



Annual Review

Ability 
Centre

2018/19



Ability Centre is a not-for-profit disability service provider that has been supporting Western Australian families for more than 60 years.

Our Purpose

Empower people to realise their abilities

Our Vision

People of all abilities thrive in their community throughout their lives

Our Values

Empowerment	Passion
Innovation	Accountable
Excellence	Respect
Commitment	Integrity

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Chairman's Report



It is encouraging to see an improvement in the key drivers for employee engagement that are strengthening our people and culture.

It has been another truly rewarding year serving our customers and enabling our people to realise our purpose: to empower people to realise their abilities.

Preparing Ability Centre to operate sustainably under the National Disability Insurance Scheme has again dominated the Board's decision making this year. We have prioritised strengthening our governance and strategy foundations as well as evolving our financial model to ensure we can provide the best services for our customers today and tomorrow.

We also focused on continuing to enhance our culture and reinforce our values which has helped guide our decision making throughout the year. I would like to thank and acknowledge all of our customers, their families and carers for choosing Ability Centre and I look forward to working with our Board, Chief Executive Officer and teams to continue to enhance our services.

Our preparations to embrace the NDIS have been a continued focus for nearly five years. We expect to have completed our organisational preparations by the end of 2019 and the majority of our customers to have moved to NDIS funding by mid 2020.

I would like to thank everyone at Ability Centre for their hard work, dedication and perseverance and also acknowledge the complexity involved in continuing to work with NDIS, WA NDIS and block funding systems over a sustained period.

As foreshadowed last year, our increased exposure to the NDIS funding structure has meant balancing our growth targets with a need to adjust how we operate. We have proved our responsiveness to these sector changes and ended the financial year with 2423 customers, 986 employees and income in excess of \$74 million.

Our reputation is embedded in the service we deliver and the Board is fully supportive of initiatives to better understand our employees, improve workplace culture and customer service.

In September 2018, we welcomed Jacquie Thomson as our new Chief Executive Officer who joined us from Lotterywest. I would like to thank our Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary Darren Cutri for his leadership as Acting Chief Executive Officer in the interim period.

Jacquie is committed to the not-for-profit sector and to developing our community as one that is inclusive, strong and socially rich. The Board selected Jacquie from a strong field of candidates because of her outstanding leadership skills, professional experience and her passion for the organisation and the people it serves.

We continued our commitment to seeking employee feedback with a more comprehensive organisation wide survey in February 2019. Building on the results and follow up actions from the 2018 Pulse Survey, the Board was very pleased to hear of improvements across all areas when compared to the 2018 survey.

It was particularly encouraging to see an improvement in the key drivers for employee engagement that will strengthen our organisational culture.

Continuous improvement remains a priority especially in the areas of employee development and career progression. Our reputation is embedded in the service we deliver and the Board is fully supportive of initiatives to better understand our employees, improve workplace culture and customer service.

Ability Centre is also part of a much broader community and we greatly benefit from strong relationships with other organisations such as Ability First Australia and National Disability Services. In November 2018, I attended a meeting with senior representatives of National Disability Insurance Agency hosted by Ability First Australia with board members from other disability service providers. It was a very collegiate atmosphere that provided an informative national perspective on a wide range of issues facing our sector.

During the year we farewelled Board members Janelle Marr and Roslyn Elmes who generously gave of their time and expertise. Janelle was with us for over four years and we were grateful for her positive energy and commitment to our customers. We welcomed Tony Adcock, Dianne Ritson and Russell Hardwick this year.

With changes to our Board membership and the Executive team over the last two years, it is important to reinforce our commitment to governance best practice. I was very pleased that both groups made time to undertake the Australian Institute of Company Directors' course.

In the year ahead, we expect to respond to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability announced on 5 April 2019. No form of abuse, exploitation or discrimination is acceptable and we will continue to be open and transparent during the enquiry process and will cooperate fully with the Royal Commission.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank everyone involved in our organisation and for their skills and dedication that support our customers and their families.

We respect our customers' right to raise any concerns with the Royal Commission. We hope that this inquiry will result in positive cultural change across our Australian community and will lead to improved outcomes for people living with disability, their families and carers.

This year we said farewell to two long term and significant Ability Centre supporters.

In November 2018 we recognised the life and work of Mr Stan Perron AM. Stan was a key donor for our Minderoo Rise accommodation project and a regular supporter of many other appeals. He was a great friend to Ability Centre and was unwavering in his commitment to achieving better outcomes for people living with disability

In April 2019, we received the sad news of the death of Lady Doris Brand. Lady Brand became our patron in 1979 and continued the work of her late husband Sir David Brand championing the needs of people with disability and being a strong advocate for their inclusion in society.

The support we received from Mr Stan Perron, Sir David and Lady Brand is a reminder that Ability Centre relies on the goodwill and contributions from the broader community. In March 2019, it was my great pleasure to host an event at PwC to personally thank many of our long term stakeholders and supporters. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank everyone involved in our organisation and for their skills and dedication that support our customers and their families.

I am continually inspired and humbled by the people who are Ability Centre. We are important to the WA community and I continue to be privileged to lead this organisation.



Justin Scanlan
Chairman



Customers participating in The Drum and Beats Group use drumming and rhythm to help break down social and emotional barriers

CEO's Report



Whether it is finding a fulfilling job or a new home, taking part in a school sports day or mastering a new wheelchair and the freedom it brings, Ability Centre is helping make a positive difference every day.

Almost a year has passed since I joined Ability Centre and I continue to be impressed with the breadth of services and supports we provide to our customers and the dedication of our employees.

Building a solid foundation and organisational structure to ensure we can meet the contemporary needs of our customers is vital. Following the strategic planning work in 2018, we evolved this to include organisational goals and strategic priorities that provide a simple roadmap for everyone at Ability Centre. This supports a streamlined approach to our decision making and a clarity of purpose.

At the heart of this are our customers and employees. In this Annual Review we highlight just a few of their stories although it is a great joy for me every week to hear of the small and large milestones our customers achieve. Whether it is finding a fulfilling job or a new home, taking part in a school sports day or mastering a new wheelchair and the freedom it brings, Ability Centre is helping make a positive difference every day.

New structure

In order to ensure that Ability Centre is well positioned for the future, both in terms of how we work and the services we offer, we undertook a functional review in late 2018. This led to the creation of a new executive structure in April 2019 which elevates the leadership of all operational areas to the Executive.

Another key decision was to ensure our customers were given a greater focus. The role of Chief Customer Officer was created to lead a team that combines strategy, customer engagement, research, marketing and fundraising. This will position us to further align our future decision making with our customers' needs.

We continue to operate in an era of significant change within our industry and as a result of our organisational renewal program.

We also created an Enterprise Services business unit to encompass Goodwill Engineering along with our employment services, equipment sales and workshop services. Again, this team will provide a strong focus to grow our business outside our traditional therapy and accommodation services.

In May 2019, we announced a major change to CP Tech with the therapists moving to Therapy Services and the workshop, equipment sales and product development becoming part of Enterprise Services from 1 July 2019. We are confident this structural realignment will realise customer and employee benefits.

We also considered our service provision, our locations and the skills capacity we have available within our workforce.

With the NDIS now available across regional Western Australia, we reviewed our Country Resource Program which largely supported and enhanced services already provided by local regional therapists. In early 2019, we decided to close our face to face services in the South West region and Northam and not to renew our contract with the Department of Communities after 30 June 2019.

We remain committed to supporting families and people with disabilities in rural and remote Western Australia but a substantially different approach is required. To ensure that these valuable services

are effective and sustainable in regional communities, Ability Centre is working to partner with other organisations to build capacity in the regions.

Single customer view

We achieved a major milestone this year completing preparations for a single database for all our customers' information. The new Customer Management System (CMS) was launched on 1 July 2019 and over the last two years, it has taken an incredible amount of dedication with a re-design of our business processes, extensive data cleansing and face to face employee training. At the heart of this project was a need for one source of truth for our operational data so we better understand how to improve our customer service and are financially robust in a competitive market.

By the end of 2019, we will also have implemented a more efficient rostering and scheduling system that provides real time information for all employees. This will reduce the number of conversations our customers have with different parts of our organisation and will result in a better customer experience.

Financial Stewardship

We continue to operate in an era of significant change within our industry and as a result of our organisational renewal program.

We have reported solid financial results for 2018/19 with a revenue increase of 7% to \$74.9M. This is largely attributed to more of our Shared Living customers receiving NDIS funding and the recognition of the complexity of their needs and the resource level they require. We have also seen strong growth for services in our Therapy Services South Hub. Additionally, we have reduced our deficit by 56% by deciding to close unsustainable services and improving the billable time of our therapists.

Looking ahead, the great advances to increase face to face time with customers by our Therapy Services team need to be maintained along with high occupancy levels in our Shared Living homes. Ensuring we have a location strategy to provide services close to our customers is also a priority.

