



MDS and BRI Merger

McCallum Disability Services (MDS) and Ballarat Regional Industries (BRI), two of Ballarat's leading disability support organisations, are coming together to create the largest employment social enterprise in Western Victoria.

The merger expands on inclusive employment opportunities for people living with disabilities and provides greater opportunities to deliver positive social impact for communities.



Fast Facts

- Who** McCallum Disability Services (MDS) and Ballarat Regional Industries (BRI).
- What** These two disability support services will merge their operations.
- Where** They will continue to offer their services in Ballarat and St Arnaud.
- When** The merger will be finalised over the next months, to be ratified by the organisations at their Annual General Meetings, no later than the end of November.
- Why** The merger creates opportunities for improved resourcing, funding and support for participants and ensures the long-term success of the organisations. It will provide more flexible and diverse work opportunities for supported workforce, will deliver more services to customers, members, commercial partners and communities and provide more promotional opportunities for staff.

Frequently asked questions



Who are McCallum Disability Services?

- McCallum Disability Services (MDS) is a not for profit, member based organisation that has been providing support services for its community since 1953. Those services include, accommodation, day programs, one to one support and employment for people living with disability.
- MDS is governed by an independent Board of Directors and operates under regulations of the Australian Charities and Not of Profit Commission.
- McCallum's employment operations are located at three sites; Sturt Street, Ballarat; Coronet Street, Wendouree and Long Street, St. Arnaud. The employment services consists of; packaging, gardening, commercial laundry, cloth sales and a variety of social enterprise work activities which are conducted on the sites of some of Ballarat's largest employers.
- MDS currently has 350 staff working across its sites within the Central Highlands and Northern Grampians shires.
- Further information may be obtained from the MDS website at www.mccallum.org.au

Who is Ballarat Regional Industries?

- Ballarat Regional Industries (BRI) is a not for profit social enterprise with the specific mission of providing employment and training opportunities for people living with a disability. It commenced 35 years ago by a group of parents and families who were seeking employment for their family member exiting Ballarat Special School.
- BRI is governed by an independent Board of Directors and reports annually to the Australian Charities and Not For Profit Commission.
- BRI operates from two sites in Ballarat and its services include packaging food products at one site and paper, cardboard and plastic recycling, timber manufacture and landscaping services at the other site. The customer base includes major industries, local government departments and a wide range of businesses in the Greater Ballarat area.
- At the present time BRI employs 145 people living with a disability and 35 support and administrative staff.
- Further information may be obtained from the BRI website at www.bri.org.au

Why are they merging?

The environment surrounding community services is constantly changing, meaning organisations need to grow and evolve. This merger creates opportunities for improved resourcing, investment and funding and will increase employment opportunities for all staff. The merger will also ensure the long-term success of the organisations through the pooling of resources and harnessing the collective experience of each organisations staff to further our shared vision.

When did they decide to merge?

MDS and BRI have discussed the possibility of merging several times over the past decade but the time was never quite right. Due to the constantly changing environment facing the community services sector, the two organisations resumed these discussions early this year and believe it is in the best interests of both enterprises to merge now. The merger is seen by both boards as a positive and proactive move that will ensure the long-term success of the organisation.

What will the new organisation be called?

The two organisations will operate under their current names and business structures for the foreseeable future. The employment businesses will operate under their existing brand names but be managed under one organisational structure.

When is the merger taking place?

The Boards of both BRI and MDS have fully endorsed the merger which will take effect after their respective Annual General Meetings are held, but no later than the end of November.

Who do I contact now for services?

The two businesses will remain separate from a customer point of view with all invoicing, billing, accounts, agreements and contracts remaining the same. The personnel are also remaining unchanged, so it is business as usual for all MDS and BRI customers.

So who will lead the BRI business now?

Mr Geoff Russell will step away from his full time role as CEO at BRI at the end of the calendar year and then continue as a consultant to the joint operation to ensure a smooth transition into the one management structure being planned. Mr Geoff Russell is fully supportive of the merger and wishes to ensure a seamless transition.

His experience and knowledge will be invaluable in supporting Mr McCuskey and the new board in the transition to the joint organisation, in shoring up its future and driving it to further success.

How will the joint operation function?

McCallum CEO, Tyrone McCuskey will head up the joint organisation and oversee all business operations of the two entities and report to the independent Boards.

Will it provide the same services?

Yes, all services will continue in their current format.

What happens to the staff of both organisations?

The employment of all staff will be secured through the merger process.

Will services be disrupted during the merger process?

Services are not expected to be disrupted during the merger process. The two organisations are working closely to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

Will there be a change to existing contracts?

All existing contracts with commercial partners will remain in place.

Will the merger lead to more services and employment opportunities?

In time, this merger will broaden the number and types of services being offered to commercial partners and to the people accessing the services. The merger will provide more flexible and diverse work opportunities for the supported workforce, deliver more services to clients, members, commercial partners and communities and provide more promotional opportunities for staff.