

Annual Report 2018





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*NDS represents
service providers
across Australia in
their work to deliver
high-quality supports
and life opportunities
for people with
disability.*





Report from NDS President and Chief Executive



Report from NDS **President & Chief Executive**

The past year's expansion of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has placed intense pressure on disability service providers, as well as presenting them with opportunities for growth. Reforms to the Disability Employment Services program, while less radical than the NDIS, similarly presented providers with significant risks and opportunities.

NDS has worked hard to support its members during this turbulent period to ensure they are informed about the changing landscape. We have also worked diligently to influence critical details of the reforms including implementation.

The pressure on service providers from the NDIS has arisen not only from the scale and complexity of the reform, but also from under-developed NDIS systems and processes. This has resulted in payment delays to some providers, significant additional administrative costs, and a large number of participant plan reviews.

NDS's Annual Market Survey of over 500 providers found that confidence in the NDIS has weakened this year. Concerned about the risks this poses to supply of services, NDS called for improved pricing, better market information to guide investment decisions, and a national workforce strategy.

Influencing this complex policy environment has been a critical part of our work this year. As a result, we expanded our communication strategy through multiple channels and built a strong evidence base to support our policy positions, while at the same time building strong relationships and alliances.

Responding to members' questions and concerns is NDS's daily work, and this has been particularly demanding this year. To enhance our support of members, we launched the national NDS Helpdesk, which established a system for tracking and responding promptly to members' questions. This initiative also includes a searchable Knowledge Hub.

NDS lodged 33 submissions to national inquiries and reviews during 2017-18. We responded to the NDIA's Independent Review of Pricing; provided informed advocacy on the future of supported employment and school-to-work transition; influenced the Disability Employment Services reform; and submitted proposals to the Federal Budget.

NDS's policy advice was evident in reports from key inquiries into the NDIS by the Productivity Commission and the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS.

We launched a new series of policy papers, NDIS Essential Issues, with the first two topics being transport and employment.

“NDS has worked hard to support its members during this turbulent period to ensure that they are informed about the changing landscape.”

Throughout the year, NDS's views were frequently reported in the media, particularly regarding the NDIS. We also initiated coverage of the State of the Disability Sector Report 2017, which received 240 media reports across Australia.

We worked in partnership with Every Australian Counts to launch a series of community forums, with the theme 'NDIS: Make it Work'. The forums will run over several months and involve service providers, people

with disability and their families, as well as local Parliamentarians. The aim is to build cross-party political commitment to resolving issues preventing the NDIS being delivered to its true vision.

NDS continues to meet regularly with senior officials in government and the NDIA, and is represented across Australia, serving on more than 130 advisory committees to governments. In June 2018, NDS also organised opportunities for the NDIA Board to speak with NDS members in Western Australia.

NDS held a wide range of forums and conferences during the course of the year, providing members with information and opportunities to network and debate issues. At the 2017 CEO Meeting, Andrea Mason, Co-Chair of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council and CEO of NPY Women's Council, spoke about the challenges of supporting people with disability in remote communities in central Australia.

In addition, a Board Summit in Melbourne provided strategic advice to board members of disability organisations about operating in the NDIS. Zero Tolerance resources designed to inform boards about their role in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of people with disability were also unveiled at the Summit.

Our NDIS Essential Briefing series, held in every capital city, presented up-to-date information about NDIS developments and heard from members about their priorities and concerns.

At the 2018 Disability at Work conference, the then Federal Social Services Minister Dan Tehan announced new funding for supported employment and presented NDS's Disability Employment Excellence Awards.

NDS developed a short orientation course, commissioned by government, which all NDIS workers will complete as part of their orientation to the NDIS. The online course features people with disability as presenters and actors. Other new resources include a Workforce Hub that enables members to find information about workforce recruitment, development and performance.

NDS's BuyAbility campaign, established to promote Disability Enterprises to government and the corporate

sector, held a successful breakfast at Parliament House Canberra and worked with Assistant Minister Jane Prentice to display goods and services produced by Disability Enterprises over several weeks at Parliament House.

With the assistance of a grant from the Australian Government, BuyAbility's procurement program expanded to new states. In New South Wales, where the program has been operating for several years, it has secured \$24M in contract revenue for over 54 Disability Enterprises.

NDS continued to engage closely in the dispute over wage assessment in supported employment. We welcomed the Fair Work Commission's decision to adopt a hybrid model of wage assessment and will work with other parties on the practical details. NDS is also in discussions with government to develop a sustainable funding model for supported employment.

NDS administered the Australian Government's \$5M Workforce Innovation Fund and funded some outstanding workforce projects. NDS continued to operate sector support programs to assist providers to prepare for and respond to the NDIS, with expansion in some states but a reduction in NSW.

After almost a decade administering the NSW Companion Card program, we were disappointed to relinquish the program following a decision by the NSW department to take the administration in-house.

NDS concluded the financial year with a modest surplus and a strong balance sheet, but also awareness that the funding outlook is uncertain.

Ken Baker's announcement that he would leave NDS after almost 19 years as Chief Executive concludes a career of dedication to the advancement of people with disability through service to the sector that supports them. We have been fortunate, however, to appoint a new CEO, Chris Tanti, who is equally as passionate about the role of NDS and its capacity to improve lives through our member organisations. The former long-term CEO of Headspace, Chris has extensive experience working with government at all levels and will be a dynamic and engaging leader of NDS. (See more on page 22.)



We'd like to acknowledge the very positive relationship NDS has with governments around Australia, and the funding support they provide to assist our work.

We are also grateful to the many members who assist NDS through advice and input to policy and data collection. They assist us to build a strong rationale and evidence for the positions we take to governments.