As foreshadowed last year, our increased exposure to the NDIS pricing and funding structure remains challenging. Our 2019/20 operating and capital budgets will require close monitoring. We are expecting this coming year to be financially testing however we are undertaking a carefully planned program of work to build a financially sustainable organisation within the NDIS environment which we will achieve from 2021 onwards.

Celebrating our team

Very shortly after joining Ability Centre, I had the great pleasure of attending our annual Employee and Volunteer Awards. The nominations were aligned to our values and it was a privilege to meet so many worthy winners and fantastic employees. Our 2018 Volunteer of the Year was Lisa Blow, a dedicated volunteer at our Therapy Services South Hub who was recognised for her ability to make much needed resources for our Occupational Therapists.

The 2018 Chief Executive Officer Award went to Caroline Wilson from Community Services. Caroline is our first ever Enrolled Nurse at the Transition Villa at Bradford Views. Caroline was nominated by the family of one of our newest customers, Kai. Kai sustained an acquired brain injury three years ago and had been living in hospital before moving to Ability Centre. Caroline's support has made Kai's family feel confident and his transition to life beyond hospital is well underway.

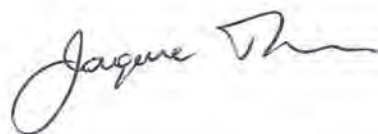
Partnering with the community

So much of our work is made possible by the kind and generous donations of a wide range of community partners and volunteers. Our Annual Golf Classic continues to be an annual highlight and we are regularly in awe of the community groups and individuals who fundraise to support us. This remains vital as we wish to continue to offer services and supports not funded under the NDIS.

We are also enriched as an organisation by working closely with researchers and health practitioners, other disability providers, advocacy groups and the WA Department of Communities.

As advocates for community inclusion and access, we were again pleased to sponsor National Disability Services (NDS) for its Disability Support Awards and International Day of People with Disability lunch. Our partnership with Kalparrin is going from strength to strength and we are continuing to reach out to more organisations and set up mutually beneficial relationships.

Every disability organisation is facing the challenge of succeeding in today's market while transforming its business. This is the work we're doing at Ability Centre. We look forward to continuing to be a leader in the disability sector and driving change to benefit our customers and the broader community.



Jacquie Thomson
Chief Executive Officer



The Annual Golf Classic was a huge success with more than 70 players participating



Caroline Wilson received the 2018 CEO Award for her tireless dedication and support to our customer Kai

Board of Directors

As at 30 June 2019



01



02



03



04



05



06



07



08



09



10



11

- 01. Justin Scanlan**
Chairman
- 02. Ken Nylander**
Deputy Chairman
- 03. Mino Intini**
Treasurer
- 04. Tony Adcock**
- 05. Daniel Butler**
- 06. Priya Cooper OAM**
- 07. Russell Hardwick**
- 08. Gary McGrath**
- 09. Melissa Northcott**
- 10. Robert Radley**
- 11. Dianne Ritson**

Directors who resigned during 2018/19: Janelle Marr and Roslyn Elmes

Meeting Attendance

		Eligible to attend
Tony Adcock	8	10
Daniel Butler ¹	4	11
Priya Cooper	9	11
Roslyn Elmes	6	8
Russell Hardwick	10	11
Mino Intini	10	11
Janelle Marr	1	3
Gary McGrath	7	11
Melissa Northcott	11	11
Ken Nylander	11	11
Robert Radley ²	5	11
Dianne Ritson	3	3
Justin Scanlan	10	11

Leave of absence

1. 5 March 2019 - 30 October 2019

2. 1 April 2019 - 30 June 2019

Executive Team

As at 30 June 2019



01



02



03

01. Jacquie Thomson
Chief Executive Officer

02. Darren Cutri
Chief Financial Officer
and Company Secretary

03. Bronwyn Fitzgerald
Chief Customer Officer

04. Tamsyn Howard
Chief People Officer

05. Melissa Boekhoorn
Executive General Manager
Therapy & Health Services

06. Sue Theunissen
Executive General Manager
Community Services

07. Steve Waddingham
Executive General Manager
Enterprise Services



04



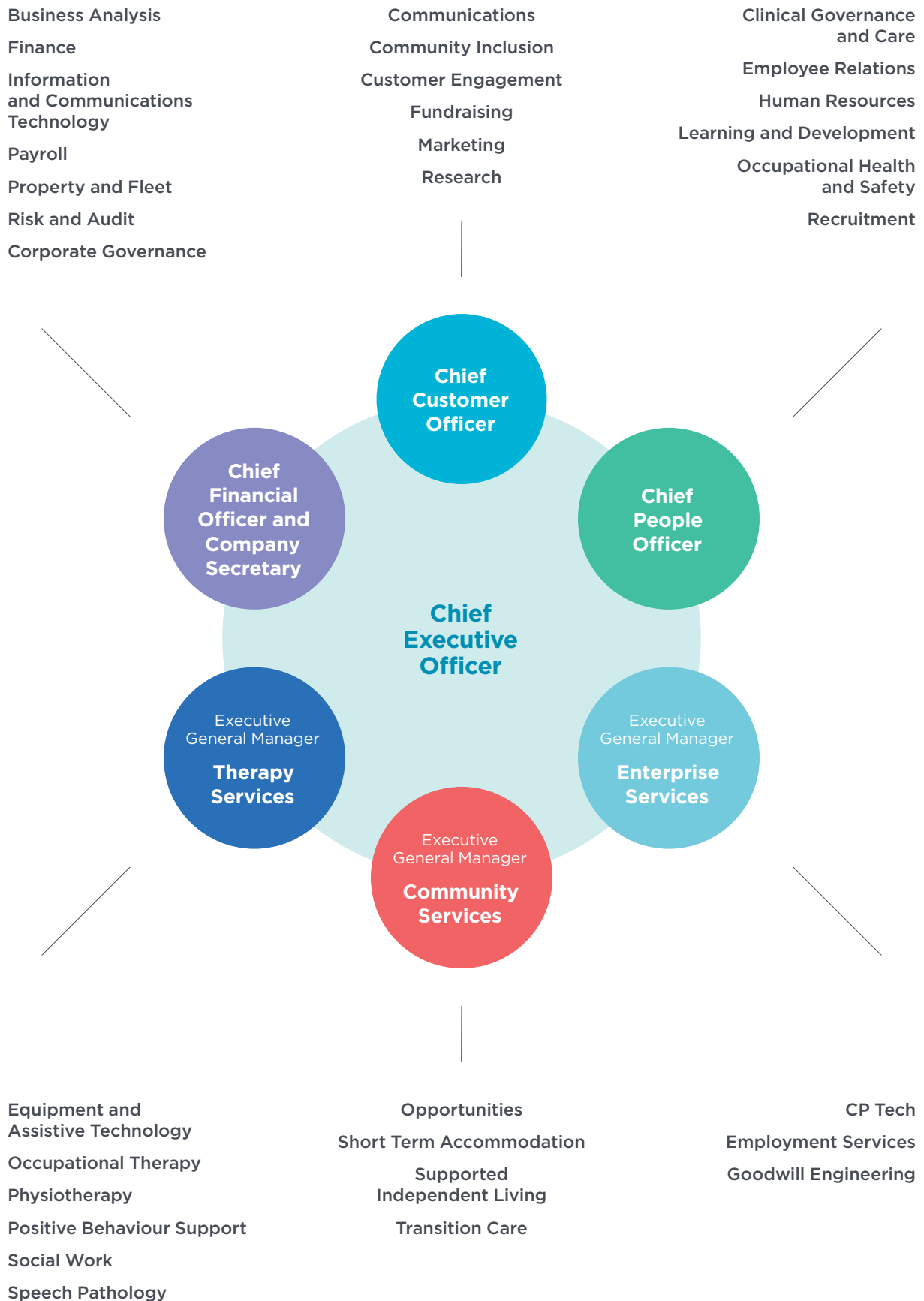
05



06



07



A young boy wearing a red helmet, a grey jacket over an orange shirt, and black pants is riding a purple bicycle. He is laughing joyfully. A man in a grey hoodie and dark pants is pushing the bicycle from behind. They are on a paved path in a park with many trees in the background. The image has a motion blur effect, suggesting speed.

**The year
at a glance**

2423

total customers as at
30th June 2019

2.3%

reduction of total
customers year on
year for 2018/19

1.3M

hours of supported
accommodation
provided

520

staff members have
been with us for
more than 5 years

225

new employees
joined us over the
course of 2018/19

<17

workers compensation
claims, 49% below the
industry average

\$74.54M


total income earned
during 2018/19

\$62.15M

grant funding
received during
2018/19

\$18.79M

cash and cash
equivalents on hand
at the end of 2018/19

A young boy with brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, is smiling broadly. Next to him, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue shirt, is also smiling. They are both looking towards the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor setting.

