



**Searchlight**  
GROUP

Candidate Briefing Pack



# Board Directors

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Three Non-Executive Director appointments

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Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Abound Communities. This pack is designed to give you a clear picture of the organisation, the Board, and the contribution we are seeking, so you can consider whether this opportunity is right for you.

Abound Communities has appointed Searchlight Group to manage this search. We would welcome a confidential conversation with anyone considering a role, and details on how to register your interest are set out at the end of this pack.

## ABOUT ABOUND COMMUNITIES

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Founded in 1869, Abound Communities — the Old Colonists’ Association of Victoria — is one of Victoria’s oldest not-for-profit organisations. For more than 150 years its purpose has remained constant: to provide secure, affordable homes and care for older Victorians, particularly those of limited means. The organisation adopted the trading name Abound Communities in 2021 and is currently transitioning from its historical incorporation under Acts of Parliament to a Company Limited by Guarantee, expected to complete by December 2026.

Today Abound Communities supports around 540 older Victorians across five sites — Rushall Park (North Fitzroy), Leith Park (St Helena), Braeside Park (Berwick), Currie Park (Euroa) and Liscombe House residential aged care. It offers a continuum of care from independent living and assisted living through to residential aged care and home care, allowing residents to remain within the Abound community as their needs change.

A unique and defining feature of the organisation is its means-tested model – a one-off ingoing contribution and a 55-year lease. Historically around half of all residents were admitted with low or no means, paying no ingoing contribution, and social purpose continues to sit at the heart of every decision. Abound is regulated as both a retirement village operator and an approved aged care provider, and is actively preparing for significant sector reform, including Victoria’s Retirement Villages Amendment Act 2025 (commenced 1 May 2026) and continuing Commonwealth aged care reform.

## OUR PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES

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**Vision.** Through independent community living and care, we enrich the lives of our people.

**Mission.** To advocate and provide affordable, safe and dignified independent homes for older Victorians within a village environment, and to offer appropriate and practicable extended care when it is required.

**Values.**

- **Respect** — we appreciate, embrace and celebrate our differences.
- **Community** — we work collaboratively to foster open, inclusive and engaged communities.
- **Kindness** — we care about people and have a shared passion to support people to live fulfilling lives.
- **Integrity** — we are open, trustworthy and take responsibility for our actions.

*“A place to belong.”*

## OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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Abound Communities is guided by its ENABLE 2024–2027 Strategic Plan. Its ambition is to enrich the lives of older Victorians through independent community living and care, and to become a leader of care services in the Australian aged care sector. The plan builds on a period of renewal: following a challenging few years, the organisation has substantially completed a financial and operational turnaround.

The operating deficit has narrowed from \$2.06m in FY24 to \$967k in FY25, with revenue growing 20% to \$18.3m and cash reserves recovering to \$9.0m. The FY26 budget is set at breakeven, and the year is currently tracking ahead of plan, with net assets of approximately \$56m. With financial stability restored, the Board's focus is shifting from stabilisation to consolidation and growth.

### Strategic directions

The ENABLE plan is organised around four strategic directions:

- Refine the service offering, systems and processes to provide high-quality care to residents and clients.
- Build on these foundations to enable ambitious and innovative projects and programs in the continual pursuit of excellence.
- Build a workforce culture that supports a dynamic and positive employee value proposition.
- Grow “profit for purpose” year-on-year to ensure financial sustainability.

### Strategic commitments

These directions are pursued through four organisational commitments:

- Partnering with residents and communities.
- Investing in workforce and culture.
- Delivering high-quality care and services.
- Establishing sustainability and agility.

### Priorities for the period ahead

Alongside the strategic plan, the Board is steering a number of significant near-term priorities: completing the transition to a Company Limited by Guarantee and modernising the constitution; preparing for and embedding major sector reform, including Victoria's Retirement Villages Amendment Act 2025 (commenced 1 May 2026) and continuing Commonwealth aged care reform; growing home care through a direct Support at Home licence; rebuilding philanthropy as a sustainable source of revenue; and pursuing measured growth, including development projects, while safeguarding the organisation's social mission.

Candidates should also understand the Board's current operating posture. Through the turnaround, the Board has worked more closely to the operational detail than is typical, supporting the Chief Executive and protecting the organisation's recovery. As that momentum continues, incoming directors may in the short term need to lean in more actively than a steady-state governance role would usually require. We are therefore seeking directors with strong values alignment and a genuine preparedness to contribute to the extent the organisation needs, while recognising that, as Abound matures, the Board's focus will progressively return to its core governance and strategic role.

For incoming directors, this is a genuine opportunity to help shape Abound Communities' future, guiding a stable, well-regarded organisation as it deepens its impact for older Victorians and strengthens its foundations for the long term.

## ABOUT THE BOARD

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Abound Communities is governed by a voluntary Board of Non-Executive Directors. The Board is responsible for the organisation's strategic direction; financial, clinical and corporate governance; risk management and regulatory compliance; and for stewardship of its long-term sustainability and social mission. Directors are expected to demonstrate leadership, integrity, sound judgement and a genuine commitment to older Victorians.

The Board is supported by a committee structure that includes Governance, Finance, and Clinical Governance committees, with nominations and remuneration matters also overseen at Board level. The Board works in close partnership with the Chief Executive Officer, Katherine Burton, who leads the organisation, and with its executive team.

