



NDS National
Disability
Services

Annual Report 2020





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Report from NDS President and CEO

Message from Joan McKenna Kerr, NDS
President and David Moody, NDS CEO

This has been a year of unprecedented developments and a good deal of stress for the disability sector, especially with the changes brought about by COVID-19. This has also been a year that saw members responding in remarkable ways to the challenge of the pandemic: from disaster-recovery plans and securing scarce PPE, to maintaining essential services and, most importantly, keeping people safe.

2019-20 began on a positive footing, with the Federal Government responding to the issues raised by NDS and committing more than \$850 million of new funding for the sector. The funding addressed some critically important areas, including transport, cancellation policy, new prices for health supports, and a temporary loading for attendant care and community participation supports during the pandemic.

Even with these very positive strides forward this year, there is a long way to go

yet to ensure the sector can grow and be sustainable in meeting the ongoing needs of people with disability.

Throughout the financial year, NDS continued to raise the issue of pricing, especially for individual support services and other areas of NDIA policy related to service costs. We also made a strong case for less red tape, greater funding flexibility and additional government investment in workforce development and training.

We advocated strongly this year on issues related to supported independent living and group supports as well as the many policy challenges posed by COVID-19. Overall, NDS lodged 28 submissions to national inquiries and reviews – including the Disability Royal Commission and the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS. We also continued to make the case for greater workforce flexibility to the Fair Work Commission, as it considered the Social, Community, Home Care and

Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Awards.

NDS regularly petitioned policy-makers throughout the year and connected them with our members in a wide range of forums. In addition, and just as importantly, we connected members to each other to collaborate on a wide range of issues and initiatives. In addition, we provided training, webinars, forums and resources to support our members in key areas during this time of unprecedented change.

Throughout 2019-20, we continued to see demand for quality disability services growing but, unfortunately, there are increasing reports of shortages of skilled support workers. NDS is very keen to collaborate with government to work on an issue that, if left unaddressed, will present a significant challenge for people with disability and our community.

It certainly has been a year like no other, but despite this we continue to plan for the year ahead. So much of the policy landscape in which we work is under constant review and there is a fatigue for service providers that comes with this. Going forward, however, NDS is very mindful of the needs of our members and we will be robust in our advocacy on their behalf in the coming twelve months. We are also especially mindful of those of our members who are supporting vulnerable populations and those living in regional and remote areas.

We continue to value our positive working relationships with governments around Australia, as well as the NDIA and the NDIS Commission. We are committed to the shared purpose of ensuring people with disability can lead the lives they choose with the support they need. We would also like to strengthen these relationships to advance our common purpose of creating opportunities for people with disability supported by quality services.

We extend our sincere thanks to, and acknowledge the support of, our members



Joan McKenna Kerr
President



David Moody
CEO

across Australia. We would also like to thank our staff, the National Board and the various committees for their significant contribution this year to the wellbeing of the disability sector and the advancement of people with disability.

As we contemplate 2020-21, there has never been a more important time to be part of Australia's National Peak body for disability service providers. There is much work to be done in the coming year on many fronts. We need to ensure through our work that we create a stronger, more vibrant sustainable sector for the people we support; and we look forward to working with you to do so.

A unique voice for a unique sector

NDS is Australia's biggest and most diverse alliance of disability service providers. Found in cities, towns and regions all over the country, our 1,200 members serve all types of people with disability and do so in all sorts of ways.

But whatever their services involve, and wherever they might provide them, our members often face the same challenges – and benefit from the same sorts of opportunities if and when they arise. The NDIS's focus on flexibility has been its greatest asset, empowering people with disability to have far more choice and control. But the scheme still presents our members with obstacles – from fragmentation and financial uncertainty, to confusion and tangled red tape.

That's why NDS offers members the chance to bring about change and explore ways to improve the sector. We believe that we are stronger together; that when all of us speak with one voice we make a sound certain to be heard by governments.

And we believe that speaking to each other is important as well. NDS members enjoy regular opportunities to pool resources, exchange ideas, and generally talk, learn, teach, network and listen. The collective experience of our members has been this organisation's heart and soul for 75 years, filling and shaping the body of knowledge that the sector as a whole now relies on.

We also work hard to keep our members informed about day-to-day issues, so they



can anticipate and rectify problems if and when they arise. Along with access to our ever-expanding range of professional and business development tools, members receive regular updates about policies, programs and funding contracts, as well as service delivery and management issues.

NDS's membership grew by 12% in 2019-20 – and we are committed to ensuring that our effectiveness grows along with it. And in doing so, we would like to thank everyone in the NDS team, in every state and territory, for their hard work during what was a very demanding year.

We promise that, next year, we will work even harder.

2019-20 Membership Awards

NDS's Membership Recognition Awards acknowledge the loyalty, support and contributions of long-serving members. In November 2019, 18 such organisations were recognised for their long-standing and productive partnerships.

50 years of membership

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children
Sunnyfield

30 years of membership

Anglicare NT
Gold Coast Recreation & Sport
Inala
MOIRA Limited
OC Connections
We are Vivid

20 years of membership

Bowen Flexi Care
Brain Injury Association of Tasmania
Glenray Industries
Gunnedah Workshop Enterprises
Headstart Acquired Brain Injury Services
New Horizons Enterprises
Sylvanvale Foundation
The Junction Works
Thorndale Foundation
UnitingCare Queensland

2019 President's Service Award

The 2019 President's Service Award was presented to Nadia Lindop. The CEO of MJD Foundation, Nadia was recognised for her efforts in establishing and growing an organisation which today supports hundreds of Aboriginal families affected by Machado-Joseph Disease, and employs around 30 staff. Nadia was also elected to the NDS Board in 2019.





Our year in review

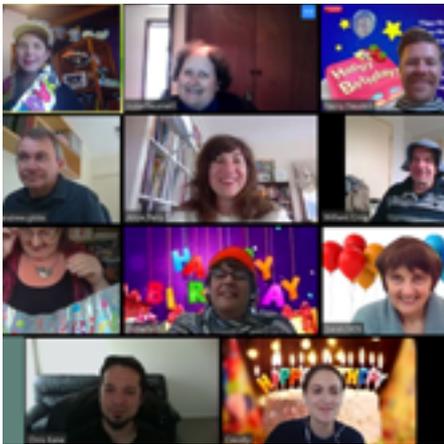
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Reporting developments

In 2019-20, we worked harder than ever to keep our members up to date and informed

Disability service provision is a complicated business. Providers face a complex range of regulations, compliance and reporting requirements that continually evolve. Keeping up with the news has never been more important.

And in 2019-20, this was truer than ever, with bushfires ravaging services, COVID-19 threatening safety, ongoing preparation for the Disability Royal Commission and the roll-out of the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework across Australia.

That's why providing members with timely, relevant information was very much at the core of our year.

Providing news updates

In 2019-20, we sent out over 850 news updates, covering policy changes, new resources, funding opportunities, and day-to-day developments in every part of the sector.

Our members were also able to stay up to date through our ever-growing suite of online resources, or by putting questions to our popular helpdesk.

Delivering news face-to-face

Nothing beats face-to-face dialogue. In 2019-20, the NDIS Essential Briefing series kept members informed about NDIS developments in capital cities all over the country. Many

hundreds of NDS members embraced the chance to network with colleagues, hear from thought leaders and contribute important thoughts of their own.

In the virtual world, we also held more than 20 interactive webinars and webcasts, allowing COVID-conscious members to keep up with developments, and the latest and best ideas, from the comfort and convenience of their own offices or homes.

Other face-to-face and virtual forums held throughout the year included the WA State Conference, our CEOs' Meeting, a lunch celebrating the International Day of People with Disability, a Supported Employment Summit, two virtual conferences, the WA Disability Support Awards and multiple briefings about COVID-19.

Supplying data

In 2019-20, we continued to provide up-to-date data to help our members make business decisions. Some of the more popular online platforms included:

- NDS Workforce Hub: Knowing Your Workforce (links to a range of workforce data); and
- NDS Workforce Census (tracks the changing structure and composition of the disability workforce with periodic workforce surveys).