Jamie and Team Leader Elaine
having some fun kite building
at the Adventure Camp

6,228

nights of respite
accommodation for
368 people

Community Services

Over the last year, the Community Services team has continued to build strong foundations that allow us to support customers to achieve their individual aspirational goals.

During the year, an increasing number of customers became eligible for NDIS plans. While some began their second plan, a number will not begin the process until after 1 July 2019. We also undertook several service design projects that focused on what customers told us is important to them in contemporary services while retaining the core values that underpin traditional quality care. It has also been a busy year while employees and customers alike learn the new processes and language that accompany the NDIS implementation.

Our commitment to our employees this year has been guided by feedback received through the Employee Pulse Survey. Introducing the Strategic Roadmap and embedding our Ability Centre values and the associated work behaviours were priorities this year. Our leaders were proactive and imaginative in bringing the values to life for our support workers. As a result, we had a record number of nominations for both our Ability Centre employees' awards and finalists in the NDS Disability Support Awards. Training and preparations for the new CMS were extensive and this new system will enable us to better support customers with online access to vital care information.

Training and preparations for the new CMS were extensive and this new system will enable us to better support customers with online access to vital care information.



120,573

**hours of total
Community Inclusion
services were provided**

Quality services

The Quality Evaluation commissioned by Department of Communities, Disability Services, into Central and South Shared Living, was completed in April 2019. This was a comprehensive audit conducted against six national standards. It involved an evaluation team undertaking a review of our policies and procedures, documentation, systems and processes; and seeking feedback from management and staff, individuals, families and carers to assess compliance and how well individuals are supported to achieve their goals.

We successfully met all criteria with best practice identified in the area of goal planning. Service improvements identified are tracked as part of the continuous improvement processes with governance oversight from the newly established Quality Team.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework will be effective from July 2020 and in 2018 we began preparing for this change. A key focus is on the elimination of restrictive practices. We appointed a dedicated team to conduct an extensive review of the positive behaviour support needs and restrictive practices for our Supported Independent Living customers. This involved customer communication, visiting residential homes and talking with employees, customers and families about current practices as well as reviewing existing documentation.

We are now developing individual action plans and meeting with our customers and their families. This process will ensure each customer has the right type and amount of support they need and any restrictive practices are accurately documented and a plan towards elimination developed, in accordance with the new quality standards.

We also attended the Supported Independent Living Ability Round Table in May. This is a national benchmarking group set up to foster collaboration and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision in the sector. This group allows us to benchmark against services across Australia.

Supported Independent Living


Considerable resources have been dedicated to preparing for our customers to transition to the NDIS by 30 June 2020. The Community Services team and the Customer Engagement team work with customers, families and planners to ensure that our customers are well supported through the NDIS planning process.

The roll out of a new Visitors' Code of Conduct from August 2018 was well received by employees, our customers and their friends and families. In keeping with contemporary approaches to supported independent living and the NDIS Code of Conduct, this document supports our provision of quality care and supports.

A large light blue circle containing the number 148 in a bold, dark blue font. Below the number is a horizontal line, and below the line is the text 'people lived with us in 2018/19' in a smaller, dark blue font.

148

people lived with
us in 2018/19



Minderoo resident Eleana
loves volunteering at
Tuart Hill Primary School

64,531

**hours of Shared
Living Opportunities
provided**

We engaged Disability Services Consulting to help redesign our service delivery model to ensure Bradford Views is a sustainable and contemporary model, focused on quality care

We welcomed eight new customers throughout the year and were very pleased to re-purpose 108 Bradford Street from an office back to a home. This home has a vibrant group of four young residents who were extensively involved in furnishing and decorating their new home and are making the most of their new garden and outdoor area.

The garden has also become a focus for our Minderoo Rise customers. They have embraced the local community by establishing a new community garden that includes a 'little library.' The garden is a hidden gem in Coolbinia and our residents received donations of an insect house, gardening equipment and outdoor furniture from their neighbours. Bunnings donated paint and Foodbank also kindly donated plant seedlings. 'Veggie patch to plate' is the long term aim with a range of cooking activities to be added once the garden is established. A local artist has also been commissioned to paint a wall mural.

After the excitement of opening in December 2017, we continue to work with Bradford Views' customers, families and employees to ensure we are making the most of this fantastic complex. We engaged Disability Services Consulting to help redesign our service delivery model

to ensure Bradford Views is a sustainable and contemporary model, focused on quality care, which meets the criteria for our customers to access Supported Independent Living funding under NDIS. Our customers and families were an integral part of this consultation.

Support in the home and support in the community

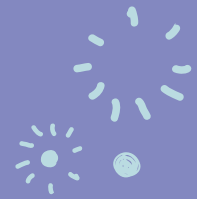
This year we amalgamated the leadership of our support in the home (self-directed services) and support in the community services (Opportunities Program). We were pleased to re-open our Panama and Townsend studios enabling us to develop an increased focus on the facilitation of life skills programs to meet our customers' capacity building goals. We were delighted that several of our customers nominated support workers in the National Disability Support Worker Awards held in May. Customers and nominees celebrated this great night together recognising the great work that support workers do in partnership with people with disability.

The Coolbinia Community Garden is a vibrant and imaginative space



Case Study

Twice the caring



Support in the Community

Support worker Julie Johnson is a great example of the difference our employees make in people's lives. Julie works with our customer Michelle and her twin boys Ranveer and Samardeep.

Michelle is a long term Ability Centre customer. She has cerebral palsy and uses an electric wheelchair at all times. She lives independently with her partner who works 12 hour shifts at Perth Airport.

Julie was assigned to support Michelle when she was pregnant with the twins in 2018. Julie has twin boys of her own so is a very knowledgeable support for Michelle.

According to Julie, "I first saw what community support workers did when my father was very ill. It made a real difference to our family and I decided this was something I could do to give back to the community.

"I started with just six hours a week and now I have seven customers I regularly look after. I just love the work and the customers."

Julie visits Michelle six times a week to assist her with caring for the boys and her personal care.

Before the twins could be discharged from King Edward Memorial Hospital, Julie had to complete a six hour shift at the hospital under the supervision of a midwife and a paediatric nurse to ensure her competency. This involved handling, bathing and feeding the boys as well as first aid resuscitation procedures for a newborn.

Julie's regular tasks include bathing and changing the boys, preparing meals and accompanying Michelle and the boys to the local shops or the park. Although the boys are now in day care, Michelle needs regular assistance when they are home given her partner's long working hours.

Julie's presence also means Michelle can rest if she needs to or have some quiet time when Julie takes the boys for a walk. She also attends medical and other appointments with Michelle.

Julie, Michelle and the twins out and about in the community



The artists amongst our customers were very pleased to make full use of the new art room at Bradford Views from March 2019. The studio has been purpose built for people living with disability and can be used for painting, mix-media art, clay making and ceramics.

We also established a partnership with not-for-profit arts organisation, DADAA. Specialist art workshops are now run twice a week for Ability Centre customers and people living with disability from the wider community.

Every week, 12 customers enjoy a painting class in Bassendean. Since they started this class they have been working to produce a range of pieces to be included in the Creative Connections Art and Poetry exhibition that will be held in August 2019.

Short Term Accommodation

We were pleased to support 51 customers through block funded respite care. NDIS treats respite care differently to the current block funded service and uses the term 'short term accommodation' with a general annual limit of 14 nights per year. It makes many more care options possible for our customers and this has prompted a review of how and where we provide services. We are underway with research to talk with current and prospective customers about how they would like to be supported and we will be redesigning our services to reflect this need.

Becoming eligible for NDIS Supported Independent Living funding also provides an exciting opportunity for a number of our adult customers who were accessing a high level of State funded respite care. They are now eligible for funding that will allow them to access permanent accommodation and location changes have been identified to support this customer choice.

Natasha has been creating some fabulous artwork at the DADAA workshops



Children's camps

An exciting initiative began in April with our first camps designed for children between the ages of 5 and 17. The themes have included adventure camp, bike camp, sport camp and a drama and art camp. The bike camp and therapy camp were a collaboration between Therapy Services and Community Services and offered the opportunity for children to learn to ride and also receive intensive blocks of therapy while on camp.

The camps were a great success and more are planned next year. One mother was overcome with emotion as she told us that her children were in their early teens and have never spent any time away from their parents. They had a fantastic time and Mum got a much needed break. Another young customer on the bike camp, made friends and enjoyed himself and just as importantly, no longer needed training wheels by the end of the camp.

Building communities

Supporting community inclusion and access for people of all abilities is a priority for us. Through our Community Inclusion Officer we are regularly invited to participate in community consultation programs to offer advice and insights. This year the WA Police completed their first ever Disability Access Inclusion Plan and Ability Centre customers were involved in the consultation sessions and workshops.

