



2018/2019  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Distinctive Options**



Welcome to the Distinctive Options Annual Report for 2019. This report provides information about our activities, operations, highlights and performance on objectives for the 2018-2019 financial year. Following the NDIS transition and organisation restructure, the theme of this years' report is "change and growth". This is demonstrated within the report in the information and stories detailed throughout. This report was created with input and ideas from management, staff and participants to provide a detailed reflection about our service, our impacts and our role in the communities we serve. It was developed 100% internally.

### Audience

This report has been written for the following stakeholders: participants, their families and supporters, federal and state government partners, our local communities and partners and the Distinctive Options Directors and staff members who share and deliver this collective vision and mission.

### Accessibility

This report has been created using Adobe InDesign and optimised for screen readers and other assistive devices used by people with a disability. This report uses consistent paragraph styles, anchored images, threaded text boxes, alternative text and metadata. This report is available in PDF on our website or in other alternative formats on request.

### Feedback

We welcome all feedback on this report. Please use the details provided below to provide your feedback.

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### Copyright

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**Photos (top to bottom):** Hannah enjoys the Melbourne Cup Parade; Brad shows off his wood art.

**Cover photo:** Leanne experiments with light at Scienceworks.

# CONTENTS

## 3 About Distinctive Options

- 4 About us
- 6 Feedback
- 8 Message from the Chairperson
- 9 Message from the CEO
- 12 The NDIS - A CEO's Perspective
- 14 Strategic Planning
- 15 Strategic Performance
- 16 Financial Overview
- 21 Our Future



Having a Say

## 23 Services and Participants

- 24 Year in Review
- 25 Sites and Services
- 26 Demographics
- 28 Service Use
- 30 Participant Survey
- 32 Community Life



Peter Hits the Air

## 35 Human Resources

- 36 Senior Management Team
- 37 Executive Manager Report
- 39 Our People



R&R Network

## 45 Operations

- 46 Operating Environment
- 48 Marketing
- 49 Risk Management



Going Viral

## 51 Governance

- 52 Board of Directors
- 54 Corporate Governance
- 56 Board Committees



Tri State Games

## 59 Finances

- 60 Profit or Loss
- 61 Financial Position
- 62 Equity and Cash Flows
- 63 Director's Declaration
- 65 Auditor's Independence Declaration
- 67 Index
- 68 Thank You
- 69 Get Involved



Film Making



Together on the Green



# HAVING A SAY CONFERENCE

This year was the 20th anniversary of the Having a Say Conference which is held by the Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID). The annual event gives people an opportunity to have a say about issues that affect them, celebrate ability and achievement, be actively involved in running the conference, be heard by government and politicians, and meet people from around Australia. This year's theme was 'Having a Say Forever!'

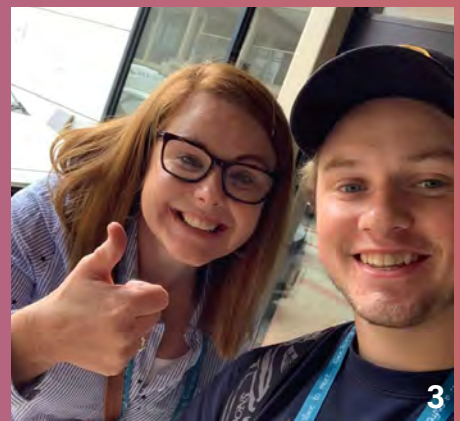
Ten participants from Sunbury and four participants from Bendigo travelled to Geelong for the Conference, supported by four staff. It was the first time that participants from Bendigo had been to the Conference, making it even more exciting than usual.

The group attended the opening ceremony on the first day, then spent the next two days listening to talks, participating in 'come and try' activities and viewing presentations and performances. Some of the standout activities were make-up tutorials and rides on Harley Davidson bikes and in limousines.

Sunbury participant Stephanie Challis gave a speech thanking VALID for their services and shared her experience of working with Hume City Council to improve accessibility throughout the Sunbury community.

On the final night, the group donned feather boas, pearls and suits for a "Roaring '20s" dinner dance at 'The Pier' in Geelong.

**Photos:** 1) Tara and Heidi walk along the beach in Geelong. 2) Participants from Sunbury and Bendigo pose for a photo with Bendigo Coordinator Catherine. 3) Lucy and Jackson give a thumbs up. 4) Stephanie presenting at the Conference. 5) All dressed up for the Roaring '20s dinner dance!