‘As the NDIS moves forward, the biggest challenge is to make sure we’re moving forward with it and understanding what’s involved.’

State of the Disability Sector Report 2019

Bushfire hub

The 2019-20 bushfire season didn’t just destroy lives, homes and wildlife; it compromised the delivery of disability services in many states and territories.

That’s why we were quick to launch the NDS Bushfire Hub – an online resource with links to information, advice and relevant support services for providers in fire-affected regions.

Reporting on the Royal Commission

As the Disability Royal Commission progressed, we continued to distribute regular newsletters and provide concise summaries of each day’s hearings.

And we continued to add to our ‘one-stop-information-shop’, the Royal Commission Hub, to provide members with advice and guidance, including from our expert

panel spanning legal services, insurance, communications, quality management and governance.

Keeping members across Quality and Safeguards

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework has introduced a new, nationally consistent approach to quality and safeguarding for NDIS participants, providers and workers. To help our members understand the Framework’s implications, NDS held a range of forums, workshops, presentations, roundtables and webinars throughout the year, together with a virtual conference.

We also produced several online resources to help providers understand and meet registration conditions, engage with the NDIS Practice Standards, and continue to drive quality improvement.

Revitalising the workforce

The disability sector needs more workers – and we want to make sure it gets them

The disability workforce has been growing more rapidly than at any time in its history. But it is still not growing quickly enough to meet demand.

All over the country – and particularly in regional areas – we are seeing long and growing wait lists for services like accommodation support, respite, community access, therapy, employment and assistive technology.

Simply put, the disability sector needs to attract, train and retain more workers. And we're committed to making sure it does.

Delivering workforce initiatives

NDS has always had productive and professional relationships with governments, and in 2019-20 we continued to play important roles in workforce initiatives such as WorkAbility, the Workforce Impact Collective and Workforce Connectors, as well as participating in several jobs fairs.

We also were successful in seeking funding for training initiatives through the Commonwealth Government's Jobs and Markets Fund, and pushed for NDIS School Leaver Employment Supports to be open to young people before they finish Year 12.

Working with government

In 2019-20, NDS continued to work with Australian governments and their agencies

and departments to increase the appeal of a job in the sector – or, better still, of a long-term career. That work included many submissions to national inquiries and reviews.

We also continued to represent members' interests in the dispute over wage-setting before the Fair Work Commission, and make the case for greater workforce flexibility in relation to the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Awards.

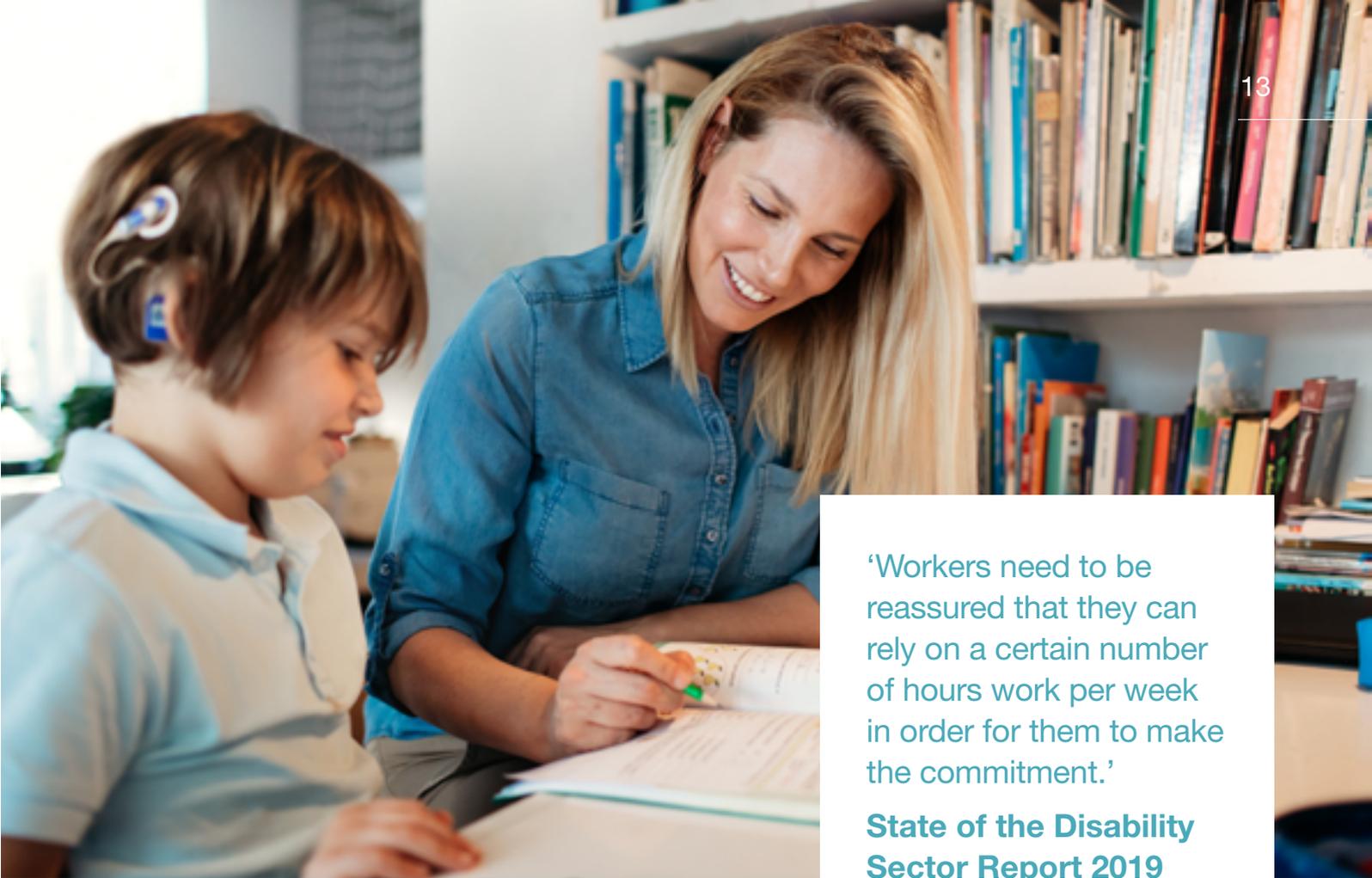
Helping with recruitment

In 2019-20, NDS continued to offer our members a wide range of online recruitment tools, including:

- carecareers
- the Values-based Recruitment Toolkit
- the Disability Workforce Capability Framework; and
- the Capability Framework.

Making connections

All staff of NDS member organisations were able to access NDP for free from 30 July 2019. A community of 15,000 individuals working in the disability sector, NDP helps to develop, inspire and connect all members of the Australian Disability Workforce at every stage of their career.



‘Workers need to be reassured that they can rely on a certain number of hours work per week in order for them to make the commitment.’

State of the Disability Sector Report 2019

State and Territory highlights

- In **Victoria**, NDS attended jobs fairs in Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Morwell, Mildura, Shepparton and Dandenong to promote and grow the disability workforce.
- In **WA**, NDS started developing a ‘Disability Skills Passport’ to record and verify all the information that employers routinely require. This platform will reduce the administrative costs of recruitment and training.
- Our **WA** team also continued to support improved employment outcomes for Indigenous people in the disability sector through regular workshops and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Guide and Toolkit.
- In **SA**, the Disability Sector Traineeship project continued to engage with employers to create awareness about, and promote the benefits of, traineeships as a pathway into the disability workforce. This year’s program resulted in a high number of trainees gaining ongoing employment in the sector.
- In **Tasmania**, NDS kicked off two traineeship projects designed to stimulate interest in disability careers.
- **Tasmania** also continued the great work of Project Momentum. Launched in December 2018, the program is designed to show students the many benefits of a career in the disability sector.
- In **Queensland**, attracting young people to the disability workforce was the target of two new NDS projects: the Community Services Gateway to Industry Schools program and the Human Factor Disability Workforce Pathway Program.
- In **NT**, NDS and partners launched the CarePlays VR project, a collaborative project focussed on giving young Indigenous people opportunities to work, train, volunteer and/or study in the health services sector.
- In **ACT**, the Workforce Impact Collective saw volunteers brainstorm ideas on how to retain, sustain and build the disability support workforce, and put six innovative pilot projects into development.