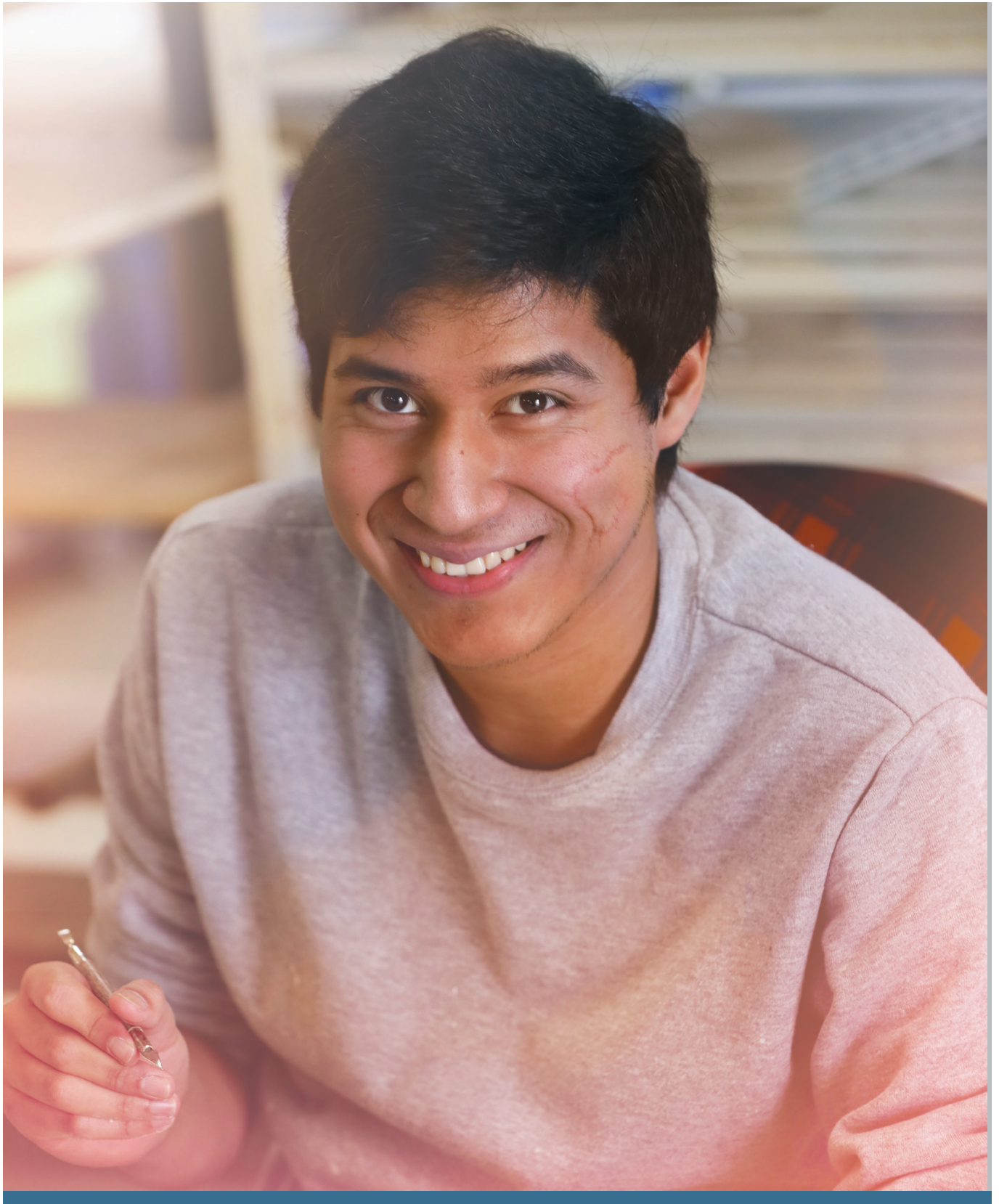
We would like to thank the Board of Directors and State Committees for their invaluable contribution to the sound governance of NDS and for the time and contribution they willingly make on behalf of members.

Finally, we thank NDS's staff in every state and territory for their hard work and commitment during a very demanding year.

Together, we have all worked to advance NDS's purpose and values.

Joan McKenna-Kerr
President

Ken Baker
Chief Executive



The year in review



The year in **REVIEW**

Networking and professional development

Building an NDIS-ready workforce

Over the roll out period, the NDIA identified that there was insufficient staff on the ground to provide supports for all the participants coming into the NDIS. In response, NDS's initiative WorkAbility began working with the sector to identify priority areas for building an NDIS-ready workforce. Collaborating with parties including government departments, service providers and Disability Employment Services (DES) providers, WorkAbility has connected people who were looking for jobs with organisations that were looking for staff. In the 2017-18 financial year, WorkAbility held 'employment markettas'; participated in disability expos and careers expos; and worked on career options in multiple capacities with school-aged children. WorkAbility also explored new employment models, supported values-based targeted recruitment activities in CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and developed a toolkit for others who want to hold employment markettas in their communities.

Personalised mentoring for sector workers

National Disability Practitioners (NDP) – a division of NDS – supports the disability workforce by providing opportunities for career development and networking. Leveraging its diverse membership, NDP launched a new mentoring program this year. The one-to-one program ran for 10 weeks and enabled sector professionals to learn from each other and gain or offer guidance on issues such as adapting to change under the NDIS and accelerating career progression.

In June, NDP presented ‘Working with the NDIS’, its first virtual conference. The online forum gave members an opportunity to learn, develop and connect with other disability practitioners in an affordable and convenient way. The conference featured 15 hours of live presentations and opportunities for registrants to ask questions and engage with other attendees in real time. The conference was a huge success, with more than 400 people attending.

carecareers answers your calls

NDS’s job service, carecareers, made a big transition in the 2017-18 financial year. Despite the conclusion of significant government funding in November 2017, a large amount of people continue to access carecareers support, illustrating its value to the sector. National

Manager of carecareers, Mike Field, said that this is due to the personalised service that carecareers offers. “A lot of places don’t publish phone numbers anymore,” Mike said, “but ours is really prominent, and if you call it, you don’t get an automated voice, you get one of us. And that’s deliberate!” carecareers’ personalised approach also feeds into excellent market research for the sector. Alongside its daily work to support a growing workforce, carecareers continues to develop and launch exciting initiatives, including a new project for a shared labour pool and the Let’s Talk Disability workshops around Australia.

Recognising you for what you do

NDP’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program was launched in March 2018, and by the end of June, there were already 1,000 people enrolled. CPD is an opportunity for employees in the sector to prove that they are committed to lifelong learning, and to be recognised for it. It delivers an individualised program in which each person chooses the content that is most relevant to their career and goals, and it is delivered at a cheaper rate than other training on the market. CPD is a prime example of a project that supports the current culture shift in the workforce; as organisations are now expecting employees to be part of a more competitive marketplace.

Policy influence

Making it the best NDIS

The NDIS has changed the way the disability services sector works. NDIS Adviser for NDS, Stephanie Worsteling, says that NDS continues to take a role of advising providers and anticipating, mitigating and rectifying issues as quickly as possible for members. “NDS maintains strong, productive working relationships with the Agency,” said Stephanie. “These relationships have been a great benefit to NDS members in the past financial year; helping to highlight emerging issues and supporting providers that are in financial stress.”