We are currently working with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority on its inclusive swing project. Ability Centre customers have been involved in the design process and we are looking forward to the mechanical testing stage.


We are also a member of the Access and Inclusion Committees for City of Perth, City of Belmont, City of Armadale, City of Rockingham, Perth Stadium, the Department of Communities and National Disability Services.

Physiotherapist Grace encourages Tom on the Bike Camp

51.4%

**of Self-directed
Services customers
are aged under 30**



A man with short brown hair, wearing a black wetsuit, is smiling and assisting another person in a swimming pool. He is holding the person's arm, and they are both in the water. The background is a bright blue pool with ripples.

Senior Physiotherapist Rowan uses hydrotherapy to help build Aaron's mobility and strength

2,291

customers received
Therapy Services
during 2018/19

Therapy Services

Over the last year, Therapy Services has focused on establishing strong work practices to ensure we continue to provide excellent customer service.

We take a holistic approach to supporting our customers to achieve their goals across our physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, social work, psychology, dietetics and positive behaviour support services.

We have also been working hard to ensure our customers and their families are well prepared for their NDIS planning meetings, facilitating a smooth transition from block to NDIS funding or transfer from WA NDIS to NDIS funding. We have noted a strong demand for individual services based in our regional hubs, positive behaviour support and hydrotherapy. We have also seen record growth in our Canning Vale and Rockingham offices.

As part of our commitment to streamlining our services for customers, in October 2018 the Central Therapy team moved to centralised scheduling. This is a significant change and means our customers now make their appointments with our Scheduling team rather than directly with therapists. Therapists are maximising therapy time in their face to face sessions and their administrative load is reduced. This approach will be adopted for all Therapy Services customers over the next year.

We have noted a strong demand for individual services based in our regional hubs, positive behaviour support and hydrotherapy. We have also seen record growth in our Canning Vale and Rockingham offices.



62,872

**hours of Therapy
Services provided**

Since the roll-out of the NDIS began, we have seen greater diversity in the people who are approaching us for services.

In late 2018, we conducted a comprehensive review of Therapy Services. More work is continuing on the services we offer our customers and where we are able to offer these. As a result of the review, we decided not to extend our contract with the Department of Communities to provide the Country Resource Program past 30 June 2019. While Ability Centre will no longer be offering these services in country regions, we remain committed to supporting families in regional areas from our Perth hubs by providing equipment and teletherapy services. We are also exploring partnership opportunities with other regional organisations.

Since the roll-out of the NDIS began, we have seen greater diversity in the people who are approaching us for services. There has been an increase in the types of disabilities, as well as an increase in the number of adults re-accessing services. To ensure we are meeting this demand, our leadership team attended relevant professional and clinical development particularly in the areas of mental health first aid, positive behaviour support, elimination of restrictive practices, dysphagia and mealtimes (including the sequential oral sensory approach), neuro-developmental treatment, yoga, literacy and autism.

We provide a multidisciplinary and holistic service to our customers.

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)

This year has seen a significant expansion of our PBS service across our organisation. We have developed our team of senior clinicians and PBS champions who work across all therapy disciplines to ensure PBS is embedded within our service delivery.

We have put this in place to be well prepared to meet the new NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework from July 2020.

Social Work

A major focus for our social workers has been to support the work of the PBS team. In addition, the social work team has had training in play therapy and is integrating this into their services, with great results, for our customers under 12 years.

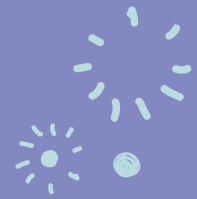
Speech Pathology

Our speech pathology services continue to be in high demand and we have focused on upskilling our team. Many therapists received training in the sequential oral sensory approach and have successfully implemented this in one to one customer sessions. We had high demand for our social skills and literacy groups, particularly for our young customers moving from primary to secondary school.

We continue to build our in-house expertise for key word signing and will now be able to offer basic workshops to our customers and their families. We have pursued professional development for the team working with customers with dysphagia and supporting their mealtimes.

Case Study

A spark of success



Early Intervention Service

We have long been a strong advocate for early intervention programs that support parents facing the unexpected challenges of a child born with a disability or developmental delay. A child's earliest years drive cognitive, social and physical growth and the first three years are critical for brain development.

This year we have been very pleased to partner with Tiny Sparks WA and broaden the reach of our early intervention programs by providing a Developmental Playgroup for its members.

Tiny Sparks WA is a volunteer run, not-for-profit that supports families across Western Australia who have high-risk pregnancy, infants requiring neonatal unit care and the associated childhood impacts.

The fortnightly Developmental Playgroup is based at our Central Hub in Coolbinia. The sessions are run by speech pathologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists to ensure that parents have access to a wide range of information and support.

The playgroup has become a safe space for parents to gain important peer to peer support as well as professional advice.

Our therapists advise on key ways a parent can monitor and support development through engaging and play based activities.

To date more than 20 babies aged six months to three years and their parents have attended the program. Over the course of the next 12 months, the Developmental Playgroup is looking to expand across the metropolitan area.

Community Inclusion Worker
Rodna enjoys some playtime
with Tiny Spark Jasper



Physiotherapy

Our Xhale weekly group exercise program for children with extra sensory needs is going from strength to strength. We have built the concept up with Xcelerate, our running program, and Xert for those wanting to develop their sports skills.

Water based activity remains popular and we offer this service at locations across the metropolitan region as well as onsite at Coolbinia. Our yoga groups continue to be well attended and we have been very pleased to work with our colleagues in Community Services to support their holiday camps. This year we have applied a curriculum approach to our group programs with attendees progressing to different levels as they build their skills.

Occupational Therapy

Professional development on the topics of sensory processing and regulation and autism has been a key priority for our therapists this year as we have increasing customer demand for these services. We have also noted greater interest in the hand writing and computer skills interventions we provide.

Functional assessments for our NDIS customers have also been requested this year and we produced a contemporary professional development schedule to support new therapists who join Ability Centre.

Senior Clinicians / Specialised Services

We have had another year of high demand for all our clinics as these services are unique and run by a very experienced team. Our combined clinic, run by senior physiotherapists and an orthotist, has been especially valued by customers who can have coordinated discussions about gait, spinal position and orthotics simultaneously.

Our gait analysis expertise to review walking patterns continues to be highly valued and supports surgery and botox decisions for our young customers at Perth Children's Hospital.

There is significant demand for expertise around feeding and mealtimes. We embrace a transdisciplinary approach and this past year, further developed our paediatric groups and feeding support specific to children with autism. We are thrilled to have added another dietician to our team to support our service.

IBIS

Over the past 12 months Ability Centre's In-home Baby Intervention Service has supported 91 children aged 0-2 years, across the Perth metropolitan area.

The service sees therapists travel to a family's home to provide a range of therapy services. The service not only focuses on the child but also gives parents and carers the skills and information to understand the developmental needs of their child.

Of the 91 children who received the service, 37 have now moved on from the program. A third of these children made significant progress resulting in age appropriate development, meaning no further therapy input was required. The remaining children were identified as having a disability and were supported to transfer into Disability Services or access the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

IBIS is an important service that provides excellent outcomes for the children and families it supports, with 100% of families accessing the services saying they would recommend IBIS to others.


The current Telethon funding for this service finishes 30 June 2020. Ability Centre is grateful for Telethon's support in establishing this valued service and we are committed to continuing to provide this service.



Physiotherapist Jessica delivers vital in-home support to baby Zoya



Brad confidently manoeuvres around the obstacles at the Xhale group



Goodwill Engineering supported employee Chris works on the finishing touches of a water tank ladder

78

individuals provided with
supported employment
opportunities

Enterprise Services

Our Enterprise Services team was newly formed this year combining the established business units of Goodwill Engineering, CP Tech and Employment Services.

The alignment of these services in one group places us in a strong position to make the most of commercial opportunities available to us.

Goodwill Engineering

Developing the capability of people living with disability is important to everyone at Ability Centre. Nowhere is this more true than at Goodwill Engineering (GWE) where we had another very positive year supporting 78 employees to achieve their life goals.

Our supported employees have an annual discussion to outline their career and personal goals and we help them to make this a reality. We have two people dedicated to meet with each employee regularly and check on their progress.

Each supported employee has identified work goals that vary depending on their individual skill sets and personal capabilities. We are always looking for and exploring ways for each person to be upskilled and given the full opportunity to reach their potential.

GWE takes a collaborative approach involving production and services staff to discuss ways of maximising our workforce strengths. Staff regularly identify employees who are ready for more training and to

We are always looking for and exploring ways for each person to be upskilled and given the full opportunity to reach their potential.