**ABOUT  
DISTINCTIVE  
OPTIONS**

# ABOUT US

Distinctive Options is a not for profit organisation that was established in 1985. We provide services to children and adults with a disability with a range of flexible group and individual support options available. We employ 202 people and are supported by eight volunteers. Turnover is now a record \$8.3 million, including \$2 million provided by the once-off Outside School Hours Care demonstration project. Distinctive Options is a company limited by guarantee.

## Mission, Vision and Values

Our mission is to offer real life choices for people with disabilities, their families and supporters.

Our vision is to assist people to fulfil their potential and gain equality in the community.

We are distinctive and innovative by offering choice and control, by providing unique experiences, by helping people live the life they want, and by being the best in all we do. Our values at Distinctive Options are:

**People** - Respecting diversity, knowledge and wellbeing

**Human Rights** - Ensuring participants' human rights are understood and respected

**Collaboration** - Achieving more together

**Excellence** - Being the best we can be



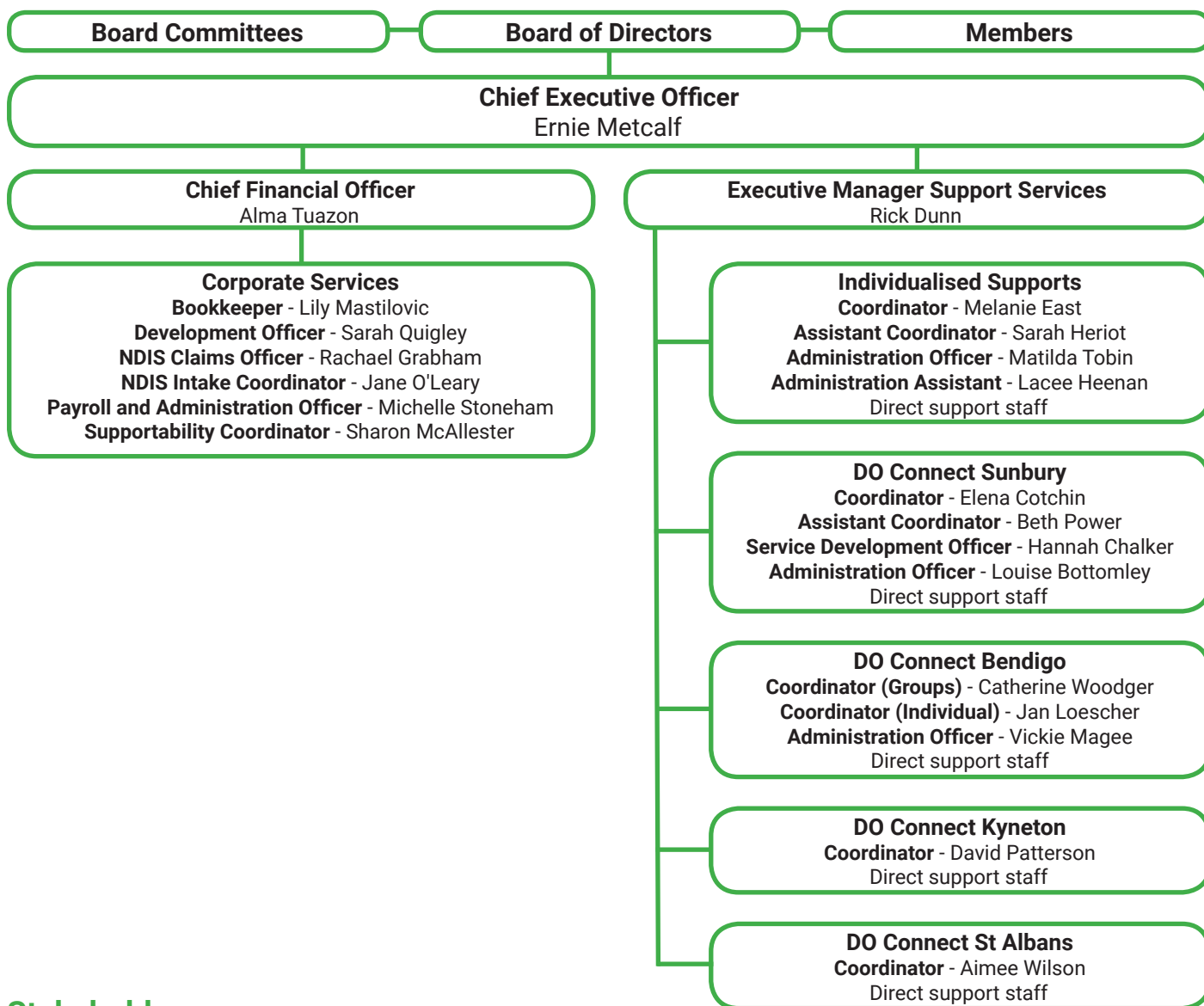
In September 2018, we created the above values statement to summarise our values in a single statement. At the same time, our vision and mission were rewritten to modernise them whilst maintaining the same meaning as our previous versions.