As an advocate, NDS has been able to co-design some crucial elements of the NDIS. We were involved with the NDIA and PricewaterhouseCoopers in a payments project in the 2017-18 financial year, providing feedback

Did you know?

NDS’s Zero Tolerance initiative developed a set of short films on Recognising Restrictive Practices in partnership with the Office of Professional Practice (OPP) in Victoria in the 2017-18 year. The films are now being used as part of a research project led by RMIT and have been embedded in the OPP’s Restrictive Interventions Self Assessment Tool (RISET).



on a revised Supported Independent Living (SIL) quoting tool. We contributed to payment self-help guides and synthesising the breadth of payment issues affecting members around Australia. Notably, one of these issue resolutions was the introduction of an 'edit service booking' function in the provider portal.

In the NDIS space, NDS also engaged a group of plan managers in meetings for the first time, and continued the delivery of communities of practice on a variety of topics – including NDIS coordination, complexity and finance – which inform our advocacy and policy influence.

Advocating (and winning) for supported employment

A great achievement by NDS in the 2017-18 year was a win on supported employment with the Fair Work Commission (FWC). The FWC released its interim decision

around wage tools and their review of the Modern Award after sustained advocacy from NDS. The unions and advocates had made an application to have all the tools removed and only use the Supported Wage System (SWS), which was going to be a significant imposition on members, putting many in financial distress. The Commissioner acknowledged that the current tools didn't meet the modern award objectives, but also said that the SWS in its current form (the tool that the unions and the advocates were pursuing) wasn't an appropriate method for determining wages. This was something that NDS had been arguing consistently. This was acknowledged by the Commission, who suggested that a hybrid model be developed – a model that looks at the size and the skill of the job compared to a job in open employment, and then does a productivity-based assessment. This decision acknowledged that supported employment is a complex area. NDS continues to be a leader in this space.



“The value of NDS’s work around the NDIS is absolutely critical. We have staff that have been on the ground since the first day of trial, and many years before that. They have a wealth of sector experience that can inform where we are today and where we’re heading.”

Stephanie Worsteling, NDIS Adviser

“We’re very conscious that providers are stressed and overwhelmed ... which is why we’re exploring different formats in different locations to make it easy [for them] to engage in as many activities as possible.”

John Carrigan, Sector Support Consultant



Supporting the sector with consultants

NDS Sector Support Consultants hear directly from providers about their issues during NDIS transition. In the 2017-18 financial year, NDS sector consultants facilitated the development of a number of NDIS implementation groups in New South Wales; continued to undertake successful, large-scale NDIS provider forums around the state in partnership with the NDIA; and ran smaller, pop-up workshops with providers focusing on the Quality and Safeguarding Framework and the Independent Pricing Review. In a time of uncertainty, the tailored support and flexibility of NDS's sector support consultants have been highly-valued by providers.

1,000 young people get their Tickets to Work

This was a significant year for NDS's Ticket to Work, a national initiative that aims to improve the transition to employment of young people with disability. A total of 1,038 young people have now participated in employment. 31 local Ticket to Work networks have been operating across Australia. Since 2014, 2,000 young people with disability have been supported to access career development and work-related learning opportunities while at school.

Tasmania is one of the regions that has recently seen the roll out of Ticket to Work. This was made possible by funding from the Gandel philanthropy and Barr Family Trust to test and demonstrate the effectiveness of school-to-work transition in an NDIS framework. A celebratory breakfast was held on International Day of People with Disability to acknowledge a major milestone for Ticket to Work in Tasmania – 20 Tasmanian students and numerous employers have entered into traineeship arrangements since the project started in Tasmania in late 2016.

Providing essential facilities

Since 2015, NDS has been working to implement the Changing Places network across Western Australia, which has seen the establishment of secure, clean facilities for people with disability who need full-size change tables and hoists in public toilets. This year, NDS assisted over 1,500 people with disability to gain access to a free key to start using the Changing Places facilities. This was made possible by leveraging the network of WA Companion Card holders to spread the word on the Changing Places network.

Tailoring jobs to job seekers

Australia needs to improve the rate of people with disability in employment. Part of the solution is finding new ways to support people with disability to find



2018 was the biggest year for the Australian Disability Parking Permit Program, with over **47,000 parking permits issued** to people with disability in Western Australia.

jobs that are better aligned to their strengths. NDS supports Customised Employment - an individualised approach to employment supports and services. The goal of Customised Employment is to tailor jobs or self-employment to fit the skills, interests, strengths and support needs of people with disability, whilst also meeting the needs of businesses to deliver specific services or products.

NDS ran a series of popular Customised Employment training and mentoring sessions for WA-based disability employment providers. One session was attended by staff from Intelife and Therapy Focus, who used their learnings to support 20-year-old Phillip Kalimeris, who has Autism and intellectual disability, to gain job skills and eventually run his own micro-enterprise. Phillip spent four years working and learning a variety of valuable skills at Intelife, after which he found ongoing work cleaning golf buggies at the Altone Golf Course in Beechboro, WA. By the end of the year, Phillip had picked up additional jobs cleaning cars and homes, enabling him to run and grow his own business.

Information provision

Answering all your NDIS questions

The national NDS Helpdesk is a new initiative that enables users to ask NDIS and disability employment related questions and receive quick, accurate responses from NDS's specialised teams. Launched in July 2018, the Helpdesk is based on the highly successful Victorian Helpdesk which was established in July 2016 as part of a state government-funded project.

The easy-to-use platform allows users to access NDS's growing database of over 100 common questions and answers, or ask a new question. It is a crucial resource to NDS members and enables the efficient coordination of the knowledge of NDS experts from around the country in order to best answer questions. In just the first month of the national NDS Helpdesk, 1,461 users visited the site. 139 questions were asked, of which 89 per cent were answered within three business days.

While the NDS Helpdesk is a key member benefit, it is also available to all disability service providers in Victoria and Queensland with the support of state government funding.

The power of talking about disability

Launched in May 2018, the Let's Talk Disability workshop program speaks to organisations about employing people with disability. The workshop goes by the saying "Nothing about us without us," and is presented by people with disability. These sessions provide a welcoming and collaborative environment in which attendees can receive tips on accessibility, language, advocacy, respect and inclusion. They offer principles that attendees can practise in their daily lives that will ensure people with disability are more included in workplaces, communities, and other facets of life. Let's Talk Disability strives to bust myths about disability employment. Its content is developed by a team of NDS presenters around Australia using their own stories and experiences.

