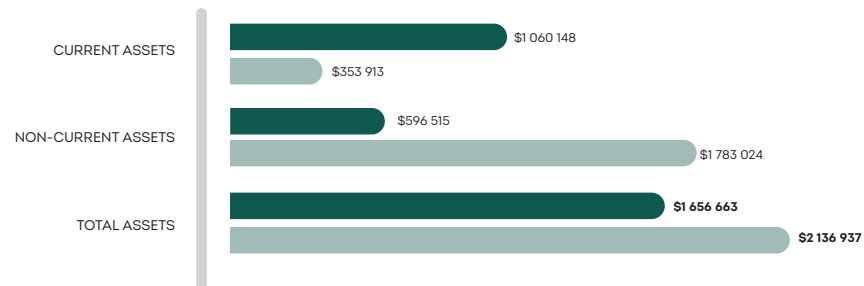


## Statement of Financial Position

30 June 2023

30 June 2022

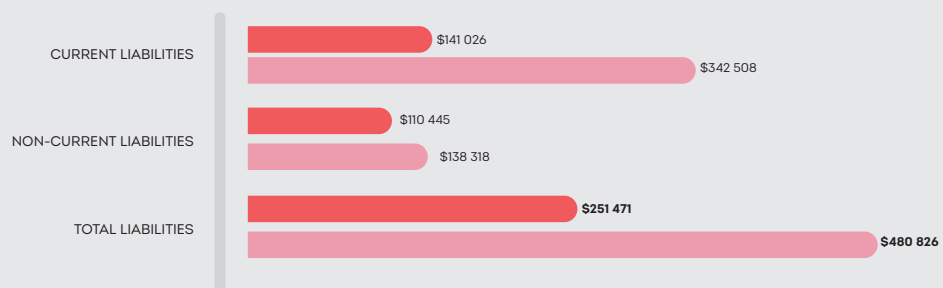
### ASSETS



30 June 2023

30 June 2022

### LIABILITIES



### NET ASSETS

2022 / 23    2021 / 22

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# MAKING HEARING SEEN AND PEOPLE HEARD

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS, FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

**PHONAK**  
life is on

  
CITY OF  
MONASH

  
Australian Government  
 **myagedcare**

**unitron**

**TWININGS**

**bernafon**<sup>®</sup>  
Your hearing • Our passion

**oticon**  
PEOPLE FIRST

Collier  
Charitable  
Fund •

  
**Cochlear**<sup>®</sup>  
Hear now. And always

 **Tinnibot**

 **Tinnitus  
Care Clinic**

DONALD EAN  
ROSS BEQUEST

Thank you to our generous donors and volunteers.

  
**SOUNDFAIR**  
MAKING HEARING SEEN AND PEOPLE HEARD.

## HEARING LINE

**1300 242 842**  
For hearing, social and  
emotional support,  
and general enquiries,  
Monday to Friday,  
9am – 5pm

## ADDRESS

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VIC 3149  
Phone (03) 9510 1577  
Fax (03) 8640 0681  
Email [info@soundfair.org.au](mailto:info@soundfair.org.au)

## LET'S CONNECT



#MoreThanJustEars  
#MoreThanJustDevices