## History

- 1985** The 'Sunbury Adult Unit' opens to support 15 people
- 1989** Supported employment options are launched
- 1993** The organisation is renamed 'Able Community Services'
- 1997** There are 69 participants and revenue hits \$1.27 million
- 1998** The first Client Council is formed
- 1999** The organisation is renamed 'Distinctive Options'
- 2004** National Standards for Disability Service certification is achieved
- 2012** Participant numbers reach 89 with total revenue reaching a record \$4.22 million
- 2014** Services focus on direct support provision only and employment services are ceased  
There are 95 participants and a revenue of \$2.21 million
- 2017** New services are added across Victoria and the first participant transfers to the NDIS  
Participant numbers reach 165 with revenue at \$4.13 million
- 2018** Total revenue tops \$5.5 million with 234 participants and 170 participants have transitioned to the NDIS
- 2019** The organisation is restructured, with individual and group support services the main focus of the organisation

## Organisation Chart

Our organisation chart was updated in May 2019 following a restructure. Changes were made to service names, titles and positions across the organisation. A copy of the updated chart was provided to all staff members and participants to ensure they were kept informed. Changes to Board Committee titles were also made to the updated chart. More information about this is provided on Page 56 of this report.



## Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Engagement Strategies
Our participants and their supporters	Meetings, newsletters, surveys, memos, website, social media, plain English resources, Annual Report, invitation to Annual General Meeting
Our Board, staff and volunteers	Meetings, workshops, surveys, reference groups, committees, Annual Report
Government regulators and funders	Data submission, reports, emails, site visits, participation in external audits
Sponsors and donors	Emails, private and public acknowledgments, Annual Report, invitation to Annual General Meeting
Local communities	Website, social media, advertising (radio and print), Annual Report, invitation to Annual General Meeting
The media	Invitations to events, emails
Informal partners	Emails, social media, public acknowledgments, meetings, invitation to Annual General Meeting
Contractors and suppliers	Emails, meetings, reviews



# FEEDBACK

Feedback plays an important role in our service provision at Distinctive Options. It informs the supports that we provide, the way we run our organisation and continuous improvements to our services.

People can provide feedback to us in various ways, including:

- Using a Participant Feedback Form (provided to all participants when they commence and regularly throughout the year)
- Annual surveys, including the Participant Survey, Supporter Survey and Staff Survey
- Via our Facebook page
- Via email to [info@d-o.com.au](mailto:info@d-o.com.au)
- Through the Contact Us page on our website
- In person at any service to any member of staff



**Photo:** Marnie attending the AFL with Individualised Supports

## Compliments

This was the second year we used a Compliments Register at Distinctive Options. This is a record of the positive feedback received from participants, their families and supporters, staff and other organisations. Here are some of the compliments we received this year:

- *"Distinctive Options is doing a great job in the Kyneton area"* - Support Coordinator
- *"The staff have a great attitude and the service is receptive and responsive"* - Parent
- *"Thank you for being so helpful and supportive to our students and families"* - School Social Worker
- *"How I wish every service provider operated at your level of professionalism and competence"* - Support Coordinator
- *"I would like to sincerely and deeply thank you for your great work in supporting (my son) during our time of need"* - Parent
- *"Thank you for your care over the past two and a half years I've been sick. Now I'm well and feeling great"* - Participant
- *"My family are blessed to live in Sunbury and to be a part of the Distinctive Options community"* - Parent
- *"(My son) has settled in so well. He gets excited on the way to (Distinctive Options) in the mornings"* - Parent
- *"(My daughter) is so happy coming to Distinctive Options. You're all doing a great job"* - Parent
- *"Thank you to the staff for being so supportive and flexible with supports"* - DHHS Case Manager
- *"I do good activities with (the staff) and they listen to me and help me"* - Participant



# PETER HITS THE AIR IN KYNETON

In late 2018, DO Connect Kyneton approached Highlands FM with the idea of participants running their own radio show out of their Woodend studio to broadcast around the Macedon Ranges. The radio station said yes! Peter was one of the lucky participants to be involved in the radio group. Together, they decided it would be a music show. They would announce songs, read the weather and do station announcements.

At first, everyone was very nervous at the thought of talking on a live radio show with potentially hundreds of people listening. Peter was no exception, but despite feeling a bit anxious having never been involved in a radio show he quickly developed a voice perfectly suited for the air.