Responding to queries

Responding to members' questions is NDS's daily work – and this year, there have been quite a few of them

Delivering high quality services increasingly means being quick on your feet. Getting prompt answers to questions is not just a luxury; it's become an essential resource.

That's why 2019-20 was another big year for the NDS Helpdesk.

NDS Helpdesk

Established in Victoria in 2016, before being rolled-out across the nation, the NDS Helpdesk provides an avenue for providers to ask NDIS and disability employment-related questions anywhere, anytime.

In 2019-20, more than 700 questions were posted about the NDIS price guide, quality and safeguarding, housing support, employment support, travel, transport and planning.

'Change ... is the one thing that is certain ... You have to be agile enough to react to the changes while the sector matures and evolves.'

**State of the Disability Sector
Report 2019**



Reforming pricing

NDIS prices are slowly improving – and we're determined to see them match the true costs of delivery

The 2019-20 financial year began on a positive note, with the Federal Government injecting more than \$850 million into the NDIS market.

The direct result of an NDS campaign supported by our members, the new prices will lead to more people with disability getting the support they need.

We will continue to work with, and advocate to, the NDIA and Federal Government to ensure prices reflect the cost of service provision, and allow the sector to attract, train and retain all the skilled workers it needs.

Australians with disability deserve no less – and the same goes for the people who support them.

Talking to governments

Submissions to government and parliamentary inquiries are an important channel of NDS's influence on pricing policy. In 2019-20, we met with public officials and policy-makers at all levels and released multiple research papers and policy submissions.

Some of the key themes of our *Annual Price Review Submission* included:

- Transport: NDS was disappointed that the annual pricing review did not allow providers to charge for the work-related use of a vehicle, and went on to successfully argue that such travel is an unavoidable cost of business.
- TTP: while NDS welcomed the introduction of a temporary transformation payment of 7.5 per cent [reducing by 1.5% per year] to help providers adapt to the NDIS market, we continued to push for this funding to be made available in new NDIS plans, and for providers to be paid promptly for their supports.
- Market stewardship: we continued to make the case for a more flexible pricing model that responds to the warning signs of market failure.



'The uncertainty about future pricing policies is causing us to reconsider whether we continue to provide core supports.'

State of the Disability Sector Report 2019

Reducing red tape

NDIS processes are still too complex and slow – but we're doing all we can to get them streamlined

Many people with disability regard the NDIS as an administrative challenge – and the same goes for most of our members.

In our last comprehensive survey, only 13 per cent of providers said the NDIS system worked well, while 58 per cent thought it came with too many 'unnecessary' regulations. The bottom line is that the rules around registration, funding, reporting and compliance still take up too much time, and cause needless confusion and stress.

That's why NDS spent 2019-20 working hard to identify problematic processes and to advocate for ways in which they could be improved.

In our Annual Price Review Submission we lobbied for:

A more flexible system

We argued that, for the NDIS to truly deliver the choice and control that is at the heart of the scheme, its planning, funding and service models need to become a great deal more flexible. More than anything, they must be able to adapt to local conditions, particularly in remote and very remote parts of the country.

A faster system

We pointed out that the pressure on providers didn't just arise from NDIS's bureaucratic

complexity, but from the glacial pace at which its payments were processed. The resultant uncertainty made it much harder for providers to plan for the future and often resulted in additional costs, issues with individual plans, and providers remaining in the dark on service reviews.

To the Agency's credit, a great deal of progress has been made on this issue, to the point where it's just about fixed.

A smoother system

We continued to push for improvements to:

- design problems associated with reporting incidents;
- poorly designed data-gathering processes; and
- the functionality of the Commission's portal.

'We are seeing some great outcomes for participants in the NDIS, but ... the current model is not taking into account the red tape and other requirements for running a not-for-profit organisation. There is sometimes an overwhelming amount of reporting on data, focusing on outputs rather than measurable outcomes.'

State of the Disability Sector Report 2019



State and Territory highlights

- In the **ACT**, we negotiated several changes to the new standardised NDIS service agreements required by the ACT Public Guardian. The original agreements were intended to streamline approvals, but contained a number of provisions that members felt were unworkable. The updated standard agreements better align with other regulations and current pressures in the local marketplace.
- In **NSW**, we established a strong working relationship with the new Minister, and had productive discussions about disability supports, a disability housing strategy, employment opportunities for people with disability, and interface issues with mainstream services.

Resourcing members

Disability services are evolving all the time. But NDS's suite of development resources helped our members to stay ahead of the curve

The disability sector is growing fast. To survive in this complex world, providers need systems to collect and manage data, the ability to prepare tenders, sound internal auditing systems, sophisticated business planning, and well-developed financial skills.

That's where we come in. Throughout 2019-20, NDS continued to offer low-cost and no-cost staff professional- and business-development resources to providers all over the country.

We make running a business simpler so you can do what matters most – delivering the best possible services for people with disability.

Annual CEOs' Meeting

Held over two days at the Sydney Hilton, NDS's flagship conference was squarely focussed on professional development. More than 650 delegates from all over Australia shared their thoughts about the current operating environment, and ideas about how to improve it.

Organised around the theme of 'Foresight for Leaders', the rollcall of speakers included distinguished futurist, Professor Sohail Inayatullah, who looked at the ways to navigate disruptive futures, and former Myer CEO, Bernie Brooks, who took a deep dive into transformational leadership.

Our series of expert panels also included

sessions on building partnerships for mutual benefit, and on how CEOs can be more customer-centric.

Other high-profile speakers included NDIA CEO, Martin Hoffman, the Minister for the NDIS, Stuart Robert, the Shadow Minister, Bill Shorten, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner, Graeme Head, and Australia's Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Ben Gauntlett.

Developing business capacity

In 2019-20, NDS continued to offer a range of resources to help providers operate in an NDIS environment. Especially popular were:

- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Hub (a range of resources, training and webinars to assist providers to meet the requirements of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards framework)
- NDS Learn and Develop (a suite of training workshops and modules designed to build capacity and ongoing professional development)
- NDP's Learning Hub (access to bite-sized learning and resources for disability support workers, allied health professionals, team leaders, sole traders and more).
- NDS Fundamentals for Board Members (guidance, advice and tools for board members)
- NDS Workforce Hub (multiple resources grouped under four main categories:

Build, Optimise, Know and Develop the workforce)

- NDS Allied Health Workforce resource (material on building a sustainable allied health workforce); and
- carecareers (career advice and recruitment tools for the disability sector).

New Business Analysis Tool

In 2019-20 a resource, which can be adapted to suit all organisations, was created for NSW members and then redeveloped into a nation-wide resource. The Business Analysis Tool is designed to help providers meet NDIS compliance requirements and improve their general organisational performance.



Image: Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Ben Gauntlett, speaking at the CEOs' Meeting 2019

State and Territory highlights

- In **SA**, NDS provided an opportunity for allied health and disability workers to connect in a fun, speed-dating-style setting. NDS also arranged for more members to attend a range of professional development events; launched a professional development program for VET practitioners; and continued to promote the benefits of traineeships.
- In **NT**, NDS worked with human services organisations, government departments and statutory bodies to develop the Northern Territory Human Services Industry plan, a ten-year vision for growth and development of the local human services sector.
- In **Qld**, NDS ran a popular series of forums designed to show members how to successfully apply for an ILC ('Information Linkages and Capacity-Building') grant, increasing member's knowledge of the ILC program and likelihood of a successful outcome.
- In **NSW**, NDS launched the Triple N monthly webinar series to help members stay up to date without ever leaving their desk – over 200 tuned in. NDS also convened a business systems roundtable for members to discuss issues, share ideas and collaborate.
- In **Victoria**, NDS's Specialist Disability Accommodation and Sector Development Projects delivered workshops and resources designed to help providers thrive in the NDIS environment. NDS's Disability Workforce Innovation Connectors helped providers in regional areas to access tools and resources, and connect with Aboriginal Communities, local health services and advocacy groups.
- In **Tasmania**, NDS established the Support Coordination network, and arranged Leadership Innovation Network workshops to encourage new ways of thinking.
- In **WA**, NDS reached around 100,000 people with disability through access and inclusion services such as ACROD Parking, Companion Card, Community Living and Participation Grants and support for the Changing Places network.