Research-informed practice when you most need it

NDS's Centre for Applied Disability Research (CADR) has worked with well-respected experts from universities and research bodies to do something no other organisation or service in Australia has done before – create a central resource for disability research. The CADR Clearing House provides this resource, as well as summarising what the research means for the sector and people accessing services. In the 2017-18 financial year, CADR put together communities of practice to translate academic literature into short, useful resources called Research to Action Guides. These resources are designed for immediate and easy use, enabling simple 'research mobilisation' in the sector. The guides included one on inclusive research that advised readers on how to involve the people using their services from the beginning to the end of the process.

Informing great leadership

In June 2018, NDS held its Victorian Boards Summit in response to concerns that provider boards need more

support to understand the implications of the NDIS for their organisations and to exercise their critical leadership roles. More than 200 board chairs and directors attended the summit. They heard from NDS Chief Executive Ken Baker on NDS's eight key priorities for the sector, as well as the Victorian Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing on the State Government's NDIS priorities.

Getting creative with ILC

An Information, Linkages and Capacity-building (ILC) project was developed to support providers to understand the ILC grants in Queensland – assisting them to position themselves in the new operating environment and come up with innovative ideas. The ILC project ran two rounds of workshops around Queensland in the 2017-18 year across 17 locations. The workshops built knowledge about ILC grants that haven't been released in Queensland before, as well as the opportunities they bring. Providers expressed appreciation that the ILC project team brought them up-to-speed quickly and that they valued the tools and resources offered. NDS continues to be a trusted independent advisor in this space.



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



Since the launch of BuyAbility in 2017, we have secured **\$33.492M** in contracts, with **1,511** supported employee roles engaged across **62** disability enterprises.

Business support products and services

Exciting success in procurement

NDS is in a unique position to connect public and private sector businesses with supported employment enterprises to deliver high-quality products and services. We do this through our BuyAbility initiative, which ensures that supported employees continue to gain fulfilling and sustainable work through socially-responsible procurement opportunities. Last year, BuyAbility secured \$9.62M in contracts, with 408 supported employee roles engaged as a direct result.

BuyAbility also expanded its national footprint by moving into Tasmania. Speaking at BuyAbility's official launch, Tasmanian Premier Will Hodgman announced a grant of nearly \$342,000 from the Tasmanian Community Fund to see "significantly increased procurement activities in Tasmania, leading to more contracts for Australian Disability Enterprises, and more jobs for people with disability."

Learning in leaps and bounds

NDS Learn & Develop (L&D) provides members with e-learning and training opportunities that address the growing and wide-ranging needs of the sector. In line with this, the Workforce Essentials e-learning library licence was created in the 2017-18 year to offer members a more affordable and convenient training option. More than 20 e-learning resources were bundled to form the licence, which covers short courses on topics ranging from sector compliance to leadership development. Topics are reviewed regularly for accuracy and relevance, and are based on sector needs as determined by focus groups and polling. Since December, 32 member organisations have signed up for a Workforce Essentials e-learning library licence – with an additional 90 organisations expressing interest in applying.

In Western Australia – which signed on to the Federal NDIS in December – it was a very busy year in L&D.

Highlights included the successful series of ‘Hot Topics’ breakfasts, which received excellent attendance and participation from the chair of the NDIA. Hearing from the NDIA in this forum was pivotal for the WA sector at a great time of change. L&D in WA also completed two leadership series that were exceptionally well-received, as well as events on high performance teams, a very successful finance, clinical and allied health forum, various WA workforce projects and many other NDS member and public events. Thirty-two L&D workshops were held with a total of 976 registrations.

Lead and be well

Critical to realising the vision of the NDIS is empowering the disability workforce to consider the opportunities the NDIS presents for personal and professional development. To facilitate this, NDS partnered with Asia Aus Leaders to run a number of personal leadership and wellbeing forums in regional South Australia. Held in Berri and Whyalla, the forums explored topics such as building resilience, goal-setting and career development. The workshops were very well-received, with 93 per cent of participants in Berri stating they felt ‘more empowered to be resilient and adapt to change under the NDIS’ as a result. In Whyalla, eight out of 10 said they would encourage peers to attend future workshops.

Celebrating inclusion and excellent services

An important part of NDS’s role in supporting the disability sector is to recognise and showcase the dedicated and innovative work of individuals and organisations that improve the lives of people with disability. Now in its sixth year, the Northern Territory Disability Services and Inclusion Awards was launched to do just that. Run as a collaboration between NDS and the Northern Territory Government’s Department of Health, the Awards were held last November and attended by over 260 people – a record for the event. Attendees included Paul Kirby, MLA, Member for Port Darwin, representing the Minister for Health. Nine awards were given out, recognising excellence in areas including innovation, promoting community awareness and improving community participation. CarersNT, an organisation dedicated to reconnecting people with disability who are socially isolated, was awarded the Overall Award for Excellence.



Celebrating 10 years with NDS

Values, change and keeping an even keel

Cate Houston

Ten years ago, Cate Houston saw an expired job ad in the paper for NDS. Hopeful, she decided, “What the heck, I’ll just ring up!” It turned out that someone had just left and there was a position available. She walked in for an interview, and soon started at NDS.



How do you reflect on NDS, 10 years after starting here?

The first thing I look at when I look to an organisation is its purpose – and the values that underpin that purpose need to be aligned to what I hold as values. For me, that’s respect, integrity and justice. Those values, in my mind, underpin the purpose of NDS. In my time at NDS, I’ve worked with some very substantial people, and I’ve learned a lot. Part of what I value is lifelong learning, and that has certainly continued working at NDS and with the people here.

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

NDS has a byline that says ‘One strong voice’, and that is a pivotal point. When I first came to the sector, it was very disparate. If we have the ability to draw different groups together, there will be a truly big impact – to maximise targeted and effective impacts. And that’s what I see NDS focusing on. The other critical thing that we provide is industry-specific information that keeps services on track and keeps them doing the best they can.

Does anything from the past 10 years stand out to you – that you were proud to be part of?

Definitely. One was a rally for Disability Action Week in the Botanic Gardens in Brisbane. It was people with

disability and others, arm-in-arm. There was a feeling that things could be really different. This was before the Every Australian Counts campaign had started. The atmosphere was alive with hope. It was a beautiful thing to be part of.

How do you see the future of the sector?

Change, change, change. It will continue. And when you think about it, life is change. If things aren’t changing around you, you’d better take your pulse! I see NDS keeping that ship on course, and keeping it even-keeled.