58,088

**hours of Supported
Employment services
were provided**

This year, 10 employees marked long term service ranging from 10 to an amazing 45 years.

apply new skills. As an example, we now have employees who have been trained to operate a machine that drills holes into a metal product. This requires precision to make sure the first hole is correct and accurate. Failure can result in wastage of material and product at GWE's cost. Our employees pride themselves in delivering a high quality product with this process.

GWE has over 105 different tasks required to make over 100 products and we have trained and upskilled all employees in the areas of stores, press, welding bay, packaging and wire. This has meant over 250 training plans being completed in the last year.

This year, 10 employees marked long term service ranging from 10 to an amazing 45 years. GWE is more than a workplace and our events with family and friends were again joyous occasions. We had over 100 employees and their families attend the dinner dance at Burswood on Swan in August 2018 for a fantastic night of dinner and dancing. In April we had our annual picnic in Whiteman Park where employees and family were able to relax, have lunch and play outdoor games.

We enjoy successful and long term relationships with our business customers and partners. Our top customers remaining committed to GWE include Bunnings, BGC, Pioneer Water Tanks, Johns Building Supplies and Beri Distributors.

We also had some new laser cutting customers such as Belladonna Steel Fabrication. In addition, we have been working closely with CP Tech to laser cut all their brackets used to mount base plates to wheelchairs.

GWE is very flexible and we work with a range of organisations with particular requirements. We developed a relationship with the maintenance team at RAC Perth Arena and have supported them with a range of smaller pieces of work. Agricultural company, Primary Sales, asked for help in fabricating ware strips used in seeding. This work requires three to four supported employees every day and provides upskilling opportunities as the employees take on new tasks such as grinding, tapping, drilling and quality checks.

We attended the WA Disability Enterprises Expo in October and this was a great opportunity to showcase what we can achieve and to see what others are doing in our sector.

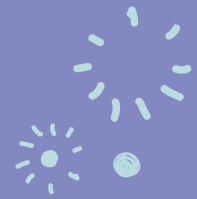
GWE and Employment Services worked together and attended the Abilities Expo. This was an opportunity to meet with a wide range of school leavers and their families and explore the many employment options Ability Centre can offer.

For the first time we were a sponsor for the Housing Industry Association Industry Awards and we received great feedback on our video that reminded people that buying our products is more than a financial contribution.

It is very important that we maintain our ISO 9001 accreditation for new and ongoing business and this year we transitioned to the 2015 version. We again passed with flying colours with no non-conformances noted. We also undergo a yearly audit from SAI Global who audit us against the Disability Standards. The feedback from this audit was excellent and reinforced that GWE always ensures we abide by the six standards in anything we do.

Case Study

Joey switches on for success



Assistive Technology

Joey had his first appointment with our Assistive Technology (AT) team in 2004 at the age of four. From that first meeting it became clear that technology would become the most reliable way for Joey to communicate with the world. Over the next 15 years, a strong bond developed between Joey and the AT team that has empowered him to achieve some amazing things.

After mastering the use of switch technology, in 2007 he began using a simple Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device. With the support of the AT team he now uses one of the most complex AAC devices available.

Joey is now stepping out of his comfort zone, with the support of AT team and his brother Jojo, he presented at the biennial conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) on the Gold Coast.

Joey spoke at two different sessions. At the first he captivated a packed room, speaking about his journey with technology, particularly how technology has enhanced his independence. After his presentation, he masterfully responded to questions from the audience.

As a result of Joey's impressive presentation at ISAAC, he was invited to share his story with a parent group at the Variety Motor Mouth camp for children who use AAC devices. He has also been invited to be a keynote speaker at the next AGOSCI conference to be held in Perth in 2019, where he will share more of his story and his ideas for technology.

Switch technology has boosted Joey's ability to communicate confidently



CP Tech

CP Tech's expertise in all aspects of equipment and technology for people living with disability was again highly valued this year. An increasing number of customers moving to NDIS packages has seen strong demand for our clinics and equipment services. This year we had a 10% increase in referrals for our services and we also saw an increasing number of customers with spinal cord injuries.

We continued as the sole Australian distributor for Wizzybug children's wheelchair and added the Dreamline seating system, the OBI feeder and the Safety Sleeper as products we have the sole WA distribution rights for. This year we also added the Spex seating system to our product range.

Recreational equipment sales are also an important part of our service. For many customers, getting out and about and having the independence to enjoy life with friends and family is a high priority. Our most popular items continue to be beach wheelchairs and bikes.

We are again thankful for the Community Aids and Equipment Program (CAEP) run by the Department of Communities, which provides funding for the purchase of equipment that support customers to access their homes. Through CP Tech, CAEP delivered \$2.95 million of equipment to customers this year.

There was strong demand for our sleep, seating, communication and recreation clinics which saw a record high for our clinic income.

Developing assistive technology solutions for our customers continues to be a growing area of our business. A great example of this is the use of eye gaze technology for our customer Bill. Bill is an avid gamer and we have built a prototype for him to access his computer with his eyes while lying in bed. Although Bill can use a touch pad and micro joystick, his hands fatigue easily and he has limited use of his thumb. Trials so far with eye gaze technology are giving Bill many more hours of enjoyment with his custom Playstation controller.

CP Tech products and modifications are defined as Class 1 Medical Devices and, as a registered Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) manufacturer, we must ensure conformance to the TGA's 14 essential principles. Our ISO 9001 accreditation provides a structured approach to ensure this happens and our customers are provided with high quality solutions.

Our accreditation applies to all our wheelchair modifications, splints, foam cutting and any other structures we develop that could have an impact on the body. The standards apply to training and processes around risk analysis, trialling equipment and



13,135

hours of CP Tech therapy
services delivered during
2018/19

how we handover to customers. We were very pleased that we again successfully passed another audit by SAI Global across our clinic and workshop operations.

Employment Services

Finding meaningful work for people living with disability is at the heart of our employment services and after another year of solid growth, the team is proud of the difference regular work has made to the lives of 207 people this year.

Ability Centre is an accredited Disability Employment Service (DES) provider and we have consistently held 4 and 5 star performance ratings since the rating system was introduced. On 1 July 2018, the sector was deregulated and all providers returned to a zero base Star Rating. Although we have had an initial report for the period ending March 2019, it is too soon to comment on our performance. A more complete report is due to be released in August 2019.

A feature of the deregulated environment is the need to proactively market our services to job seekers. Over the last year we have run successful social media campaigns and attended a number of exhibitions and information forums.

In 2018/19, we added sites in Canning Vale and Mandurah to our portfolio. We now provide services across the Perth metropolitan area which is making it easier to link job seekers with employment opportunities closer to home. Unfortunately, anticipated growth in the Mandurah area did not come to fruition. Due to a number of operational factors but largely due to the lack of demand for services, in March we returned our contract for the Dale Employment Service Area to Department for Social Services.

Supporting people to find jobs or work experience requires a partnership approach. This year we were very pleased to add a Relationships Officer to our team who has been able to focus on developing strong working relationships with the business sector and to promoting the benefits of workplace diversity. This has allowed us to create a wider range of employment opportunities for job seekers.

Palmer can now enjoy the beach with his family thanks to his new beach wheelchair



207

**people were supported to
find work placements**

Over the last year, we have successfully partnered with the following organisations:

- Mills Resources
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy
- Michael Page
- Compass Group
- Lendlease
- Perth Racing
- Beyond Rest
- Brightwater Linen
- Aquinas College
- Mandoon Estate
- Australian Container Unloading group
- PlusLife
- Department of Water and Environment Regulation (DWER)
- Rural Training Australia
- Pan Pacific Hotel Perth
- Myer Perth City
- Scene to Believe
- Crown
- Black Swan Health
- Woodlands Childcare Centre

A large number of these employers have not previously engaged people with disability and we are delighted with the trust they have placed in us. Through these organisations, our job seekers have secured roles such as Administration Assistants, Customer Service Attendants, Food and Beverage Attendants, Kitchen Hands, General Hands, Payroll Officer, Container Crew member and Retail Assistant.

In early May, we were very pleased to invite our employers to an inaugural networking event. It was an opportunity to thank them

for their ongoing trust and support and also hear from customers who are embracing life thanks to steady employment.

In November 2018, we partnered with the City of Stirling as part of AccessAbility Day. We were able to offer two jobseekers, Daphne and Luke, the opportunity to undertake a week's work experience in the Human Resources and Parks and Gardens teams respectively.

AccessAbility Day is an Australian Government initiative which provides an opportunity for employers to connect with jobseekers with disability through their DES provider and enables the jobseeker to sample a particular job or work role. For the employer, it's an introduction to exploring the concept of employing a jobseeker with disability.

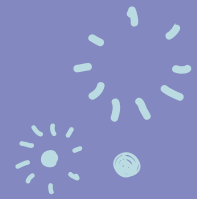
The initiative was a great success and we hope to partner with more organisations in the coming year. The skills and experience that Daphne and Luke gained through this initiative enabled them to successfully secure similar roles within other government departments.