Redressing wrongs

Abuse and neglect are unacceptable. That's why we do not accept them

Like everyone else in our community, people with disability have the right to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

While national statistics are rarely collated, evidence gathered at the Disability Royal Commission suggests that people with disability are at a much greater risk of traumatic experiences, including neglect, abuse and violence, than other members of the community.

It's everybody's job to ensure this stops. And we worked hard at it in 2019-20.

Working with governments and the Disability Royal Commission

In 2019-20, NDS submitted advice to a Senate inquiry into the abuse and neglect of people with disability, together with two Victorian-based inquiries and the Royal Commission.

While the next few years of the Commission's work may, at times, be challenging for the sector, we strongly believe it will also bring opportunities: opportunities to facilitate change, reflect on service quality, and develop better systems and processes.

Showing Zero tolerance

Run in partnership with the Australian disability sector, Zero Tolerance is NDS's national approach to helping providers understand, implement and improve practices

'We are committed to continuing what we started more than five years ago, to embed zero tolerance approaches to disability abuse in all disability service organisations.'

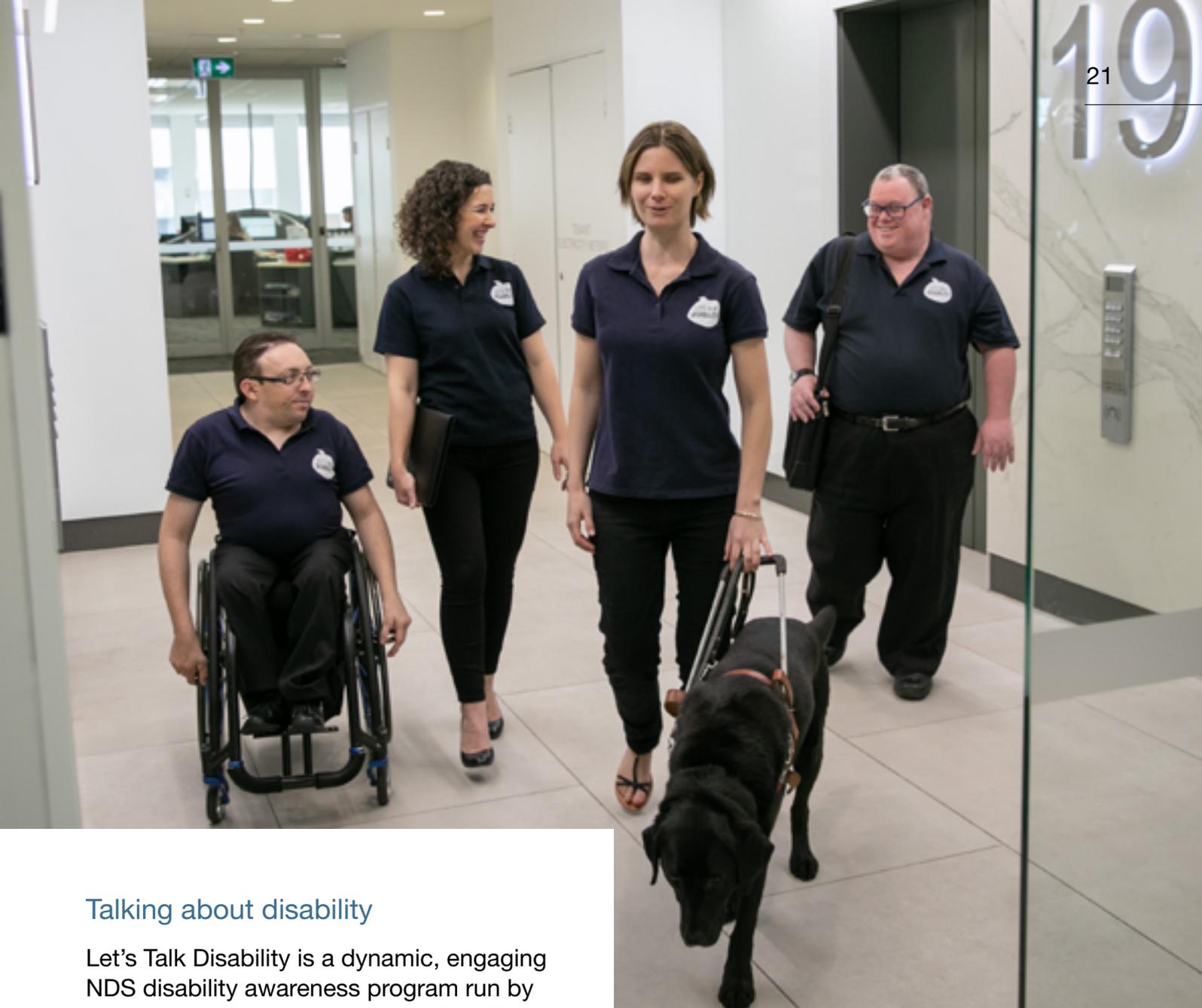
David Moody, NDS CEO

which safeguard the rights of the people they serve.

Since 2015, a raft of resources has been developed to that end, including films and e-learning programs.

In 2019-20, we developed an interactive guide to enable easy access to all of these resources. We also released:

- a series of animated films about trauma-informed support
- a series of films about the foundations of positive behaviour support
- an interactive resource guide for practice leaders; and
- multiple online and face-to-face events, workshops and training sessions delivered by people with a disability, as well as people with experience in the sector.



Talking about disability

Let's Talk Disability is a dynamic, engaging NDS disability awareness program run by people with lived experience of disability. In 2019-20, we presented workshops to businesses and organisations all over the country. Here's what some of the 750-plus attendees had to say:

Image: Let's Talk Disability presenters (L-R) David, Jillian, Sarah (with Guide Dog Angelina) and Leigh

'Hearing from people with disability directly was the highlight – it was a really fun, informative and interesting session.'

'Brilliant training session! This should be compulsory for all workplaces!'

'I've been to a lot of these courses in my time. This has been THE BEST. Warm, enjoyable and a good pace.'

'The team of presenters were absolutely awesome! The session was constructive and gave me practical tips to make me less nervous about disability.'

'I relished the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters. It's important to talk with people with disabilities instead of about people with disabilities.'

Recruiting people with disability

Australians with disability have a right to work. And we're working hard to make sure they can

One indicator of a healthy society is that all of its citizens can get a job.

Australia is not there yet. While many Australians with disability want to work, their rates of employment remain distressingly low. People with disability are still more likely to drop out of school, experience poverty and be excluded from the labour force.

It's everybody's job to make sure that changes.

Lobbying government

In our advocacy, we argued that disability service providers want to lead by example and significantly increase supported employment but governments need to invest more in workforce development and capacity, including an industry assistance fund. This has been reiterated in our draft industry vision, which we continue to work on with our members.

Significant progress will also require a

'All levels of government and the private sector have a critical role to play in the social and economic empowerment of people with disability.'

David Moody, NDS CEO

satisfactory outcome to the long-running dispute over wage-setting before the Fair Work Commission and a more stable funding and pricing model under the NDIS. The government must also continue to work with the sector to expand procurement from Disability Enterprises.

Pushing for a national strategy

In 2019-20, we worked with other peak bodies to encourage the establishment of a national disability employment strategy, modelled the proposed NDIS pricing for supported employment and lodged a submission on proposed pricing. We believe that NDIS costs and prices should be set so as to strengthen the focus on employment of people with disability, and that participants of working age should be offered funding for employment in their plans on the basis of a 'work first' approach to planning with people with disability of working age.