I love a quote from the movie *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, delivered by Judi Dench’s character Evelyn Greenlade. It goes: “Perhaps what we fear is that it will be the same, so we must celebrate the changes, because everything will be alright in the end, and if it’s not alright, it’s not the end.”

Breaking barriers

*with projectABLE's
John Gee*



John Gee is a presenter with NDS's careers and disability awareness program, projectABLE. He's also an Ambassador for TAFE since starting his Certificate IV in Disability Support. We spoke to John about his exciting work and study in the disability sector.

What has working with projectABLE been like?

It's been very fun, very informative. I've learned a lot... I've felt that it's a very good opportunity to break the barriers between what's real and what's not real – not only about working in the disability sector but also with people with disability. I feel that projectABLE has a very powerful message behind every activity that we run.

It's really good to help people understand the disability sector more, understand people with disability more and to encourage students to consider working in the disability sector and matching their passions, skills and abilities to jobs in the sector. This is something I truly believe in, and I feel blessed to be a part of it.

Do you get feedback from students about your presentations?

I have had students come up to me and say, "Thank you, I didn't realise I could do this for work"... Some students have said, "Thank you, I have a family member who has been experiencing similar things and it's helped me understand it a bit better."

When did you decide to start studying Disability Support at TAFE?

projectABLE actually inspired me to consider working in the disability sector. I feel that what we're talking about is something that I truly believe in. I have believed in supporting people with disability for a while, but projectABLE pushed my passion further and deeper.

What do you want to do when you finish your course?

I'd like to work with adults with mental health issues that may need support, but I'm not 100 per cent certain at this point!



Membership Recognition Awards

NDS's Membership Recognition Awards acknowledge the loyalty, support and contributions of Organisational Members that have reached the milestones of 20, 30, 40 and 50 years of continued NDS membership.

In December 2017, 18 members were recognised for their long-standing partnership with NDS. These partnerships have contributed to the growing strength and influence of the disability sector and reflect a shared commitment to providing quality services for people with disability.

50 years of Membership

Disability Services Australia Ltd
Vision Australia

40 years of Membership

Hartley Lifecare Inc

30 years of Membership

Cerebral Palsy Alliance
Darwin Skills Development Scheme Inc
Endeavour Foundation
Minda Incorporated
The Personnel Group Ltd

20 years of Membership

Anglicare Tasmania Inc
The Cram Foundation
Granite Belt Support Services Inc
JewishCare
McCall Gardens Community Limited
MiLife-Victoria Inc
Self Help Workplace
Sharing Places Inc
Wangarang Industries Ltd
Windgap Foundation

Celebrating 50 years of membership

We speak to Ron Hooton, CEO, Vision Australia and Mark Spurr, CEO, Disability Services Australia, about their 2018 highlights.

Vision Australia

What was your biggest achievement this year?

One of the biggest achievements for Vision Australia in the 2017-18 financial year has been the successful lobbying of the NDIA to provide NDIS plans in alternative formats for our blind and low vision clients. Independent access to your own plan is the cornerstone of exercising choice and control.

How did NDS support you during the year?

NDS was an important partner with Vision Australia in achieving this accessibility gain for all people who are blind or have low vision.



Disability Services Australia

What was your biggest achievement this year?

The past year has been one of celebration for Disability Services Australia as we reached the milestone of 60 years of service. The world was a different place back in 1957 when we first started with seven employees in a garage. We are immensely proud of the fact that, through all of the changes in the years since, we have adapted to and grown with the changing disability service landscape. We now employ 1,400 people – more than a third of whom are people with disability working in our Australian Disability Enterprise.

Direct supported employment for people with disability is in our DNA. It is the reason we started back in 1957 and the reason we remain committed to providing meaningful employment options for people with disability. In 2017, we also celebrated the opening of our flagship centre in Mascot. An Australian Disability Enterprise, school leaver employment support service, Disability Employment Service, supported learning hub and allied health services are all located in this facility employing more than 300 people.

How did NDS support you during the year?

For 50 of the 61 years we've existed, we have been members of ACROD – now known as NDS. The support of NDS members and staff has helped us to grow and thrive as an organisation, navigating an ever-changing political landscape and lobbying for appropriate funding to ensure the best possible quality of life for people with disability.



Signing off as CEO

Ken Baker

Working as NDS's Chief Executive for nearly 19 years has been a great privilege. I've benefited greatly from the goodwill and experience of NDS members and the commitment of talented staff.

Much has changed since I joined NDS, and the biggest change is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. There's still much hard work ahead to get the NDIS operating well, but we shouldn't let its implementation difficulties overshadow the achievement. The NDIS doubles the funding for disability support across Australia and expands choice and control for people with disability and their families.

The NDIS is an inspiring idea, but the idea alone was not enough to win broad political and public support. The unity



and determination of the disability sector were critical. We can and should debate policies and practices, but we can't afford to lose that determination and unity of purpose.

Heading a national association during turbulent times isn't easy. When NDS members are under pressure, NDS is under pressure. Among the several things that have kept me going is a continuing fascination with disability policy, which, at some point, intersects with every government portfolio – that's why we need the National Disability Strategy. Most important of all, however, is purpose. While, at times, progress is frustratingly slow, the point of what we do in this sector – work to boost the wellbeing and opportunities of people with disability – is very worthwhile. When the going is rough, don't lose sight of that purpose!





Welcome, Chris Tanti

Chris Tanti stepped into the position of CEO of NDS in September 2018. We asked him a few questions about himself and his vision for the organisation going forward.

Tell us a bit about you.

I was born and raised in Melbourne and grew up in a large family. Following my Arts degree, I was a professional drifter looking for the ultimate career! After owning and operating a café for a while, I concluded that a career in human services was what I should pursue. I worked for Yooralla for a brief time, and applied to do social work. I've now spent 25 years working largely in mental health-related organisations as a clinician and manager.

What attracted you to NDS?

I'm attracted to NDS because of its mission, its vision, and the sector it seeks to serve. I'm very focused on getting outcomes for people. Supporting, resourcing and advocating for services that are equally passionate about client outcomes is a privilege and honour. This sector is also going through a significant period of change and,

while I love change, it needs to be managed carefully.

What are you most looking forward to in the role of CEO?

I'm looking forward to making this the best organisation it can be for the sector and the people it seeks to support. NDS has had great leadership, and a reputation for being at the cutting edge of policy development. I'm looking forward to consolidating that reputation and building on it by raising awareness of the great work that is done in the sector and prosecuting the things that the sector is most concerned about.