Being a huge music fan, Peter was instrumental in choosing songs, with the Beatles, Rolling Stones and Bob Marley being at the top of the playlist. The next step for Peter was to get in behind the control panel to learn how to use the volume sliders and buttons that operate the microphones, computer, and CD player. After a short time, Peter was able to confidently operate the control panel. The next step was for Peter to not only operate the panel but to combine all the skills he had learnt. That is, line up a song on the computer, play it at the correct level, turn the microphone on, announce the song, turn another microphone on so another participant can read the weather then quickly turn all the microphones off and put another song on, all whilst thinking ahead about what is coming up next. Peter quickly achieved this!

Today, the staff member is able to walk out of the studio while Peter is at the control desk. The best thing about the radio show is that it is a heap of fun. It is also a fantastic way for people to have a voice in their community and develop new skills and confidence as well as the sense of team work and achievement that it provides.

**Photos (top to bottom):** Peter at the controls. Shanah and Peter on air. Peter, Cameron and Tania pose for a photo in the studio.



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

I am proud to present my fourth report as Chairperson for Distinctive Options. This year has been another extraordinary one for many reasons at Distinctive Options. There have been both significant changes and strategic developments that have positively positioned our organisation for the years ahead. This was a year to stabilise our organisation and focus on strengthening our systems and processes. We have improved our financial controls through the automation and simplification of core processes after a period of rapid growth as experienced in prior years.

I would like to highlight the appointment of Alma Tuazon as our Chief Financial Officer. Alma settled into Distinctive Options quickly and efficiently. She has done a tremendous job working with the management team and staff to drive great outcomes.

The organisation has also maintained a strong focus on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and this has become a standing item at every Board meeting. This ensures we will remain abreast of any and all issues as they arise, and it bodes well for our ability to meet the new demands that may come with the NDIS. Notwithstanding the challenging transition to NDIS, Distinctive Options is well positioned for future years.

## Achievements

There have been many achievements this year and I am keen to highlight the most significant outcomes:

- Successful restructure of our organisation, aligned to our strategic priorities and the need to be more commercially focused in the new funding environment under NDIS.
- Increased focus on fundraising.
- Strong financial performance.
- Increased focus on risk and controls.

## Underpinning our Growth

The organisation is well positioned to grow in the next 12 months. The focus on commercial acumen throughout 2019 has positioned us well for future years. This outcome demands a robust governance and administrative structure and I am pleased to report Distinctive Options is very fortunate to have highly skilled and competent staff to support all the activities and programs provided by our services. I wish to acknowledge Ernie Metcalf (CEO) and Rick Dunn (Executive Manager – Support Services) and their management teams for the quality of their leadership provided to staff.

I also want to acknowledge and thank all the staff who have given so much of their



time and energy to supporting all participants who attend our various programs. Without their commitment, skill, empathy and dedication, Distinctive Options would be a poorer place indeed.

Likewise, the organisation has a very skilled and committed Board who give generously of their time in a volunteer capacity to ensure Distinctive Options operates within a strong operational and governance structure. Board members are committed not only to the regular Board meetings but also all members actively participate in various Committees to further support the ongoing services of Distinctive Options.

It has been a pleasure to deliver this Chairperson's report and I look forward to the coming year with great confidence in our organisation to continue to both grow and deliver exceptional support to all who attend our services.

**Anthony Aboud**  
Chairperson



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The previous 12 months have been some of our most colourful, with significant changes and exciting developments to the organisation.

## Organisational Restructure

Following preliminary Board discussions back in August 2018, I undertook a major organisational wide restructure in May 2019, with the full support of the Board following the annual Strategic Plan review. The restructure targeted all unfunded roles to ensure the quality of direct support services were not compromised, whilst restricting wage costs so they could be contained within budget forecasts and in line with NDIS funding restrictions. The end result was that four middle management positions were made redundant. Two managers opted to take packages, whilst two others were redeployed in new coordinator roles. I thank Carolyn Richardson, the former Lifestyles Manager, for her 25 years of service to our Sunbury day services, and Michelle Harrison, the former Assistant Lifestyles Manager, for her time with the organisation.

Internal promotions to Coordinator roles were made. These staff proved they were very competent and effective as innovative change agents as the organisation realigned its operations in

Bendigo, Kyneton, Sunbury and Individualised Supports. I'd like to thank the following key staff for their support throughout this time, including Catherine and Jan in Bendigo; Dave in Kyneton; Elena, Beth and Hannah in Sunbury; and Melanie and Sarah in Individualised Supports. St Albans has maintained its status quo for operations but remains under review. Other internal changes also saw Jane O'Leary move from Outreach Manager into the revised role of NDIS Intake Coordinator and Sarah Quigley move from Executive Assistant to Development Officer.