Supporting DES

As a key member of the Disability Employment Services reference group and the newly convened COVID-19 peak group, NDS worked hard to help influence policy changes that delivered more positive employment outcomes for people with disability and encourage more employers to employ people with disability. Our advocacy resulted in an extension to the 'permissible breaks' from employment during



the COVID-19 lockdown. This ensured that many participants in DES were able to stay connected to their employer and subsequently return to work as restrictions eased.

NDS was also a key contributor to the mid-term review of DES by the Boston Consulting Group, highlighting the need to align DES funding to the real costs incurred in delivering services, reduce the administrative burden and reform the relationship between DES and the NDIS. This report is still with government and NDS is urging its public release ASAP.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a landmark NDS initiative that brings together multiple stakeholders – from families and educators to a wide range of businesses – to provide young people with disability with a path to employment.

In the 2019 calendar year, Ticket to Work helped 167 students with disability get a job and 296 commence career development activities.

BuyAbility

It was another big year for BuyAbility, an NDS service which helps Disability Enterprises to create more employment opportunities by promoting and facilitating procurement with private and public enterprises.

In 2019-20, BuyAbility Procurement managed a significant number of contracts across a number of states (75 active contracts in total), with a relatively high proportion in NSW (71 active contracts in NSW). These contracts provided employment opportunities for 247 supported employees.

In 2020-21, NDS will commence moving away from the delivery of a contract management system to a promotional/relationship-building initiative that will promote the goods and services provided by supported employment providers. Additionally, BuyAbility will continue to explore opportunities to act as an intermediary between governments (Commonwealth, State and Territory as well as local) and highlight the important role of supported employment in the continuum of employment opportunities for people with significant disability.

We would like to thank the Tasmanian Community Fund for its generous and longstanding support of that state's BuyAbility/procurement project.



Researching the sector

The disability sector needs more research. And in 2019-20, we helped to provide it

Reliable, evidence-based research and data is an essential part of developing and running the disability sector.

But it's not always easy to get.

That's why NDS has made it a priority to disseminate research that is directly relevant to disability policy, practice and service innovation. Only then can we provide a robust, independent and rational voice to governments – one that is both informed by consultation with providers, and representative of what they think, see and do.

NDRP

In 2019-20, NDS continued to play a key role in the National Disability Research Partnership, a world-class disability research and policy hub that brings together academics, advocacy groups, governments and providers to conduct cutting-edge applied research into the sector.

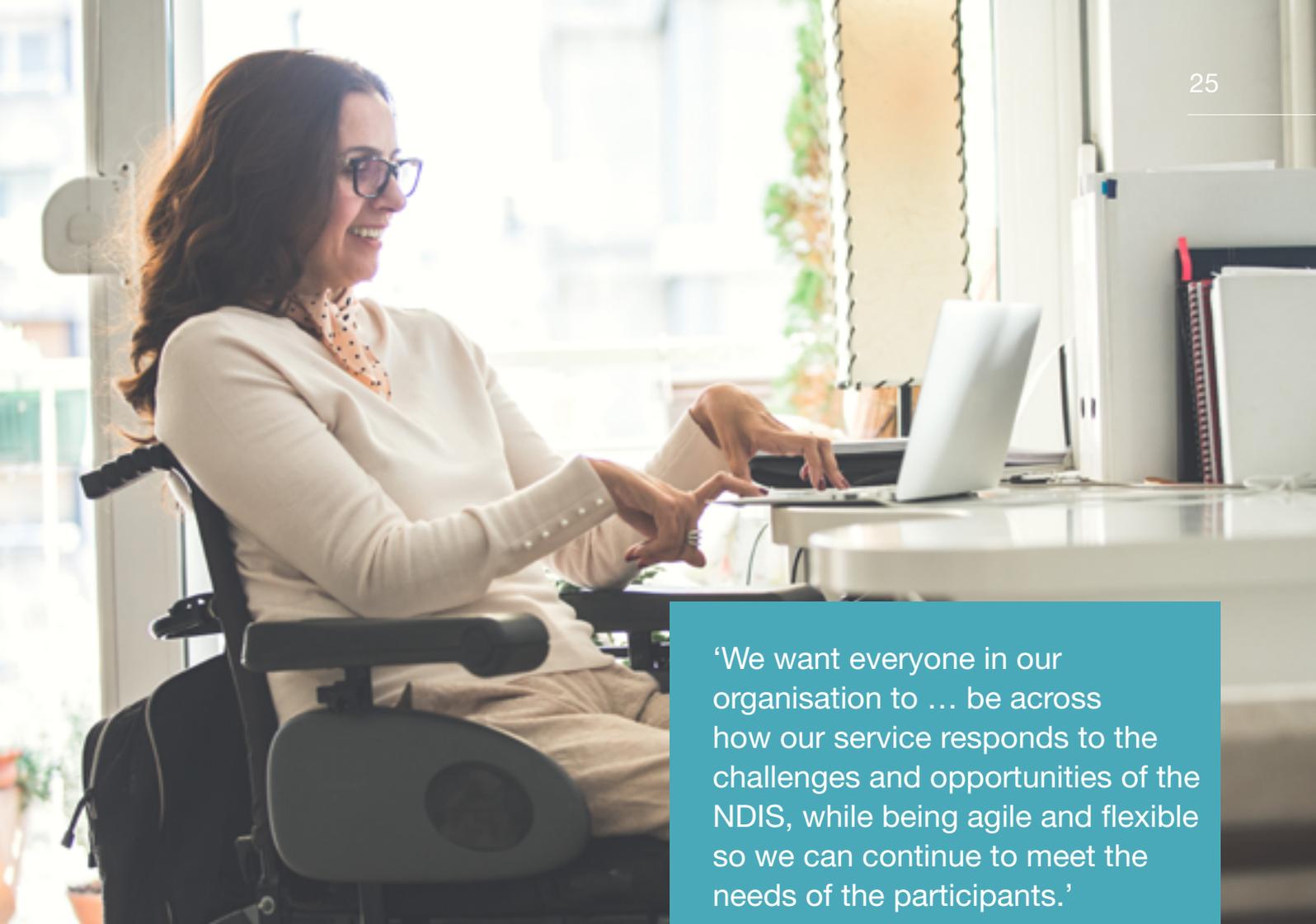
Annual Market Survey

NDS's most important research work is in our annual survey of providers, the results of which are released in our flagship *State of the Disability Sector Report*. This has been the definitive report on the disability sector for close to a decade, and a core reference for policy makers.

Launched at the 2019 CEOs' Meeting in Sydney, our report was widely covered in Australia's media and read by all Australian governments. The report found that while operating conditions might have improved in recent times, the sector is still facing a number of serious issues.

Key findings included:

- financial stability is fragile: just **49%** of providers reported making a 2019 profit of **3%** or more
- **52%** of providers were worried they couldn't provide NDIS services without the Temporary Transformation Payment price loading
- **58%** of respondents thought there were too many unnecessary rules and regulations
- **75%** said that unpaid assistance for people to navigate the NDIS distracts from their service provision
- **over half (55%)** of providers said NDIS policy reforms were heading in the right direction
- **four in ten** respondents were confident the Quality and Safeguards Framework would improve services
- **22%** of providers said operating conditions in the disability sector had improved (compared to 11% in 2018); and
- **only 22%** of respondents felt that the NDIA had a high level of respect for providers.



'We want everyone in our organisation to ... be across how our service responds to the challenges and opportunities of the NDIS, while being agile and flexible so we can continue to meet the needs of the participants.'

State of the Disability Sector Report 2019

Workforce Census

NDS's 2019-20 Workforce Census tracked a range of key workforce metrics. We included the data from the Census in our *State of the Disability Sector Report*, and sent participating organisations their own report, so they could benchmark their workforce profile against comparable organisations. We also published the aggregate results and used them to advocate for better workforce development across the nation.

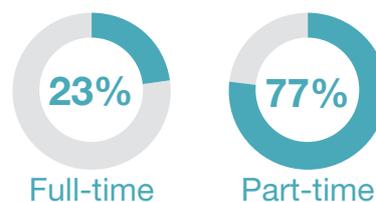
Key findings in the Census as at December 2019 included the following:

Employment Type

(Disability Support Worker and Allied Health)



Full-time and Part-time share



Workforce turnover



Average Working Hours



29.2 hrs per worker per week.
Compared to 22.4 hrs per worker per week in December 2018

Responding to crises

2019-20 has been a year of unprecedented challenges

2019-20 was a year like no other – and not in a good way, it seems needless to say. COVID-19 saw many services temporarily suspended, and others stopped altogether.