What are your priorities as your step into this role?

I'm lucky to have a period where I can observe and spend time with the staff of NDS, as well as sector leaders. There are clearly high levels of anxiety and concern around pricing structures and some aspects of the NDIS, so there are some external things to prioritise. Internally, I want to make sure that we are meeting the needs of members and, to that end, I will very quickly seek to survey the sector to ensure that we continue to meet their needs.



Board and committees

the NDS BOARD



Joan McKenna Kerr

President, WA Chair
Chief Executive Officer
Autism Association of WA



Anne Bryce

Vice-President, NSW Chair
Chief Executive Officer
Achieve Australia



Rohan Braddy

Elected Member
Chief Executive Officer
Mambourin Enterprises Ltd



Tony Burns

NT Chair (*from Dec 2017*)
Chief Executive Officer
HPA Helping People Achieve



Paul Byrne

TAS Chair
Chief Executive Officer
Li-Ve Tasmania



Warwick Cavanagh

Elected Member
Chair
Active Inclusive Community Housing



Jennifer Fitzgerald

VIC Chair
Chief Executive Officer
SCOPE (Aust) Ltd



Joanne Jessop

QLD Chair
Chief Executive Officer
Multicap



Mark Kulinski

Elected Member *(from Dec 2017)*
Chief Executive Officer
Community Living Australia



Cathy Miller

SA Chair
Chief Executive Officer
Minda Incorporated



Danielle Newport

Elected Member *(from Dec 2017)*
Chief Executive Officer
Activ Foundation



Vicki O'Halloran AM

NT Chair *(to Aug 2017)*
Chief Executive Officer
Somerville Community Services



Cheryl Pollard

ACT Chair *(to Feb 2018)*
Board Member
LEAD



Eric Thauvette

ACT Chair *(from Feb 2018)*
Chief Executive Officer
Hartley Lifecare



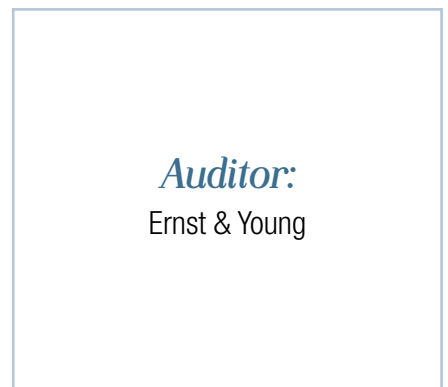
Gordon Trewern

Elected Member
Chief Executive Officer
Nulsen Disability Services



Rob White

Elected Member *(to Dec 2017)*
Chief Executive Officer
Cerebral Palsy Alliance



Auditor:
Ernst & Young



National Committees

National Committee on Accommodation, Housing & Support

Chair: Anne Bryce,
Chief Executive Officer, Achieve Australia
NDS Co-ordinator: Philippa Angley,
Executive Officer to the Chief Executive

National Committee on NDIS Operations

Chair: Chris Mathieson,
Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Deaf Society
NDS Co-ordinator: Stephanie Worsteling,
NDIS Adviser

National Committee on Open Employment

Chair: Cathy Miller,
Chief Executive Officer, Minda Incorporated
NDS Co-ordinator: Kerrie Langford,
National Employment Manager

National Committee on Children, Young People & their Families

Chair: Vacant
NDS Co-ordinator: Philippa Angley,
Executive Officer to the Chief Executive

National Committee on Supported Employment

Chair: Sally Powell, Chief Executive Officer,
Bedford Group (*to Dec 2017*)
Rohan Braddy, Chief Executive Officer,
Mambourin Enterprises Ltd (*from Jun 2018*)
NDS Co-ordinator: Kerrie Langford,
National Employment Manager

National Committee on Workforce

Chair: Paul Byrne,
Chief Executive Officer, Li-Ve Tasmania
NDS Co-ordinator: Caroline Alcorso,
National Manager, Workforce Development



State & Territory Committees

ACT

Chair:

Eric Thauvette *(from Feb 2018)*
Cheryl Pollard *(to Feb 2018)*

Vice-chairs:

Hugh Packard & Nadine Stephen

Members:

Anne Kirwan
Torrien Lau
Lisa McPherson
Chris Redmond
Ian Ross
Kylie Stokes
Marco Xuereb

State Manager:

Stephen Fox

NSW

Chair:

Anne Bryce

Vice-chair:

Chris Campbell

Members:

David Carey
Adrian Ford
Pennie Kearney
Glenda Pearce *(to Nov 2017)*
Andrew Richardson
Claire Robbs
Deb Sazdanoff
Kerry Stubbs
Rob White

Senior Manager State Operations:

Tony Pooley

NSW Sector Operations Manager:

Karen Stace

NT

Chair:

Tony Burns *(from Dec 2017)*
Vicki O'Halloran *(to Aug 2017)*

Vice-chair:

Nadia Lindop

Members:

Robyn Burridge
Terry Cleary
Helen Egan
Eileen Farrell *(to Dec 2017)*
Peter Kay
Kim McRae
Stephanie Ransome
Annie Rily
Steve Vitone

State Manager:

Noelene Swanson

TAS	QLD	SA
Chair:	Chair:	Chair:
Paul Byrne	Joanne Jessop	Cathy Miller
Vice-chair:	Vice-chair:	Vice-chair:
Donna Bain	Elizabeth Sutton	Janine Lenigas
Members:	Members:	Members:
Drew Beswick Jenny Branch-Allen (<i>to Mar 2018</i>) Deborah Byrne Murray Coates Steve Daley Kathryn Ellston Nigel Hill Mark Jessop Paul Mayne	Brett Casey Judy Dickson Robert Evelyn Ann Greer Russell Mason Evan Munroe Peter Tully	Liz Cohen Matt Collins Marjorie Ellis Michael Forwood Emma Hinchey Sue Horsnell Fiona Kelly Mark Kulinski Andrew Ramsey Peter Stewart Wendy Warren
State Manager:	State Manager:	State Manager:
Will Kestin	Richard Nelson	Peter Hoppo
VIC	WA	
Chair:	Chair:	
Jennifer Fitzgerald	Joan McKenna Kerr	
Vice-chair:	Vice-chairs:	
Terri Carroll	Marina Re & Gordon Trewern	
Members:	Members:	
Rohan Braddy Warwick Cavanagh Elizabeth Crowther Glenn Foard Estelle Fyffe Julie Graham Daniel Leighton Christine Mathieson Kerry Nelson	Justine Colyer Suzi Cowcher (<i>to Feb 2018</i>) Darren Ginnelly Robert Hicks Rob Holmes Vik Jeyakumar (<i>to May 2018</i>) Rosie Lawn Marcus Stafford Michael Tait	
State Manager:	State Manager:	
David Moody	Julie Waylen	

Celebrating 10 years with NDS

Making employment work

Paul Musso

As National Policy Adviser at NDS, Paul Musso has spent the past 10 years advocating for the supported employment sector and securing its ongoing viability. He reflects on the journey so far.