41

**the average age
of our Employment
Services customers**

Case Study

Service with a smile



Employment Services

Finding that job when you have a disability, health condition or injury is a daunting task when you don't have the right support.

Liddy who has a brain injury was looking for the support to build his skills to find a job after completing a Certificate II in Hospitality. In 2011 Liddy was referred to our Employment Services team through Centrelink to help him reach his ultimate goal of finding paid employment.

The team worked with Liddy to understand his strengths and weaknesses in the workplace so he could build the skills he needed to be successful. The team then worked with him to find a job placement at McDonalds that suited his skills and passions.

In 2013 that work placement turned into a paid position in customer service. Over the next six years, Employment Services and McDonalds worked with Liddy to develop his skills and confidence with customers.

Liddy currently has a front of house role that assists customers place their orders on the self-service touch screens. To date, Liddy has received five customer service badges which are awarded to McDonald's staff members for showing excellence in their jobs and also for customer feedback.

The success of work placements like Liddy's is due to the strong partnerships that are developed between the participant, their employer and the Employment Services

team. This partnership ensures that challenges are resolved quickly so that everyone can work together to achieve a participant's employment goals.

Liddy said, "I love my job, customers love the job I'm doing and I always make them happy. I've got lots of customer service badges, they're important to me, they show what a good job I'm doing. It makes me shine all the time."

Liddy gets the best support from his manager Angela and Employment Coordinator Simone





Physiotherapist Rebecca
makes Minnie's therapy
sessions fun

11%

increase in our social
media followers

Customer, Community and Strategy

In February 2019 the new Customer Community and Strategy team was formed under the leadership of our Chief Customer Officer. The team has a core focus on attracting and retaining customers by ensuring we are offering contemporary services.

We have been working to set up a representative Customer Advisory Council to help inform the development and design of our services from a customer's perspective. We have seven customers who have nominated to meet every two months for an initial period of two years and we expect the first meeting will be held in September 2019.

This year was also the beginning of our successful partnership with Kalparrin. Kalparrin is a not-for-profit organisation based at Perth Children's Hospital supporting families caring for children with additional needs. There are strong synergies between the two organisations and we have been very pleased to provide information and resources to Kalparrin families and look forward to continuing our relationship over the next year.

Marketing has also been an increased focus for us as we look to ensure prospective customers can easily find out about our products and services. We have greatly increased our use of paid and earned social media and built our followers by over 11%. An outdoor media campaign profiling our customers and families was also very well received.

We have been working to set up a representative Customer Advisory Council to help inform the development and design of our services from a customer's perspective.

16,937

**phone calls taken
by the Customer
Contact team**

Over the last year we continued to implement a centralised administration model for our customers. Combined with a one stop shop approach to customer service, we believe this is reducing the administrative load for our operational staff and therapists and increasing their face to face time with customers.

Central to this is the implementation of our CMS and centralised scheduling processes which are both scheduled for implementation in the second half of 2019. The complexity of changing the way we work across Ability Centre led to a delay in the CMS until 1 July 2019 to ensure we had sufficient time to re-cast our business processes and provide face to face training for over 750 employees.

Until the NDIS roll out is complete in 2020, we will continue to support customers from a range of funding models. We will also continue to provide fee for service options. This presents operational challenges as we manage multiple systems and funding requirements. As at 30 June 2019, 32% of Ability Centre customers had NDIS plans.

Our focus for the year ahead is to provide information and support to assist our customers to make the most of their new NDIS plans.

Customer experience

We aim to be consistent and exceptional with our customer service and our Customer Experience Team is the first point of contact for our customers.

Over the last year, the team supported more than 400 WA NDIS customers to transfer to the NDIS. In addition to individual consultations, we developed a number of information resources and co-hosted community information sessions to assist in the process.

The Customer Experience Team has been extensively involved in the Technology Project and is key to the successful implementation of the CMS. As part of this we have streamlined our processes, reduced duplication and made it easier for people to access our services and make informed choices about our services. We have moved to online information where possible and re-designed and simplified our Service Agreement.

To support the continued roll out, we have proactively increased our NDIS skills and expertise across the team and our Engagement Coordinators are now an invaluable resource for customers preparing for and navigating their NDIS plans. We have also aligned team responsibilities with our operational service regions to further ensure consistency for our customers.

Regular customer check-ins are proving invaluable for direct feedback on our services and to ensure customers are making the most of their funding package to achieve their goals. Feedback used to support continuous improvement, understand our customers' needs aspirations and build strong relationships that support retention.

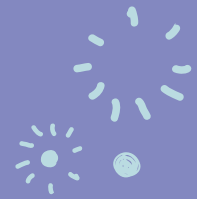


32%

of Ability Centre
customers had
NDIS plans as at
30 June 2019

Case Study

Navigating the NDIS



Support Coordination

Support Coordinator Carrie Kane has been invaluable in assisting brothers Allan, Mark and Ralph to continue living together independently and re-engage in community life.

Twins Alan and Mark and their brother Ralph live independently in a house they built and own. Allan and Mark have cerebral palsy and Ralph has Down syndrome.

Like too many people of their age, Allan and Mark did not have any interaction with a disability provider or funding after they turned 16. Both were considered to be sufficiently physically able to 'fend for themselves' and were employed for many years.

Five years ago, Mark was admitted to hospital for a hip replacement. As a result of this, he was referred to Ability Centre for rehabilitation therapy. It was at this time that Ability Centre got to know the family and believed there were considerable supports available that would make a real difference to their quality of life.

Carrie began supporting the family in February 2016 just after they received their first NDIS plans. Carrie's first step was to get to know them, learn their story, understand their goals and how they wanted to live.

With time, regular visits and following through on what was promised, Carrie helped them understand their plan, what each funding category was for and took time to understand how they wanted to use it. At their request, Carrie was nominated as their point of contact with NDIS due to her ability to explain in simple terms and get supports in place.

Carrie has also played a critical role in supporting the brothers to appeal against reduced funding in their NDIS plans. Her work has meant they now have the right supports in place and increased support funding. In short, Carrie met three very at risk adults and by getting to know them, building their trust and advocating for the funding and supports they needed, the brothers are now healthier, re-engaged in the community and still living together in their own home.

Carrie enjoys time with Alan, Mark and Ralph at their home



Support Coordination is an NDIS funded service that is designed to support participants to make the most of their NDIS funds. We have seen increasing requests for support co-ordination services to help build customer capacity and support people to become self-advocates.

To better understand our customer experience, we have introduced a Net Promoter Score survey for our NDIS customers. The voluntary survey collects feedback directly after a customer has been engaged by their Customer Engagement Coordinator. Since its launch in October 2018, we have sent 416 surveys with 135 customer responses. This is a response rate of 32.7% and we have been rated highly in the areas of knowledge, service and communication.

Fundraising

Our fundraising and philanthropy initiatives continue to focus on supporting high quality programs and best practice services not covered by NDIS.

We were very pleased to welcome more than 70 donors and corporate sponsors in late March when our Chairman and PwC hosted a donor and stakeholder event for Ability Centre. It was a wonderful opportunity for this group to meet our new CEO and we are planning more opportunities for dialogue.

Our community fundraisers continue to provide much needed support for equipment and services for our customers.

South West Riders Social Club hosted a 'dice ride' along the South West coast in March, raising money to provide activities and equipment for customers attending our Adventure Camps. New in 2019, these camps provide children with physical disabilities an opportunity to spend nights away from home with their peers.

**Our Chairman Justin Scanlan
addressing donors and sponsors
at the PwC hosted event**



Long term customer Daniel Pavlovic donates 10% of profits from his t-shirt business Daniel(ink) each year. In 2018, he presented a cheque for \$1,000 with the funds being used to purchase adaptive art supplies for our community art classes. This was a wonderful way for Daniel to share his passion for art.

The Old Rams continue to be generous supporters and their 2018 luncheon raised over \$18,000. This was used to fund a portable 'magic carpet' that is used for sensory therapy sessions at our North and South Hubs.

In its 31st year, the Ability Centre Golf Classic continued to be our major fund-raising event, bringing together Perth's corporate community in support of children and adults living with disability.

In 2018 we raised \$62,000, which funded stage 2 of the 3D Motion Analysis Lab. This is an important biomechanical modelling tool that assists with active monitoring of changes in walking for children with cerebral palsy. The funds allowed us to purchase infrared cameras and digital

technology which means therapists can now use video to capture and assess complex movements which cannot be seen by the naked eye. We are partnering with Curtin University and Perth Children's Hospital on this project.

We are very grateful to our golf sponsors – Scarboro Toyota, Credentia Construction, Kevrek, Trevor's Carpets, Margaria Cleaning, Willis CKA, Clarity Communications and Gage Roads.

