



Chief Executive Officer

Candidate Information
Brief



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about the opportunity

Introducing Headstart ABI Services	Headstart ABI is a specialist service supporting people living with acquired brain injury (ABI) across the Hunter, Port Stephens and Central Coast regions. Established in 1987, Headstart brings extensive expertise in understanding the complex and often invisible impacts of brain injury, with a focus on supporting each person's individual choices, independence and quality of life. Headstart takes a person-centred and strengths-based approach, working alongside individuals and their families to find practical and creative solutions that reflect their goals, circumstances and aspirations. Through tailored supports, Headstart helps people build confidence, develop independence, strengthen connections and create opportunities to live a meaningful life beyond brain injury.
Headstart ABI Services' Values	<i>Our vision is 'for people living with brain injury to have opportunities that strengthen and enrich their lives'. Our core purpose at Headstart is 'To make a difference in the lives of people touched by brain injury by providing opportunities and inspiring hope.' This is our single most important purpose. Every role, every person at Headstart connects to our vision and purpose.</i> Our 6 core values support our vision and purpose, shape our culture and reflect who we are: 1. People focussed 2. Bold & Innovative 3. Adaptable 4. Fair & Open 5. Sensitive to need 6. Ethics above all
Location	95 Turnbull St, Hamilton South NSW 2303
Website	For more information on the organisation, please click here

how to apply

Submit Your Application	You can apply by submitting your CV and Cover Letter directly to Chelsea: chelseaf@peoplefusion.com.au
Your Primary Contact	Should you have questions at any stage of the application process your primary contact at peoplefusion is Chelsea Farrar: Chelsea Farrar 02 4927 2027 chelseaf@peoplefusion.com.au

position description

Title	Chief Executive Officer
Reports To	Board of Management
Direct Reports	All organisational staff (through managers, as applicable)
Team	Headstart ABI Services – Executive Leadership
Award Classification	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (MA000100) Executive / Leadership

position description

Primary Focus	The CEO provides visionary, strategic and operational leadership for Headstart ABI Services and is accountable to the Board for the overall performance, sustainability and future direction of the organisation. The CEO works collaboratively with the Board and Senior Leadership Team to develop and deliver Headstart’s strategic direction, ensuring the organisation continues to provide high-quality services to people with acquired brain injury while responding to changes within the NDIS, other funding bodies and broader disability and health sectors. The CEO is responsible for organisational strategy, financial sustainability, service quality, people and culture, governance, risk and compliance, stakeholder engagement, and identifying opportunities for sustainable growth, innovation and diversification.
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Position Responsibilities	
Strategy & Organisational Direction	• Lead the development and implementation of Headstart’s strategic direction, organisational goals and annual plans in collaboration with the Board. • Monitor changes and emerging trends across the NDIS, disability, health and community sectors, positioning Headstart to respond proactively to opportunities and challenges. • Lead the organisation through change while maintaining Headstart’s purpose, specialist ABI identity and strong community connection. • Ensure organisational structures, systems and resources are aligned to and support the achievement of strategic priorities.
People, Leadership & Culture	• Lead, develop and support the Senior Leadership Team to drive organisational capability and performance. • Foster a positive, collaborative and people-focused culture aligned with Headstart’s values. • Build organisational capability through effective delegation, coaching, development, workforce planning and succession planning. • Maintain an open, approachable and transparent leadership style that builds trust, engagement and accountability across the organisation. • Promote employee wellbeing and sustainable ways of working, role modelling Headstart’s values through behaviour, communication and leadership.

position description

Position Responsibilities

Financial Management & Organisational Sustainability

- Maintain overall accountability for Headstart's financial performance and long-term sustainability, including annual budgets and financial planning.
- Maintain a strong understanding of the NDIS funding (and other funding bodies) environment and its implications for organisational performance and sustainability.
- Work closely with the Finance Manager to monitor financial performance, maintain appropriate financial controls and respond to emerging risks and opportunities.

Service Delivery & Continuous Quality Improvement

- Ensure the delivery of high-quality, person-centred services while maintaining Headstart's specialist capability and reputation in supporting people with ABI and complex needs.
- Ensure appropriate systems and accountabilities are in place to monitor service quality and consumer outcomes, with the experiences of consumers, families and support networks informing service development.
- Promote a culture of continuous quality improvement, ensuring service evaluation, feedback and complaints inform organisational learning and improvement.