How would you describe your past 10 years of working in disability employment?

In many ways, the employment space has been evolving significantly. It can be challenging to balance our members' competing views while continuing to defend the legitimacy of supported employment. However, I'm very proud that NDS has resisted arguments against supported employment during my time here. Identifying and selling the benefits of supported employment has been a dominant part of my role here. But I believe in it and continue to think that supported employment is an extremely positive and rewarding model for people with disability who may be otherwise marginalised – and I think it's imperative that we continue to get out there and promulgate that message.

Going back to the beginning – how did you first join NDS?

I had been working with Family and Community Services (FACS) and came across the position at NDS. I was very attracted to the idea of being more involved in policy development and analysis work. I had started becoming familiar with NDS via attending regional meetings, and decided to apply for the role – a decision I certainly don't regret. The work has been very interesting and rewarding, and I've particularly enjoyed working with Ken Baker. He's been a real inspiration.

How have you seen supported employment change over the years?

The supported employment model has changed significantly. Our members have risen to the challenge of selling the benefits of the model, moved into different areas of work and taken a more customised approach to employment. All of this has helped us promote the merits of the model.

What's your proudest achievement at NDS?

I feel proud of the work we've done selling the benefits of the supported employment model. We've certainly had some setbacks in that area over the years, but we have persisted, and logically and rationally argued our case. That has recently been supported by the Fair Work Commission's decision around the support employment award review. I'm proud of that very positive result and of the work we did. Because we have achieved that result, I feel that the model will continue to evolve and offer more rewarding employment options for people with disability.

What's the best thing about working at NDS?

I love working with our members. I've always endeavoured to assist them with any queries or problems, and always find this to be a positive aspect of my work. I've also enjoyed the intellectual and philosophical camaraderie with my colleagues around advancing the rights of people with disability.

Celebrating 10 years with NDS

Navigating the policy landscape

Sarah Fordyce

When Sarah Fordyce first joined NDS's Victoria office 10 years ago, she was one of two employees. Today, there are over 30 staff based in Victoria, including a policy team headed up by Sarah.



What have you enjoyed most about your time at NDS?

I've really enjoyed the complexity of the issues we deal with. The position of working in a peak body gives you a bird's eye view of trends and issues that are impacting the sector. What's kept me going at NDS is the continually-evolving issues – seeing them develop and change. I really enjoy that interplay between these different issues and trying to keep abreast of all this information. And of course, getting the sense that I've had an impact on shaping these issues.

What has kept you interested in your job?

The NDIS is the biggest social reform in Australia in recent years, so if you're a policy person, NDS is the place to be. NDS is a great position to be in to see how that reform is rolling out and impacting across the sector.

How did you join NDS?

I started out as a contractor in the Victorian disability sector. At the time, I was contracted by NDS to assist on consultations around the Victorian Disability Act in 2006. This gave me a great opportunity to hear more about NDS, so shortly after when a policy role came up, I applied.

What was it like to be a foundational staff member of NDS in Victoria?

When I started working at NDS, there were the two of us – Philippa Angley and myself in Victoria. We were based in an unrenovated, cluttered old Victorian house. There had been the merger of three peak bodies into one and Philippa was running everything at the time. Soon after, we hired our first State Manager and from there, other staff came on board.

How have you seen things change in your time at NDS?

With the introduction of the NDIS, the Victorian Government provided significant investment to support the transition of the sector during roll out. That saw a real step-up of staff in our office. There used to be just a handful of us and we are now a team of 20+ staff working over two floors. I worked largely alone before, and now have a team of four. That's made a significant difference in terms of what we've been able to accomplish.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I've enjoyed the interaction with members over many years. I've really liked the development of long-term relationships with them, seeing and catching up with them and having the sense that I can provide them with information and support. It's the long-term engagement with that community that I've really enjoyed.



Performance overview



For the financial year ending 30 June 2018, NDS achieved a net surplus of \$1,022,629.

Net assets remain strong, having increased to \$14,362,531 (2017: \$13,339,902). The current ratio (current assets: current liabilities) was 1.36 (2017: 1.26).

NDS income 2017-18

Total income received in 2017-18 was \$34.48M, a 18.9 per cent increase on 2016-17 (\$29.0M). Fifty-nine per cent of revenue for the organisation is related to projects being undertaken by NDS to support the sector (2017 – 49 per cent). NDS acknowledges the support of the federal, state and territory governments that provide funding for these initiatives.

The other major sources of income were: government grants (13 per cent), NDS and NDP membership subscriptions (11 per cent) and conference and seminars (6 per cent).

In 2017-18, NDS has reassessed the treatment of Contract Management Revenue. As NDS is acting as an agent, Revenue is now shown net of Contract Management expenses. This treatment has also been reflected in the prior year (2016-17) result.