We would also like to acknowledge the following community groups for their generous support in 2018/2019:

- Combined Charities Association
- Cottesloe Golf Club Bridge Group
- Point Walter Ladies Golf Club
- Yokine Bowling Club
- Lions Club of Kalamunda
- Lions Club of Bulls Creek
- Lions Club of Gingin/Chittering

Players at our Annual Golf Classic raised \$62,000 towards our 3D Motion Analysis Lab

\$62,000

**was raised at the
Golf Classic**



Research

Research at Ability Centre improves quality of life and services for people with disabilities and ensures that our services are rapidly responsive to the best available evidence. Our customers inform research priorities and directions for all projects. Research also gives employees the opportunity to build their capabilities and seek higher qualifications.

In 2018/19, we had 11 employees working on 17 research projects and of these, four therapists are working towards their PhD degrees. All projects are conducted in partnership with other research organisations, such as Telethon Kids Institute, Perth Children's Hospital and Curtin University. In May 2019, four of our researchers had a platform and posters published at the European Academy of Childhood Disability conference in Paris.

Tackling chest infections in cerebral palsy

Every year, one in eight young people with cerebral palsy (CP) has at least one respiratory hospital admission. Two in five of these will be re-admitted the following year. After doing a five year prospective study, a research team from Ability Centre, Perth Children's Hospital and Telethon Kids Institute has identified the risk factors for serious respiratory disease in CP. This research has been published and presented worldwide. In the coming year, the research team will continue to investigate other ways of managing respiratory problems.

Jumping for fun and function

Children with physical disabilities need access to fun activities that give them plenty of exercise. Bungee trampolining may be one option. CP Tech engineers designed an adapted bungee trampoline for children with physical disabilities. Stretchable bungee ropes attached to a belt around the child's waist provide standing support and facilitate jumping. Four children with CP (one of whom couldn't stand by himself) participated in a training program twice a week on the bungee tramp. All children who participated had a great time and gained strength in their legs.



\$270,840

**of research funding
grants were received
during 2017/18**

What happens when children are trained to run better?

Ability Centre's Xcelerate program was developed in 2014 and has been popular for the past five years. It started with a research study and the research hasn't stopped. The first research cohort went to Curtin University to be assessed before and after the training program. The children had reflective marks attached to their hip, knee, and ankle joints, and were filmed in three dimensions while running. During 2018/19, Senior Physiotherapist Annie Chappell has been analysing and publishing results that show the kinds of changes that occur in the way that children run as a result of the Xcelerate program.

Physical activity and nutrition for adolescents with cerebral palsy

There are guidelines for adolescents regarding how much activity they should be doing, what they should be eating and what their body weight should be. The research team wanted to find out whether adolescents with CP met these guidelines. We asked 12 adolescents with CP to wear an activity monitor, keep a food diary and undergo a full body scan to measure their total body fat percentage. We were pleased to find that most of them did enough moderate-vigorous physical activity to meet Australian guidelines. However, they also spent more sedentary time than they should. The team also found that you don't need to do a full body scan to get total body fat percentage however, Body Mass Index (BMI) should not be used.

Alessia cheers on Sam in their team challenge at the Xhale program





Physiotherapist Luke, Speech
Pathologist Patricia and
Occupational Therapist Jacqui

986

employees as at
30 June 2019

People, Culture and Quality

Internal customer service was the year's theme for People, Culture and Quality. We had a focus on understanding how and where to add value so that processes and systems that make life easier for our employees and leaders were upgraded and streamlined. This in turn allowed our operational teams to better support our customers.

We continued with the rollout of our organisational values and aligned all our 2018 Employee Awards categories to reflect them. A move to a shorter online process resulted in a record number of nominations across all categories with a wealth of examples of employees living our values.

The values have been embedded in our induction and onboarding processes and each Executive member has given a personal account of a value, its meaning and importance within the weekly employee newsletter. Our values are also central to a new performance appraisal system we will be introducing across the organisation in the next year.

Recruitment

It was another busy year for our recruitment team with a total of 222 people joining our organisation. Our new online portal and onboarding centre has streamlined our process and reduced the manual data entry load for our recruiters.

Our new online portal and onboarding centre has streamlined our process and reduced the manual data entry load for our recruiters.



225

**new employees
joined us over
2018/19**

We are 40% below the industry average for the number of workers' compensation claims received compared to similar sized organisations.

While our total number of employees has increased since last year, this is largely due to a focus on reducing our reliance on casual employees and moving people to permanent contracts. This provides more employment security and more staffing consistency for our customers.

This year we hosted two very successful information evenings for people interested in finding out about a career as a support worker. With presentations from senior leaders and current support workers, this has proved very useful in ensuring our applicants are well informed about the role before progressing to the formal recruitment stage.

Enterprise Bargaining

In 2018, Ability Centre conducted negotiations for replacement enterprise agreements for three workforce segments – our nursing employees; Therapy, Professional and Administrative Employees; and our Care Support and Trades Employees. Negotiations were successfully concluded for all three workforce segments. Fair Work Australia approved all three agreements and they have all been successfully implemented.

Due to the uncertainty regarding NDIS, short term agreements were negotiated to allow the organisation an opportunity to fully understand the impact and potential

changes required. As a consequence, replacement agreements will need to be negotiated during the next financial year.

Occupational Health and Safety

Our occupational health and safety data continues to track well against industry standards.

We are 40% below the industry average for the number of workers' compensation claims received compared to similar sized organisations. In addition, our workers' compensation premium rate is below the industry average being 74.7% below for the minimum payable and 39.25% below the maximum payable.

Reported employee incidents for 2018/19 were 10% down on the previous year and our Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate is currently 9.77 compared to an industry average of 19.55.

Learning and Development

We conducted a review of best practice nationally and internationally and are in the process of implementing a number of recommendations. We have increased the online component of our induction which allows face to face training to provide more focus on key areas and give opportunities for embedding learning.

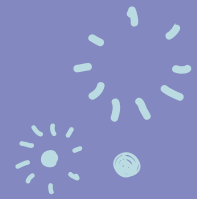
We now have three dedicated workplace assessors who coach our support workers on the job which has reduced our reliance on co-workers to act as trainers. Our focus for the next 12 months will be on implementing an online learning management system which will expand the range of courses delivered to employees.

Quality and Clinical Governance

We are committed to providing exceptional services for people living with disability. To ensure we can meet this commitment, we introduced a new Quality Framework in February 2019 which addresses our legislative requirements and national standards as well as our Strategic Plan.

Case Study

More than just a job



People and Culture

When David Bartlett joined Ability Centre in 2007, he never thought he would be working here more than a decade later.

Inspired by his father's work in disability services, David took on his first role as a casual Residential Care Worker while still working as a chef. David describes the 'soulful' work as a care worker and the support he was able to provide to customers was the catalyst for his career change.

Over the course of the next decade, David worked in a number of roles including as a Team Leader, Scheduler and Coordinator. During that time David has had a number of memorable moments seeing customers achieve their goals and grow not only in confidence but as people.

The story that stands out for David is supporting Ross to achieve his goal of returning to Ireland to see his family and friends. This was special as Ross had been very unwell for a long time before his holiday and to support him to achieve this was a real privilege for David. It's that commitment and passion for caring that saw David win the Executive Award in 2017.

In 2018 he stepped in to the role of Project Coordinator as the key liaison point for the Community Services team on the Technology Project. In this role he used his knowledge of working in the homes and with customers to ensure the CMS was fit for purpose.

David said, "What I love about Ability Centre, is working with like-minded people who just want the best for our customers regardless of department or role. We have the ability to make a real difference in someone's life – that's pretty special."

David is now working within the Learning and Development team, he's looking forward to learning and sharing his knowledge of Community Services with his new team.

David has been making a difference at Ability Centre for more than 10 years



Our new Quality and Clinical Governance team has prioritised a review of all policies and procedures to simplify and unify how we work, with a focus on the customer and incorporating all legislative requirements. This also includes an improved management process for all complaints and customer feedback ensuring continuous improvement across the organisation.

A new online incident reporting structure is being implemented that integrates a single database register for stronger oversight and accountability.

Preparations for the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework that will be in place from July 2020 are progressing. Considerable work has been completed in the area of positive behaviour support and the reduction of restrictive practices for our customers.

Listening to our people

We have continued seeking formal feedback from our workforce. Following our 2018 Employee Pulse Survey, in February 2019 we sent a full Employee Survey to all employees. Almost 50% of employees took part in the survey and our overall Employee Engagement Index increased by 12%.

The survey results were very encouraging. When we compared the results from the benchmark questions from our 2018 survey, we improved in every one. However, there are still clear areas for improvement.

We received the most favourable scores for the questions: Overall, I am satisfied with my job; Most challenges I face at work are good learning experiences and I believe that my own success is important to the success of Ability Centre. Where we need to do better is in looking at opportunities for employee development and career progression.