Growth, Innovation & Service Development

- Lead the identification and evaluation of opportunities for sustainable growth, diversification and complementary services, while protecting Headstart's specialist ABI identity and purpose.
- Develop recommendations and business cases for significant growth and investment opportunities, ensuring they are strategically aligned, financially sustainable and operationally achievable.
- Identify strategic partnerships and opportunities for innovation that strengthen Headstart's impact and long-term sustainability.

position description

Position Responsibilities

Board & Governance

- Develop and maintain an open, transparent and effective working relationship with the Board and Chair.
- Provide timely, accurate and relevant information to support effective governance and Board decision-making.
- Maintain an appropriate distinction between governance and management and ensure Board decisions and strategic priorities are effectively implemented.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships with consumers, families, government, funding bodies, sector partners and other key stakeholders.
- Represent Headstart within relevant disability, health and community sectors.
- Promote Headstart's profile, purpose and values and strengthen its community and sector connections.

Compliance, Risk & WH&S

- Ensure Headstart maintains effective risk, safeguarding and compliance frameworks and meets relevant legislative, NDIS, other funding bodies and accreditation requirements.
- Ensure significant organisational risks are appropriately identified, managed and reported to the Board.
- Maintain executive oversight of Work Health & Safety and ensure appropriate systems support a safe working and service environment.

position description

Position Goals

- Provide strategic and organisational leadership that ensures Headstart achieves its service, financial and governance objectives.
- Lead Headstart through its next phase, responding to changes within the NDIS and broader sector while preserving its specialist ABI focus, values and people-centred culture.
- Ensure Headstart remains financially sustainable while identifying appropriate opportunities for innovation, growth and diversification.
- Build and maintain a capable, engaged and accountable Senior Leadership Team and workforce.
- Strengthen Headstart's reputation, relationships and impact within the community, disability and health sectors.

Position Requirements

Experience	• Senior leadership experience within a complex service-based organisation, ideally within disability, health, community services or a similarly regulated environment. • Demonstrated experience leading at an organisational level across strategy, people, financial performance, operations and service delivery. • Strong understanding of the NDIS environment and its funding, regulatory and operational implications. • Demonstrated experience leading and developing senior leaders and multidisciplinary teams. • Strong financial and commercial acumen, with experience in organisational strategy, financial performance and leading through change. • Demonstrated experience working effectively with a Board and within a governance environment. • Experience within ABI, neurological disability, complex disability or similar service contexts, and previous CEO or equivalent executive leadership experience, will be highly regarded.
Qualifications	• Relevant tertiary qualifications in health, welfare, business, management or a related discipline. • Postgraduate qualifications in management, leadership or governance will be highly regarded. • NDIS Worker Orientation Module certificate, or willingness to obtain.

position description

Position Requirements

Licences / Clearances	• NDIS Worker Screening Clearance. • Working with Children Check Clearance (employee). • Current NSW Driver Licence. • Right to work in Australia.
Skills & Attributes	• Strategic and future-focused thinker with the ability to translate strategy into action. • Open, authentic and effective communicator with strong relationship-building and influencing skills. • Collaborative and inclusive leadership style, with the ability to listen, delegate, empower and develop others. • High level of integrity, self-awareness and professional judgement. • Adaptable and resilient, with the ability to lead effectively through change and uncertainty. • Ability to balance innovation and growth with organisational purpose, culture and sustainability. • Strong commitment to Headstart's values and achieving positive outcomes for people with ABI.
Headstart Capabilities	• Relationship • Impact & Influence • Support • Be Present • Check In • Compliance & Quality • Systems/Digital Uptake • Identity • Specialist Support • Manage, Supervise & Coach • Innovation & Continuous Improvement • Create an Enabling Environment • Commercial Acumen

some additional information

To view a copy of the Headstart Priorities towards 2028, please click below:

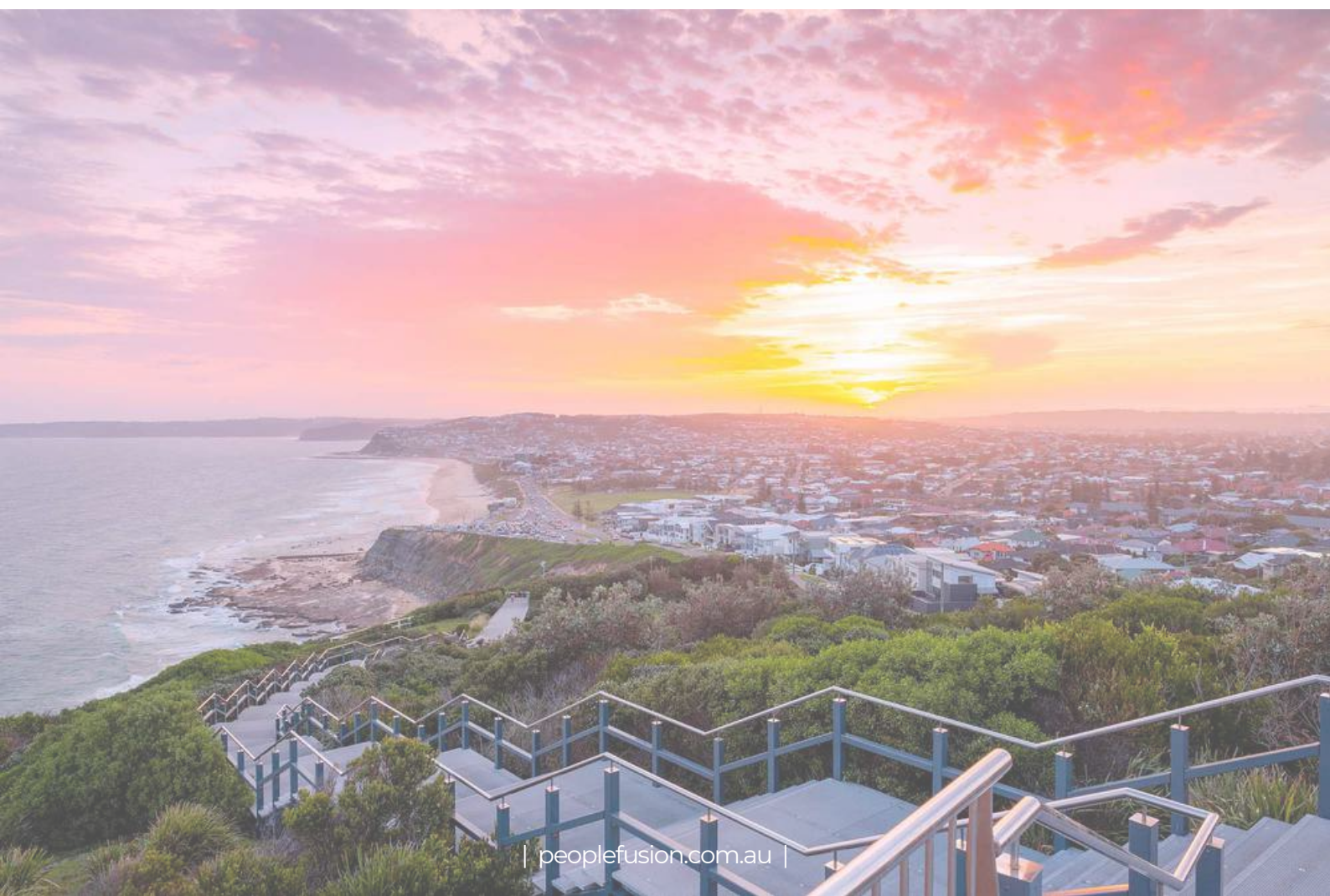
[Click here](#)

To view a copy of the Headstart Annual Report, please click below:

[Click here](#)

To view a copy of the Organisational Chart, please click below:

[Click here](#)



specialist recruiter



Chelsea Farrar

Senior Recruitment Specialist

Chelsea brings a creative, uniquely curious approach to her role and her relationships. Her flair and fresh thinking influences the way she navigates the recruitment landscape.

As a Senior Recruitment Specialist, Chelsea brings a quietly distinct mindset to her work. She doesn't just review a brief and follow the standard path; she looks sideways, exploring the cross-functional dynamics of an organisation and asking the thoughtful, unexpected questions that get to the true heart of a workplace culture and what will shift the dial.

Since joining the peoplefusion team in 2022, Chelsea has built a reputation as a trusted partner across the Communications, Marketing, and Community & Care sectors. Her recent recognition as a finalist for the 2025 RCSA Rising Star Award reflects her deep commitment to the craft.

Yet, for Chelsea, the real reward is never in industry accolades. It is in the steady, intentional work of pairing high-quality professionals with businesses in the Newcastle and Hunter region, whether she is making a single, crucial placement or helping shape an entire team.

Chelsea operates with a transparent, highly consultative style. She understands that bringing someone new into an organisation is a significant investment, not a quick transaction. By keeping all parties closely informed and ensuring absolute integrity throughout the process, she provides a calming reassurance when the stakes are high.

Her fresh perspective, combined with a genuine sense of care, ensures that the matches she makes are never just about filling a vacancy. They are about creating authentic, long-term alignments where both the organisation and the individual can confidently thrive.

Accredited Professional
Recruiter (RCSA)

2025 RCSA Rising Star
Finalist



specialist recruiter



Sally Bartley

Director and Executive Recruitment Consultant

When an organisation needs to appoint a board member or an executive leader, the stakes are undeniably high. These are the decisions that shape the future of a business, requiring a partner who brings clarity and insight, rather than just a process.

Sally guides these organisations through pivotal moments, maintaining a steady, objective perspective. With nearly three decades of experience and as co-founder of peoplefusion, Sally has built a reputation as a trusted advisor who navigates complex business landscapes with a level head and a warm heart, ensuring peak confidence from her clients.