This placed significant financial and emotional stress on our members – stress which an ongoing shortage of personal protective equipment like masks, gloves and sanitiser did nothing at all to alleviate.

As NDS CEO David Moody put it in media statements at the start of the pandemic, the consequences could be ‘widespread and deadly if many more providers are forced to lose staff, cut services, or self-isolate for prolonged periods of time ... It doesn’t take much to imagine what could happen if a support worker suddenly could not make it to

(someone’s) home, or if the virus broke out in a shared accommodation.’

This is why NDS worked hard to lobby governments for assistance, while keeping providers informed about their options.

Keeping members informed

In 2019-20, NDS delivered a suite of measures to keep our members equipped with the latest health and safety advice, and fully informed about financial support and insurance. It’s all grouped in NDS’s Coronavirus hub – a collection of resources, information and advice gathered from governments, agencies and members.

In the few months available before June, the Coronavirus hub had been viewed more than 15,000 times, and continues to be a ‘go to’ site for many members.

Managing PPE

In 2020, many providers and participants struggled to access the personal protective equipment they needed from the national stockpile.

It was a problem that NDS eventually managed to alleviate by sourcing direct suppliers of PPE at member-only rates and available for members to order through the Coronavirus hub.

We also continued to push for more training

‘Disability service providers are committed to supporting people with disability to lead great lives.

Their ability to do so now, however, is being threatened by the virus’s spread.

It’s essential that people with disability, providers and the workforce get the support they need from the Australian government.’

David Moody, NDS CEO



for workers on preventing the spread of coronavirus, and the establishment of specialist support teams and a dedicated information line for people with disability.

Calling for financial support

During the first wave of COVID-19, the Federal Government announced an additional \$154 million to support Australians with disability who are vulnerable to coronavirus. NDS didn't believe that this response went far enough. As NDS CEO David Moody commented in the media, more funding was needed to 'ensure that disability service providers are able to provide the services they can during the pandemic, and then continue to deliver quality services and to grow to meet demand post-pandemic. The worst-case scenario is that we have a disability sector which is unable to meet the needs of people with a disability during the pandemic ... What will happen is that many people with disability will end up having to go to hospital.'

In the first few months of COVID (1 March – 30 June), NDS:

10

CEO updates
sent to members

60+

news updates
sent to members

16

COVID webinars
held for members

619

responses to our
COVID survey

15,000

views to our
COVID hub

400+

check-in calls
to members

10 years of service

Shona Campbell-Brown. Team Leader, Access & Inclusion



How would you characterise your experience at NDS?

Teamwork! Over the past ten years, I have felt valued and supported in my role at NDS and feel like I have contributed to the organisation's commitment to championing the rights of people with disability.

How have things changed since you started?

Technology has had a significant impact on our work in the last ten years. We have become less reliant on paper and more electronic based.

What has been your proudest achievement at NDS?

My proudest achievement at NDS is the delivery of the ACROD and Companion Card programs. Through excellent customer services, our small and dedicated team processes over 14,000 new applications and over 45,000 renewals for both programs each year.

I'm proud to be involved in programs that are creating greater inclusion for people with disability to access their community.

How did you feel when you hit 10 years?

I honestly can't believe it has been ten years, it certainly doesn't feel like it. I've been fortunate to work with people who are committed to making a difference for people with disability. I have made some really great friends here too.

You've been committed to NDS for 10 years – what do you like most about the organisation?

What I like most about NDS is the real family values. The flexibility and the work-life fit of being able to work full time and also care for my family over the ten years has been wonderful. More recently, it was remarkable to see how supportive NDS was towards staff during the recent COVID-19 crisis.

How would you describe the value of NDS to the disability services sector?

I would describe the values of NDS as supportive, involved and genuine.

What do you think the future holds for NDS, and the sector more broadly?

NDS is a strong leader for change. I have seen a lot of change within the disability sector which has made it an exciting time to be part of NDS.



Vale Sue Salthouse

Sue Salthouse was a tireless disability advocate who played an integral role in systemic advocacy for women with disability at the local, national and international level.

Sue was remarkable in her ability to work with equal success across government and industry at all levels, and with peak bodies and individuals in her community. She worked closely and collaboratively with many disability services across Canberra to improve the lives of people with disability. NDS and many of our members benefited from Sue's mentorship and advice over the years and the sector is stronger for this experience.

Sue was always thoughtful and considered in her advice and made a significant difference to her community. Earlier in the year she was recognised as the 2020 ACT Senior Australian of the Year for her advocacy work for women with disability, building on her long list of achievements.

Most recently, NDS staff had the honour of working with Sue as fellow members of the Independent Advisory Council for the NDIS, as well as local Canberra collaborations looking at innovative housing solutions, and improving protections against violence, abuse and neglect for vulnerable people with disability in the ACT.

We know that many in the disability sector are experiencing a deep sense of loss right now. Sue's impact and legacy will ripple through the sector for many years to come. Her contribution will not be forgotten.

Our condolences go to Sue's family and friends during this difficult time. Vale Sue.

NDS Board



Joan McKenna Kerr
President
 Western Australia Chair

Chief Executive Officer
 Autism Association of WA



Chris Campbell
 New South Wales Chair

Chief Executive Officer
 The Junction Works



Rohan Braddy
Vice-President
 Elected Member

Chief Executive Officer
 Mambourin Enterprises



Chris Christodoulou
 Elected Member

Chief Executive Officer
 Greenacres Disability
 Services



Donna Bain
 Tasmania Chair

General Manager
 Self Help Workplace



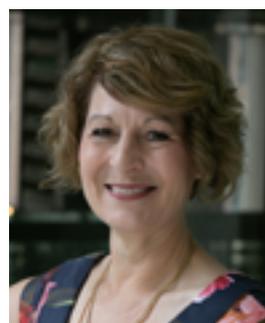
Julie Graham
 Victoria Chair
(from April 2020)

Executive General
 Manager
 genU Ability



Tony Burns
 Northern Territory Chair
(to October 2019)

Chief Executive Officer
 HPA Helping People
 Achieve



Joanne Jessop
 Queensland Chair

Chief Executive Officer
 Multicap



Mark Kulinski
Elected Member

Chief Executive Officer
Community Living
Australia



Annie Rily
Northern Territory Chair
(from October 2019)

Chief Executive Officer
Carpentaria



Nadia Lindop
Elected member
(from November 2019)

Chief Executive Officer
MJD Foundation



Eric Thauvette OAM
Australian Capital
Territory Chair

Chief Executive Officer
Hartley Lifecare



Christine Mathieson
Victoria Chair
(to April 2020)

Chief Executive Officer
Expression Australia



Gordon Trewern
Elected Member

Chief Executive Officer
Nulsen Group



Cathy Miller
South Australia Chair

Chief Executive Officer
Access4U



David Moody
Company Secretary

Chief Executive Officer
NDS



Danielle Newport
Elected Member

Chief Executive Officer
Activ Foundation

Auditor:
Ernst & Young



Board committees

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee assists the Board to fulfil its obligation of ensuring that NDS is governed by its legal, constitutional and ethical obligations as well as assisting the Board to establish and maintain its governance processes.

Chair: Gordon Trewern

Donna Bain
 Mark Kulinski
 Christine Mathieson *(to April 2020)*
 Eric Thuavette OAM
 Danielle Newport

Ex Officio: Joan McKenna Kerr & David Moody

Audit, Risk and Investment Committee

The Audit, Risk and Investment Committee assists the Board in managing organisational risk, compliance and overseeing NDS's financial reporting, internal control, audit processes, as well as the implementation and review of the Investment and Reserves, and Risk Management Framework policies.