The Board is currently undertaking a planned renewal process and is seeking to appoint three new, additional directors. This is a deliberate investment in the Board's depth and breadth of skills, and an opportunity to bring fresh perspectives to a capable and committed group. One appointment may, in time, provide a pathway to the role of Board Chair in support of the Board's succession planning.

## THE ROLE OF BOARD DIRECTOR

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Within the Board's collective responsibility, each director contributes equally to the governance and stewardship of the organisation, including its legislative responsibilities and accountabilities under the Aged Care Act and the Corporations Act. Key contributions include:

- Contributing actively to the Board's discharge of its responsibilities under the Board Charter, keeping the organisation's mission, vision and strategic direction at the centre of its work.
- Attending and actively participating in Board and committee meetings and sharing knowledge and perspective.
- Contributing to a respectful, ethical and inclusive Board culture in which different views can be expressed and consensus sought wherever possible.
- Developing collaborative and supportive relationships with the Board Chair, the CEO and fellow directors.
- Meeting with residents periodically and bringing their perspective to the Board.
- Participating in the recruitment of new directors and in Board and committee evaluation.

## WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Abound is seeking three new directors who will collectively strengthen the Board’s capability across a number of priority areas. The intent is to deepen the Board’s bench strength rather than to fill identical roles. We welcome candidates who bring depth in one or more of the areas below, together with strong governance instincts and genuine alignment to the organisation’s purpose. A Board skills matrix guides this search.

Priority Capability area	What we are looking for
<b>Financial management and audit</b>	Senior financial expertise — financial oversight, audit and the funding models specific to aged care and retirement living (AN-ACC, ingoing contributions, RADs) — adding depth to the Board’s financial governance.
<b>Clinical and aged care quality</b>	Clinical leadership and aged care quality and safety governance, with an understanding of the Aged Care Quality Standards and clinical risk across residential and community care.
<b>Governance, risk and regulation</b>	Strong corporate governance acumen, including not-for-profit (ACNC) governance, retirement village and aged care regulation, and constitutional change. May suit a director with the capability to support Board Chair succession.
<b>Development or Project Management</b>	Experience in governance oversight required for large projects of significant property development.
<b>Strategic leadership and stewardship</b>	Strategic thinking, sound risk judgement, and the maturity to steward a values-driven organisation through reform and growth while protecting its social mission.
Secondary Capability area	What we are looking for
<b>Marketing, philanthropy and fundraising</b>	Experience building philanthropy, fundraising, brand and stakeholder engagement, supporting Abound’s revenue diversification and its growing philanthropy capability.
<b>Diversity and community connection</b>	Candidates who broaden the diversity of the Board — including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people — and who bring lived experience or connection to the communities Abound serves.

### Experience we value

- Board or senior executive leadership in a complex, mission-driven organisation in the aged care (Residential or Community Based Aged Care Services), retirement living, health, or social housing sectors. Candidates with a strong understanding of the Aged Care Act and knowledge of RAC, SAP and RV’s will be regarded highly.
- Demonstrated expertise in one or more of the priority capability areas above.
- Experience of organisational change, financial stewardship, regulatory reform, philanthropy or growth.
- Strong governance experience in another not-for-profit or regulated environment may complement lighter direct sector experience.

## Values and personal attributes

- A genuine commitment to the wellbeing and dignity of older Victorians, and to Abound's social purpose and means-tested model.
- Integrity, sound judgement, and a collaborative and inclusive leadership style.
- The ability to contribute to robust, respectful debate while supporting a unified Board position.
- A strategic rather than operational mindset, and respect for the perspectives of residents, staff and the broader community.

## TIME COMMITMENT AND TERMS

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These are voluntary Non-Executive Director roles. *The Board is reviewing the introduction of director remuneration; at present the roles are unpaid.*

Directors are appointed for a three-year term, to a maximum of three terms (nine years), and are elected at the Annual General Meeting. The role involves attendance at a minimum of six Board meetings annually, membership of at least one Board committee, attendance at the annual Board strategy day, mandatory Board training and periodic engagement with residents across Abound's sites, together with time for reading, meeting preparation and Board working group activities from time to time. The Board Meetings are held at 4pm on Mondays and rotate across some Abound Communities sites.

## SAFETY SCREENING

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Abound Communities conducts screening for all Board members. Screening must be satisfied before an offer to join the Board is made and kept current to ensure ongoing compliance. It includes, but may not be limited to:

- Reference checks.
- A National Police / Australian Criminal History Check, and an International Criminal History Check for those who have lived outside Australia for 12 months or more in the last 10 years.
- A National Personal Insolvency Check.
- Verification of qualifications and professional memberships.
- Evidence of COVID-19 vaccination, consistent with Abound's policy.

## HOW TO APPLY

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Searchlight Group is managing this appointment on behalf of Abound Communities. We would welcome a confidential conversation with anyone considering a role.

To express your interest, please submit a current CV together with a brief covering letter outlining your interest in the role and your alignment with Abound Communities' purpose and values.

### Contact

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**Applications close:** 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026

**Conflicts of interest:** please let us know of any potential conflicts of interest, for example a current role with another aged care or retirement living provider, so these can be considered and managed transparently.

*Abound Communities is committed to inclusion and diversity. We warmly encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.*

### Useful Links

Abound Communities: <https://www.aboundcommunities.org.au/>

ACNC: <https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities/42efdc8e-38af-e811-a963-000d3ad24077/profile>

ENABLE 2024-2027: <https://www.aboundcommunities.org.au/about-abound-communities/our-vision>