Her approach is anchored in coaching and genuine partnership. When challenges arise, her instinct isn't to react to the noise; it is to step back, focus on the elements that can be influenced, and calmly guide the situation forward to ensure the right outcome.

Sally is driven by a deep, authentic care for her clients and the people she works with. She understands that a successful executive appointment is not about quick wins, it is a long-term investment. Because of this, she looks far beyond a standard skill set, focusing closely on cultural alignment, resilience, and the enduring impact a leader will have on an organisation.

This considered, solutions-focused mindset also shapes her broader work. As a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a dedicated mentor to emerging leaders in her industry, Sally is committed to continually raising the standard of her profession. She operates with a grounded authenticity and embodies honesty, warmth and approachability.

For Sally, the work has always been about building trust steadily over time, helping organisations grow and individuals flourish through careful, intentional decisions.

Accredited Professional
Recruiter (RCSA)

Graduate (AICD)

Director - National
Agency of the Year -
Executive Search 2025

Director - Best Agency
NSW - Executive Search
2025





Live Well. Lead Well. Why Newcastle & The Hunter Stacks Up

Newcastle and the Greater Hunter Region is one of Australia's most strategically important and rapidly evolving regions. Energy transition, infrastructure investment, health, education, and advanced industry are reshaping the Hunter and creating exciting, complex, high-stakes leadership opportunities.

But it's not just the opportunities that make it great, from the coastline of Newcastle to the vineyards of The Hunter Valley and the waterways of Lake Macquarie, the region offers a lifestyle that is both energising and sustainable.

- Start the day with a surf, lake or coastal walk
- Entertain clients over world-class food and wine
- Spend less time commuting and more time living

For our most effective leaders, that balance isn't a luxury, it's a performance advantage.

The Hunter is increasingly a destination for high-calibre executives (just like you) seeking more than just the next title.

They're choosing:

- Scope over hierarchy
- Impact over process
- Quality of life alongside career progression

And importantly, they're staying.

For the right individual, this is an opportunity to:

- Shape industries in transition
- Lead with genuine influence
- Build a career that is both ambitious and sustainable



lifestyle & location

Just a two-hour drive north of Sydney, Newcastle offers the rare combination of vibrant city energy and relaxed coastal living.

With excellent road, rail, and air connections, including Newcastle Airport, one of Australia's busiest regional airports, executives can stay connected without compromising lifestyle.

Enjoy the cafés, restaurants, nightlife, and recreational options of a major city, while also taking in pristine beaches and world-class wineries in the nearby Hunter Valley.

From casual family meals to stylish bars, intimate fine dining, and eclectic eateries, the region's food scene is diverse, innovative, and accessible. It's a city that knows how to cater to every taste, perfect for both lifestyle and networking opportunities.

Whether it's a quick swim before work, a leisurely weekend dip, or catching the perfect wave, the region's beaches and ocean baths cater to all levels.

Public amenities, picnic spots, BBQs, shaded areas, accessible pathways, and parking make it easy to enjoy the outdoors, every day.

The region's cultural heartbeat is thriving. Explore the Newcastle Art Gallery, the Civic Cultural Precinct, or take in theatre, comedy, live music, and events that keep Newcastle dynamic and creative.

Newcastle and the Hunter is not just a place to live, it's a place to thrive professionally, enjoy a balanced lifestyle, and make a tangible impact.

It's an environment where career, culture, and community align.



your experience

At peoplefusion our dedicated team lives and breathes recruitment, taking great care of our candidates every step of the way. We ensure transparency throughout the process, providing insights into roles and never sending you into interviews unprepared. You'll receive constructive feedback and continued support, regardless of the outcome of your application. Our services include permanent, temporary, and contract recruitment, executive search, outplacement, talent retention, and career coaching.

Our commitment to you is:

- Clear and consistent communication at every stage
- Personalised preparation and honest feedback throughout the process
- A respectful and human approach, always.
- Post placement follow up and support for you to strengthen our relationship and ensure your long term success

At peoplefusion we don't just accept diversity and inclusion, we celebrate it! We strive to create an environment of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, lifestyle, age, religion or physical ability, and welcome applications from people from all backgrounds. We welcome individuals to contact us if they require any assistance during the application process when applying for jobs with peoplefusion.

As a member of the Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association of Australia & NZ (RSCA), peoplefusion are committed to the Code of Professional Conduct and observe high standards of honesty, equity, integrity, and social and corporate responsibility. All of our Recruitment Specialists are accredited by the RSCA.

Learn more about us at peoplefusion.com.au





02 4929 1666



reception@peoplefusion.com.au



peoplefusion.com.au



Level 1, 169-173 King Street,
Newcastle NSW 2300