Chair: Danielle Newport

Rohan Braddy
 Nadia Lindop
 Cathy Miller
 Gordon Trewern
 Chief Financial Officer
 Financial Controller

Ex Officio: Joan McKenna Kerr & David Moody

Auditor: Ernst & Young

Communications Committee

This Committee provides advice to the Board on key communication initiatives that will strengthen the brand and/or impact on the organisation's reputation within the market.

Chair: Joanne Jessop

Rohan Braddy
 Chris Campbell
 Chris Christodoulou
 Head of Communications

Ex Officio: Joan McKenna Kerr & David Moody

National committees

In accordance with NDS's Board Charter, ratified in February, the Board determines policies and/or responses to issues affecting NDS's membership and/or the sector more generally. Such decisions on policies or issues may be delegated to a designated Committee from time to time.

The nine NDS National Committees are:

Children and Young People

The Committee seeks to promote the interests and wellbeing of children and young people with disability and their families in Australia through the exchange of information and the provision of policy advice that informs effective and quality service delivery.

Housing and Support

The Committee seeks to promote policy and practice across Australia that improves the accommodation support and housing options for people with disability consistent with the National Disability Strategy.

Supported Employment

The Committee seeks to provide policy advice in the area of supported employment, and to represent the views of members; and to provide a national focus on supported employment issues within NDS membership, with the overall objective of improving effectiveness and quality in the delivery of these services across various jurisdictions, for the ultimate benefit of people with disability.

Workforce

The Committee seeks to provide a national focus to workforce issues as they affect providers and, as part of this, will facilitate the exchange of information and the development of strategies. This will include consultation with other National Committees on relevant matters.

Open Employment

The Committee seeks to provide policy advice in the area of open employment, and to represent the views of members; and to provide a national focus on open employment issues within NDS membership, with the overall objective of improving effectiveness and quality in the delivery of these services across various jurisdictions, for the ultimate benefit of people with disability.

NDIS Operations

The Committee seeks to provide policy advice on operational issues faced by providers under the NDIS.

NDIS Intermediaries

The Committee seeks to provide policy advice on issues associated with the operations of local area coordinators, support coordinators and plan managers.

Quality and Safeguarding

The Committee seeks to provide policy advice on issues associated with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, and the operations of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Remote and Very Remote

The Committee seeks to provide policy advice on issues associated with the provision of disability services in remote and very remote parts of Australia.



State and Territory committees

Australian Capital Territory

Chair:

Eric Thauvette OAM

Vice-chairs:

Hugh Packard & Nadine Stephen

Members:

Anne Kirwan
 Kylie Stokes
 Lisa McPherson
 Marco Xuereb
 Lisa Kelly
 Tracey Hall
 Kate West *(to Mar 2020)*
 Pam Boyer *(from Mar 2020)*

Territory Manager:

Rey Reodica

New South Wales

Chair:

Chris Campbell

Vice-chair:

David Carey

Members:

Margaret Bowen
 Caroline Cuddihy
 Philip Petrie
 Andrew Richardson *(to Jul 2019)*
 Claire Robbs *(to Jul 2019)*
 Deb Sazdanoff
 Kerry Stubbs
 Rob White *(to Jul 2019)*
 Andrew Daly *(from Jul 2019)*
 Stephen Doley *(from Jul 2019)*
 Rosy Walia *(from Jul 2019)*
 Allan Young *(from Jul 2019)*

State Manager:

Karen Stace

Northern Territory

Chair:

Annie Rily

Vice-chair:

Nadia Lindop

Members:

Tony Burns
 Robyn Burrigde
 Terry Cleary
 Peter Kay
 Kim McRae
 Stephanie Ransome
 Steve Vitone
 Lawson Broad

Territory Manager:

Susan Burns

Queensland

Chair:

Joanne Jessop

Vice-chair:

Elizabeth Sutton

Members:

Brett Casey
 Judy Dickson
 Ann Greer
 Russell Mason *(to Jul 2019)*
 Peter Tully *(to Feb 2020)*
 Stuart Coward
 Terry O'Toole *(from Jul 2019)*

State Manager:

Ian Montague

South Australia

Chair:

Cathy Miller

Vice-chair:

Andrew Ramsey

Members:

Liz Cohen
 Matt Collins *(to Aug 2019)*
 Marjorie Ellis
 Maggie Dowling *(to Aug 2019)*
 Emma Hinchey *(to Aug 2019)*
 Sue Horsnell
 Fiona Kelly
 Mark Kulinski
 Peter Stewart
 Wendy Warren
 Jenny Karavolos
 Liz Forsyth *(from Aug 2019)*
 Robert Dempsey *(from Aug 2019)*
 Simon Rowberry *(from Aug 2019)*
 Sue Thomas *(from Aug 2019)*

State Manager:

Peter Hoppo

Tasmania

Chair:

Donna Bain

Vice-chair:

Mark Jessop

Members:

Drew Beswick *(to Jul 2019)*
 Deborah Byrne
 Murray Coates *(to Dec 2019)*
 Kathryn Elston *(to Jul 2019)*
 Nigel Hill
 Paul Mayne
 Rebecca Moles *(to Jul 2019)*
 Russell Penman
 David Brennan *(from Jul 2019)*
 Ruth Chalk *(from Jul 2019)*
 Lynne Harwood *(from Jul 2019)*
 Melinda Ferrier *(from Jul 2019)*

State Manager:

Will Kestin *(until Jun 2020)*
 Alice Flockhart (Acting)

Victoria

Chair:

Julie Graham
 Christine Mathieson *(to Apr 2020)*

Vice-chair:

Terri Carroll

Members:

Rohan Braddy
 Warwick Cavanagh
 Elizabeth Crowther *(to Nov 2019)*
 Kerry Uren
 Estelle Fyffe
 Kerry Nelson
 Dr Jennifer Fitzgerald
 Laura Collister *(from Apr 2020)*

State Manager:

Fiona Still *(Jul 2019 - Jun 2020)*
 Sarah Fordyce (Acting)

Western Australia

Chair:

Joan McKenna Kerr

Vice-chairs:

Marina Re & Gordon Trewern

Members:

Rosie Lawn
 Justine Colyer
 Darren Ginnelly
 Robert Hicks *(to Nov 2019)*
 Rob Holmes *(to Aug 2019)*
 Debra Zanella
 Francis Buchanan
 Justin O'Meara Smith
 Angelena Fixter *(from Sep 2019)*
 Paul Fleay *(from Sep 2019)*
 Kathy Hough *(from Dec 2019)*

State Manager:

Julie Waylen



Performance overview

Summary

For the financial year ending 30 June 2020, NDS achieved a net surplus of \$1,089,158.

Net assets remain strong, having increased to \$16,628,714 (2019: \$15,539,556)]. The current ratio (current assets: current liabilities) was 1.57 (2019: 1.53).

NDS income 2019–20

Total income received in 2019–20 was \$22.02M, compared to FY19 total income of \$27.35M. 49 per cent of revenue for the organisation is related to projects being undertaken by NDS to support the sector (2019: 59 per cent). NDS acknowledges the support of the federal, state and territory governments, and philanthropic bodies that provide funding for these initiatives.

The other major sources of income were: government grants (17 per cent); NDS and NDP membership subscriptions (18 per cent); and conferences and seminars (7 per cent).