In December 2018, we introduced an Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) survey. This email survey is sent to one third of our employees each month, resulting in each employee receiving a survey email approximately once every three months. The survey asks the question, 'Would you recommend Ability Centre as a place to work to your family and friends?' Employees choose a response from 1-10, indicating their likelihood to recommend Ability Centre as a place to work to their friends and family. To date results have been encouraging with a response rate of 32% and an eNPS score of +37.5 as at 30 June 2019 from a possible range of -100 to +100.



12%

increase in our
overall Employee
Engagement Index

NDIS and Health Gaps Project

In January 2019, Ability Centre received a Department of Communities grant to research the gaps between the NDIS and the Western Australian health system.

The project team looked at the current clinical needs of our customers and the gaps they face when transitioning to the NDIS. We sought to understand what nursing tasks our customers need and whether the tasks are covered by the NDIS. If the tasks were covered by the NDIS, then the project team researched how many hours customers would need to ask for over the course of each NDIS plan. Any nursing tasks that were not covered under the NDIS were documented and alternative access methods were researched.

Our research also considered the success rate of national and international checklists. Pre-existing comprehensive checklists were reviewed and adapted for the specific needs of Ability Centre customers.

Research results and recommendations are due in October 2019. These will include an electronic checklist with recommendations for customer's nursing hour needs, a recommendation of the minimum recommended nursing hours for customers with complex needs, risk analysis and future project requirements.

Workforce Development Project

In March 2019, Ability Centre received Department of Communities funding to research, analyse and develop a best practice framework for the orientation and induction of new Ability Centre employees.

The project had two key aims. The first was to identify and map the core skills, competencies and knowledge required during orientation and induction for all employees. The second aim was to recommend a best practice approach for a collaborative training and development environment.

Following an internal stakeholder review, the project team researched other Western Australia not-for-profit approaches to employee training and looked at national and international best practice in the disability sector.

A best practice approach was then applied to customer related needs. Mapping customer related needs against the identified skills of our workforce is instrumental in determining the volume and skill mix of training required.

The project will conclude in September 2019. The final report will include recommendations such as recognition of prior learning so that employees can complete their orientation and induction sooner and a series of matrices that demonstrate the essential orientation and induction program employees must receive regardless of their role.

Customer Experience Coordinator
Justin is passionate about getting the
best outcomes for our customers



Cassie and Peter have the
important role of looking
after our payroll



Corporate Services

Another busy year for our operational teams has flowed to a busy year for our Corporate Services team.

Overall, we have seen increased commercial understanding of our business by our operational leaders. We have continued to support their decision making with robust reporting and data. The use of dashboards to simplify performance metrics on a real time basis has continued from last year and this has helped all areas of our organisation consistently understand their contributions and areas for improvement.

In addition to daily tracking, this year we introduced a three year forecasting model to provide more transparency and insight for our organisation and other stakeholders. This is an important step to confirm the long term health of our organisation and our commitment to growth.

Following a Board recommendation in 2018, we also introduced an internal audit process with the finance component successfully completed in January 2019. An NDIS Administration audit was completed in May and a review of People and Culture has begun. This is a significant piece of work that will be ongoing across all aspects of Ability Centre.

Preparations for a new donor management system also required a considerable input from the Finance team and it will be a significant achievement to align all our donations within one system.

This year we introduced a three year forecasting model to provide more transparency and insight for our organisation and other stakeholders.



484

mobile devices were rolled out to employees during 2018/19

The Finance team has also seen an increase in customer queries and interactions as customers move to the NDIS. Work continues on providing clearer financial statements for our customers and being able to provide sound guidance on how we obtain and produce financial information for them.

Our Information Communications Technology team continued its work to transform our existing systems to provide modern operating platforms. This is essential to ensure we can support a mobile workforce that delivers services close to where our customers live and participate in their community.

By far the largest project this year was preparing for the new CMS database. This was a landmark project to ensure we have one source of truth for customer data to ensure accurate financial reporting and service delivery. Along with a dedicated project team, all aspects of the organisation have been involved in updating business processes, data cleansing and preparation, user acceptance testing and training.

The new CMS also meant an increase in the use of mobile devices by our Therapy Services and Community Services employees. The team worked to deploy the software and devices and now manages nearly 500 devices which is a substantial increase from previous years.

Introducing a single sign on for our HR system, a significant upgrade to our finance system and adopting a new expense management system were also important initiatives this year.

Quietly in the background, our Property team was kept busy with ongoing maintenance and facilities management for our 33 commercial and residential buildings and their associated gardens. The team also kept 117 vehicles on the road to ensure our Community Services customers are transported safely and on time and our employees punctual for all their appointments.

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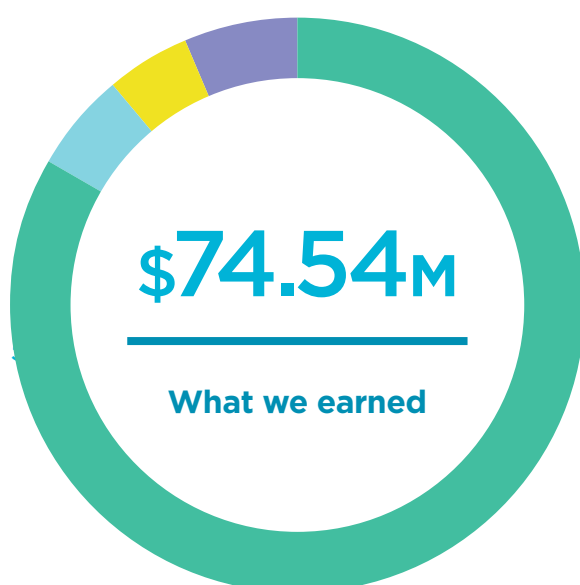
Employees received ongoing support and training to familiarise themselves with the CMS



Thanks to his modified trike, Mason
now has the freedom to be active and
spend time outdoors with his family



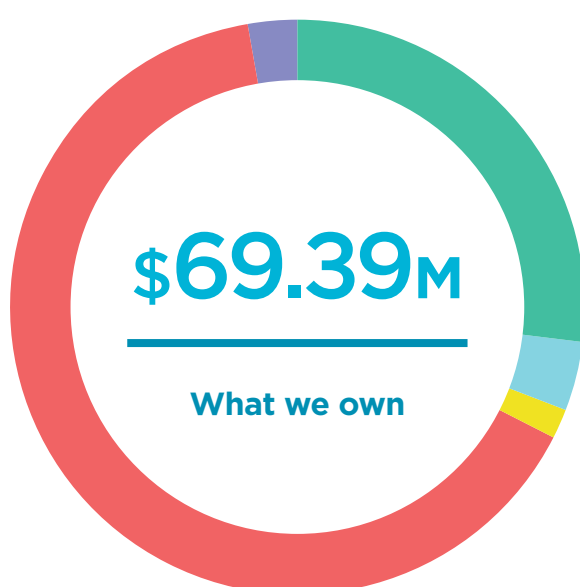
Financial Summary



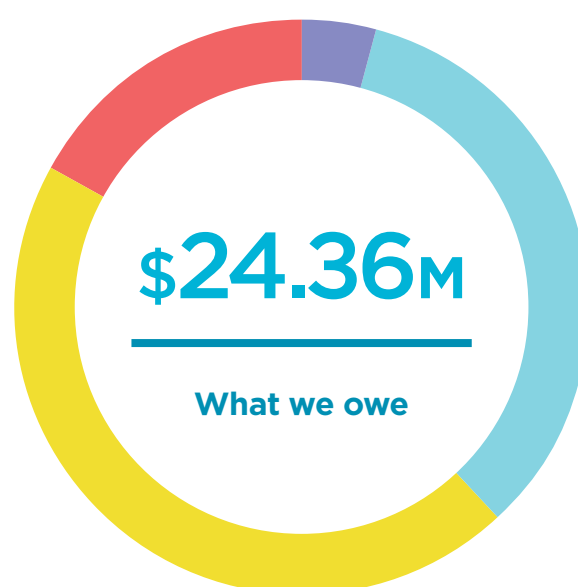
	\$M
Grant Funding	62.15
Product Sales	4.16
Service Revenue	3.67
Capital Grants	0
Other Income	4.56
Total	74.54



	\$M
Employee Expenses	54.98
Depreciation and Amortisation	2.41
Costs of Goods Sold/Sponsored Equipment	5.29
Supplies, Occupancy and Maintenance	3.95
General and Admin Expenses	1.62
Other Expenses	7.07
Total	75.32



	\$M
Cash and Cash Equivalents	18.79
Receivables and Prepayments	2.66
Inventories	1.16
Property, Plant and Equipment	44.91
Other Assets	1.87
Total	69.39



	\$M
Trade Payables	1.02
Deferred Income	8.31
Employee Benefits	10.92
Other Liabilities	4.11
Total	24.36



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