

Company: Small Businesses of Australia

Nomination Submitted by: Annette Densham, Award Writing Specialist

Company Description: Award Writing Specialist

Nomination Category: Company / Organization Categories

Nomination Sub Category: Company of the Year - Consumer Services - Medium

Nomination Title: Caring Lotus

1. Which will you submit for your nomination in this category, a video of up to five (5) minutes in length about the achievements of the nominated organization since 1 January 2023, OR written answers to the questions for this category? (Choose one):

Written answers to the questions

2. If you are submitting a video of up to five (5) minutes in length, provide the URL of the nominated video here, OR attach it to your entry via the "Add Attachments, Videos, or Links to This Entry" link above, through which you may also upload a copy of your video.

3. If you are providing written answers for your submission, you must provide an answer to this first question: Briefly describe the nominated organization: its history and past performance (up to 200 words):

Total 199 words used.

In 2021, Kerry Bolton found herself at her kitchen table with a big idea and even bigger determination. She'd seen how often the disability sector treated people like numbers instead of individuals with hopes, dreams, and potential. After years working in the mental health sector in California and with the NDIS trial site back in Australia, she knew it was time for something different—something real, personal, and truly client-focused. That's how Caring Lotus was born.

With no office and just a small, passionate team, Kerry built Caring Lotus from the ground up, using her skills in operations and web design to streamline services and create a strong online presence. What started as a small operation quickly grew into something much bigger—a thriving business with over 100 staff and a \$5.7 million turnover in just three years. But for Kerry, success was never just about the numbers.

At Caring Lotus, the mission has always been clear: provide more than just care. Build genuine connections, empower people to live their best lives, and create a community where everyone feels they belong. From personalised care plans to micro-business opportunities, Kerry's focus is on giving clients choice and control in their lives.

4. If you are providing written answers for your submission, you must provide an answer to this second question: Outline the organization's achievements since the beginning of 2023 that you wish to bring to the judges' attention (up to 250 words):

Total 246 words used.

Since launching in 2021, Caring Lotus has achieved remarkable growth. The true impact is in the initiatives that've transformed lives and redefined what care can look like:

Rapid growth

- From a startup to a thriving business with over 100 staff and \$5.7 million turnover in three years.
- Achieved 120% growth in 2023 without any marketing spend, driven by word of mouth and strong client satisfaction.

Innovative matchmaking system

- Pairs clients with support workers based on shared interests and life stages, creating stronger connections and better outcomes.
- Ricky, a young client passionate about cars, was matched with Sarah, a support worker who shares his passion. Their connection went beyond care; fixing cars, visiting car shows, and reigniting Ricky's sense of purpose.

Tech-driven solutions

- Developed the Caring Lotus app to centralise communication, forms, and resources, improved efficiency for staff and freeing them to focus on personalised care.
- Partnered with Wish Keeper, a secure platform where clients store their personal preferences and wishes, so choices are respected during critical times.

Community engagement, social connection

- Monthly community events like talent shows, museum trips, fishing days, and coffee shop meetups to combat social isolation and build stronger relationships.

Professional development

- Fast-tracked certification program for support workers with two years of experience, helping them become certified in four weeks.
- Investment through mentorship, networking, and continuous learning.

Transparency and accountability

- MUD forms (Miscommunication, Understanding, or Directions) addressing mistakes openly and improving processes.
- Clients and staff receive handwritten apology cards when errors occur.

5. If you are providing written answers for your submission, you must provide an answer to this third question: Explain why the achievements you have highlighted are unique or significant. If possible compare the achievements to the performance of other players in your industry and/or to the organization's past performance (up to 250 words):

Total 196 words used.

These achievements reflect a deep shift in how disability care can be delivered. The disability care industry is often criticised for its rigidity and lack of personalisation, Caring Lotus offers a fresh approach. It's built on real relationships, innovation, and a belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive.

Caring Lotus's matchmaking system may sound simple, but it's revolutionised how clients experience care. Strong, authentic connections between clients and support workers lead to better outcomes—for client well-being and staff satisfaction. This isn't just anecdotal; it's something clients talk about constantly, and it's why Caring Lotus keeps growing through word of mouth.

The micro-business programs are equally transformative. They give clients more than just job skills—they offer independence, confidence, and a sense of purpose. For many clients, these businesses are the first time they've felt truly capable of contributing and being part of the community.

Caring Lotus is also raising the bar on transparency and accountability. The MUD forms (Miscommunication, Understanding, or Directions) ensure that mistakes are addressed openly, with solutions and improvements put in place. Sometimes clients even receive a handwritten apology card, because Kerry believes in owning every aspect of the work, even the missteps.

6. You have the option to answer this final question: Reference any attachments of supporting materials throughout this nomination and how they provide evidence of the claims you have made in this nomination (up to 250 words):

Total 69 words used.

Our support document gives you more information on our services and point of difference. There are many organisations like ours in Australia but we are one of the few that weaves transparency and accountability into our service. The support document also shows the many community and client events we organise because we know many of clients are isolated; often their carer and family are the only people they see.



HOW TO ENTER >

Attachments/Videos/Links:

[Caring Lotus](#)

[REDACTED FOR PUBLICATION]