NDS expenditure 2019–20

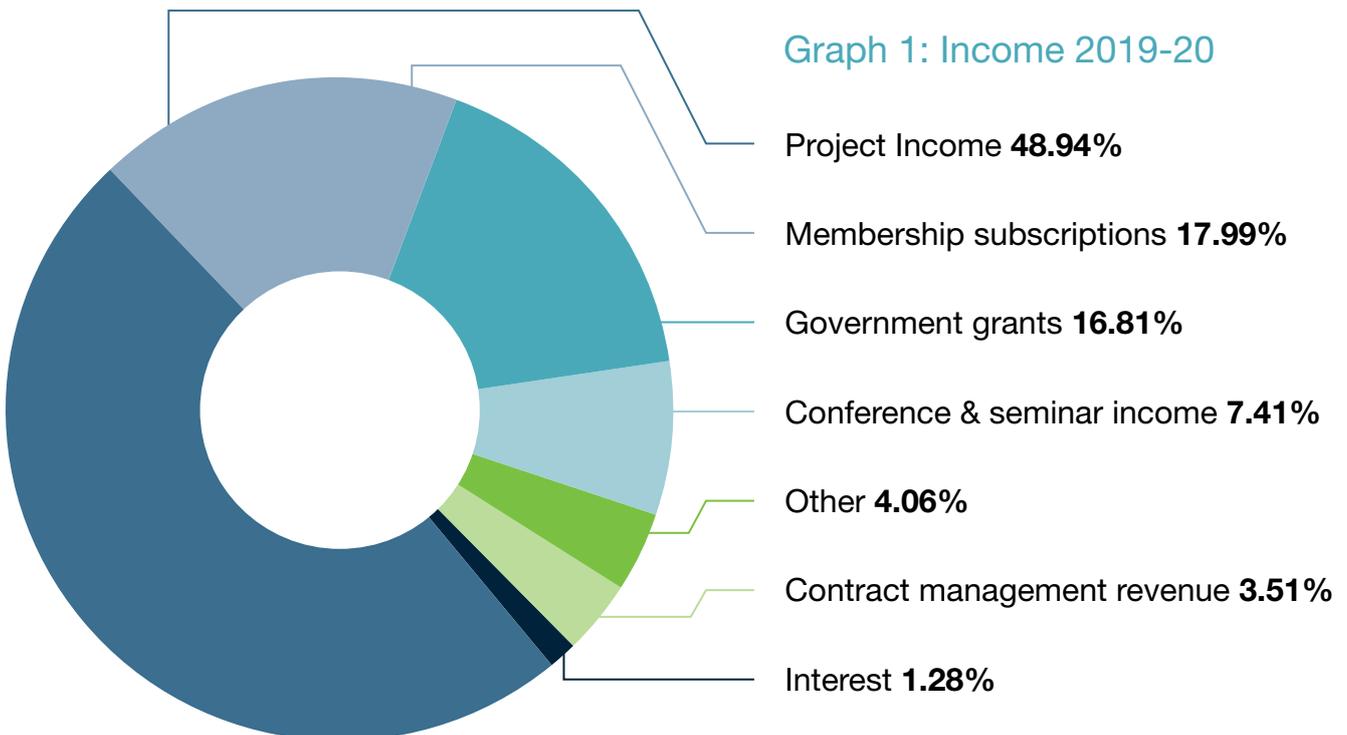
Total expenditure for the year decreased by 20 per cent to \$20.9M (2019: \$26.2M).

Employment costs make up the largest area of expense incurred by the organisation (57 per cent; 2019: 54 per cent). Other principal expenses are: Related to grants and other activities issued to service providers (7 per cent), and IT and Telephony (7 per cent).

A full set of audited financial statements is available from the registered office (33 Thesiger Court, ACT) on request, or email: nds@nds.org.au.

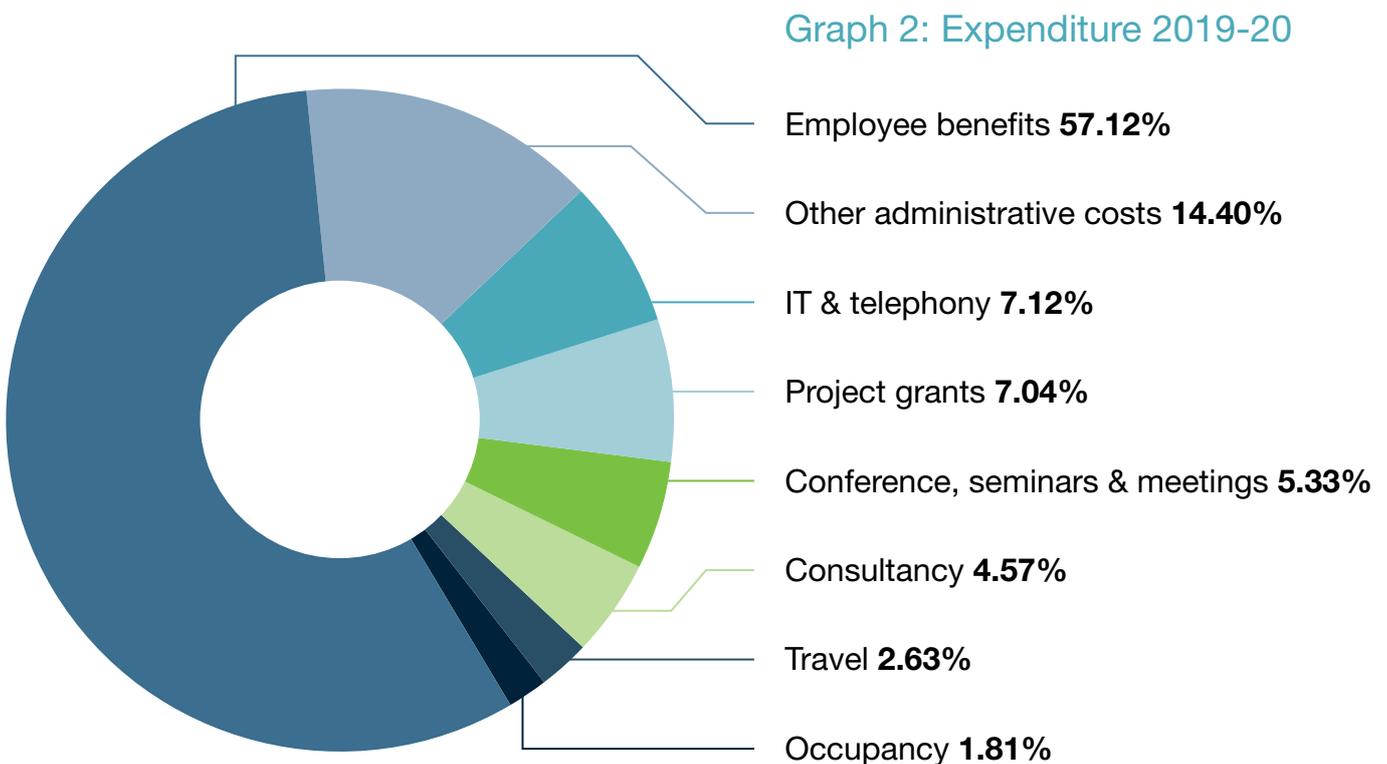
Income 2019-20

Income	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Government grants - Operating	3,703	3,385
Membership subscriptions	3,962	3,645
Conference and seminar income	1,632	1,756
Project income	10,778	16,070
Contract management revenue	772	662
Business enterprise revenue	3	92
Rentals	19	94
Finance Income	283	461
Other	873	1,184
Total revenue	22,024	27,349



Expenditure 2019-20

Expenses	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Employee benefits	11,957	14,047
Consultancy	956	2,396
Advertising	86	84
Conferences, seminars and meetings	1,115	1,716
Project grants	1,473	2,266
IT and telephony	1,491	1,425
Occupancy	378	1,359
Travel	550	1,007
Other administrative costs	2,929	1,872
Total expenditure	20,935	26,172



Assets and liabilities

Assets	2020	2019
	\$'000	\$'000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	28,842	28,589
Other current assets	3,817	3,400
Total current assets	32,659	31,989
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	4,283	4,699
Right of Use Asset	1,645	-
Total non-current assets	5,927	4,699
Total assets	38,586	36,688
Liabilities	2020	2019
	\$'000	\$'000
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	2,509	2,389
Provisions	85	18
Employee benefit liabilities	935	909
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	841	81
Unearned revenue	16,412	17,472
Total current liabilities	20,782	20,869
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	32	32
Employee benefit liabilities	245	247
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	899	-
Total non-current liabilities	1,176	279
Total liabilities	21,958	21,148
Net assets	16,629	15,540



National Disability Services Annual Report 2019–20

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Contact: comms@nds.org.au

Data used in this report is drawn from the most accurate information available at the time of writing.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the many people who have agreed to allow photographs of themselves to be used in various NDS publications.

National Disability Services acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians across the lands in which we live and work and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

nds.org.au