Performance overview *Summary*

NDS expenditure 2017-2018

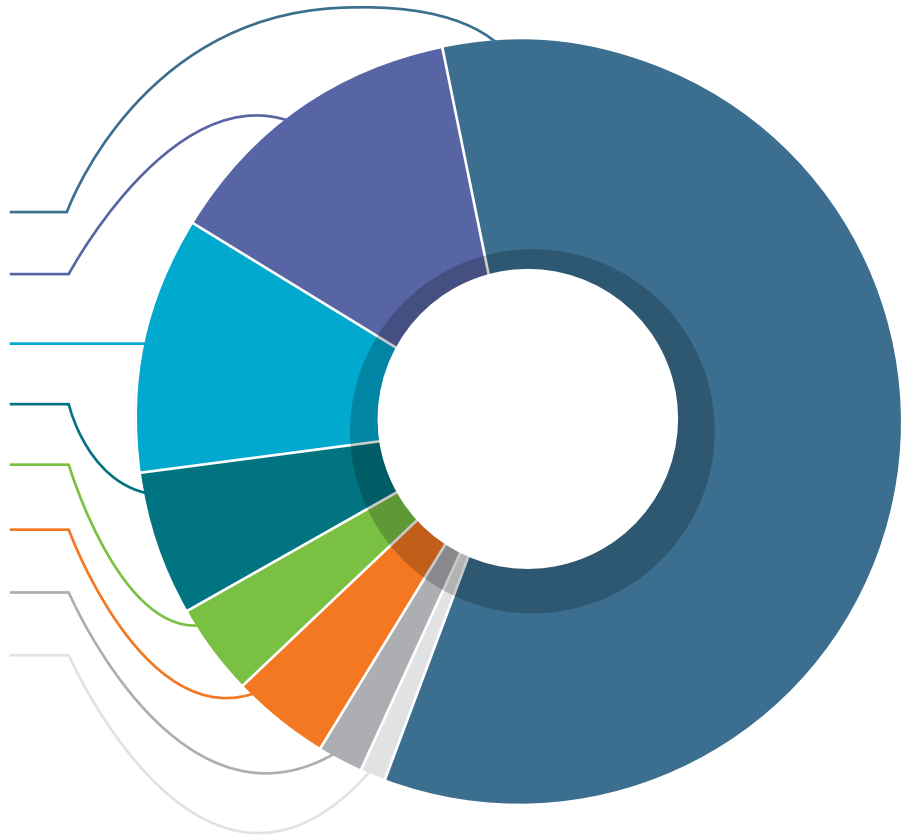
Total expenditure for the year grew by 22 per cent to \$33.5M (2017: \$27.4M). Employment costs are the largest area of expense incurred by the organisation (46 per cent; 2017 43 per cent). Grants for projects and other activities issued to service providers (17 per cent), Consultancy (9 per cent), IT & Telephony (6 per cent) are the other principal expenses.

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

Income	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Government grants	4,641	4,692
Other grants	–	–
Membership subscriptions	3,735	3,532
Conference & seminar income	2,144	2,207
Project income	20,405	16,270
Contract management revenue	232	229
Business enterprise revenue	1,320	668
Rentals	139	156
Interest	529	625
Other	1,339	619
Total revenue	34,484	28,999
Expenses	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Employee benefits	15,303	13,775
Consultancy	3,092	3,172
Advertising	95	38
Conference, seminars & meetings	2,055	2,011
Project grants	5,791	2,454
IT & telephony	1,825	1,685
Occupancy	1,323	1,246
Travel	1,014	778
Other administrative costs	2,965	2,226
Total expenditure	33,462	27,387
Total surplus/(deficit) for the year	1,023	1,612

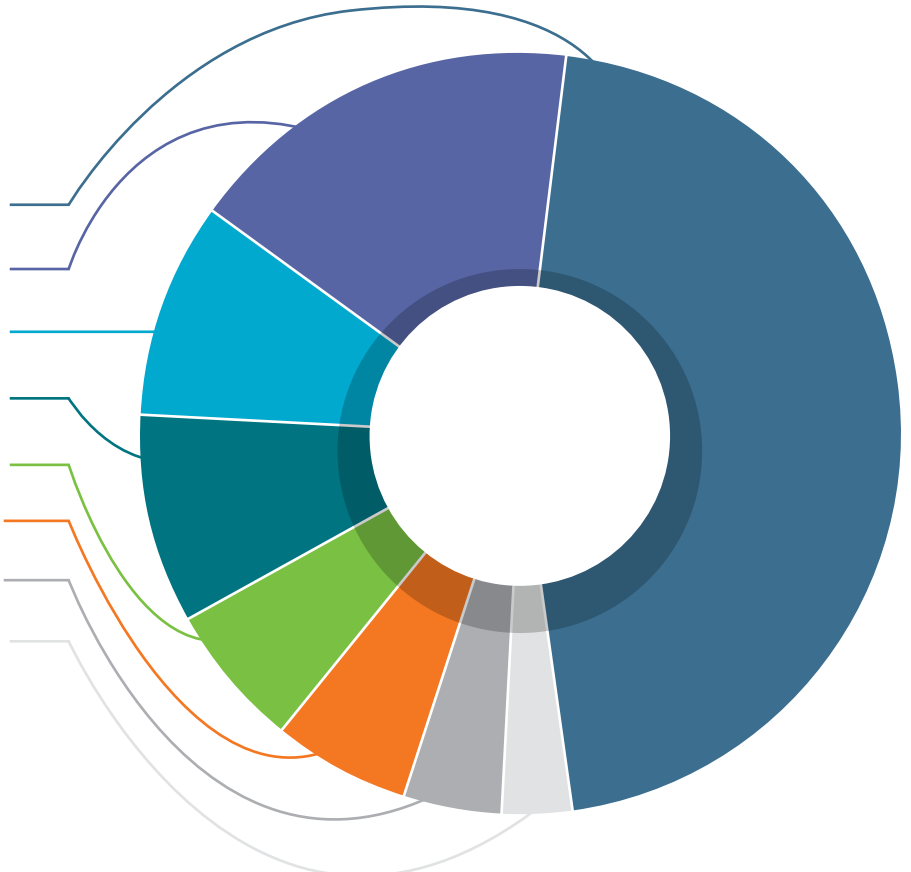
Income 2017-18

- Project income **59%**
- Government grants **13%**
- Membership subscriptions **11%**
- Conference & seminar income **6%**
- Business enterprise revenue **4%**
- Other **4%**
- Interest **2%**
- Contract management revenue **1%**



Expenditure 2017-18

- Employee benefits **46%**
- Project grants **17%**
- Consultancy **9%**
- Other administrative costs **9%**
- Conference, seminars & meetings **6%**
- IT & telephony **6%**
- Occupancy **4%**
- Travel **3%**



Assets	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
Current assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	32,256	35,015
Other current assets	3,331	4,555
Total current assets	35,587	39,570
Non-current assets		
Property, plant & equipment	5,230	5,690
Total non-current assets	5,230	5,690
Total assets	40,817	45,260
Liabilities	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
Current liabilities		
Trade & other payables	2,641	2,556
Provisions	249	283
Employee benefit liabilities	1,174	1,121
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	83	3
Unearned revenue	21,965	27,536
Total current liabilities	26,111	31,499
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	32	32
Employee benefit liabilities	293	350
Interest bearing loans and borrowings	18	40
Total non-current liabilities	343	422
Total liabilities	26,454	31,920
Net assets	14,363	13,340

**National Disability Services
Annual Report 2017-18**

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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. We also thank our members who were instrumental in arranging for the photographs to be taken.

Contact: comms@nds.org.au

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