Two unviable after school care services at Melton and Sunbury specialist schools were wound up in April and June respectively. Both schools, although they regretted these closure decisions, fully understood and supported Distinctive Options for the time, effort and financial commitment made to try and make these services work for families.

## Other Funding Opportunities

Management and administrative staff constantly monitor other opportunities available outside of the NDIS. From July 2018 through to April 2019, Distinctive Options won a \$2m tender to run and deliver an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) demonstration program at



specialist schools in Bendigo and St Albans, funded by the Department of Education and Training (DET). I also engaged with Blairlogie Living and Learning in Cranbourne as a partner for them to deliver OSHC contracted services in Officer and Aspendale. The management and administration team had to set these new services up from scratch to meet very tight deadlines in order to deliver a key election promise made by the State Premier. Distinctive Options successfully delivered these services on time, but not without some teething issues expected from a rushed start-up.

In April 2019, the contract expired and management, along with key staff, were actually happy to see the end of the demonstration program because of its significant operational demands on our limited time and resources. A very special thank you goes to Corporate Services staff member Sarah Quigley for all her work and dedication to secure the contract, to assist



management to run the project and for liaising directly with DET.

### Financial Outcomes

Financially, Distinctive Options is in a stronger position than it was twelve months ago. As an organisation under NDIS funding, we are better placed now and into the future to continue delivering quality support services. All restructure costs are included in the financial reports. The profit achieved by Distinctive Options is due to the OSHC project, rather than from NDIS funding to support service participants. An overview of the financial results is provided from Page 16 of this Annual Report.

### New Key Staff Members

During the year we welcomed two new key staff members. Chief Financial Officer Alma Tuazon brings a wealth of financial management experience and knowledge. Alma is held in very high regard by her financial peers and she is currently active in volunteering for CPA Australia.

Rachael Grabham is the new NDIS Claims Officer and she brings a lot of financial skills and abilities, as well as personal experience with disability and the NDIS, to our constantly evolving organisation.

In conclusion, I thank all the staff for their support, ideas and understanding during the year. I also thank all the families I have spoken to throughout the year for their support and understanding through the NDIS transition

and the organisational wide restructure.

To my executive management team members, Rick and Alma, I express my sincere thanks for your productive support and proactive response to the needs of organisation, now and into the future.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board for their vision, support,

dedication and enthusiasm during these significant times of sector changes. Our Chairperson Anthony has led a diverse team of professionals who bring considerable knowledge, skills and other business contacts to support us during a challenging period of change.

**Ernie Metcalf**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

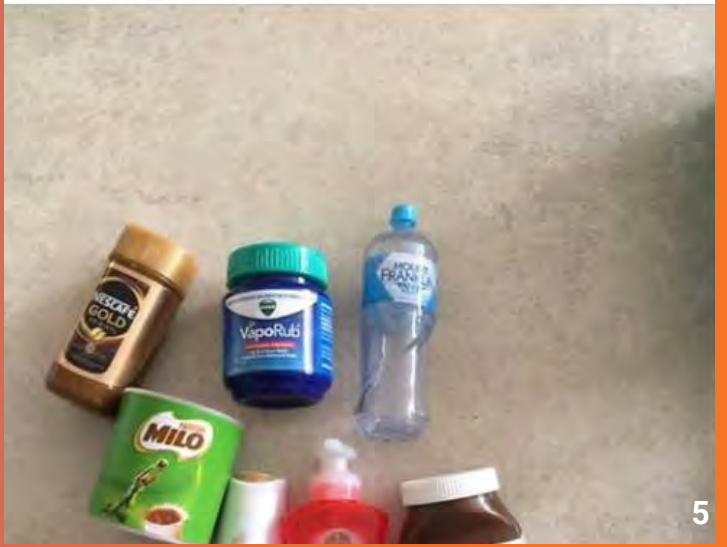
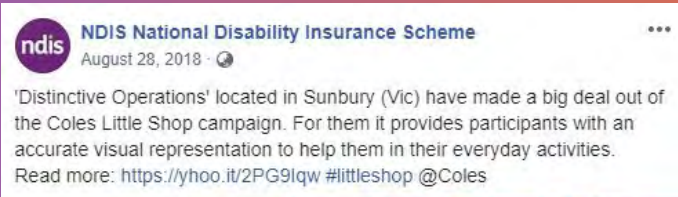


**Photo:** Ernie and Sarah from Individualised Supports pose for a photo at the Christmas party



# GOING VIRAL

Distinctive Options went viral this year when we posted on Facebook about our innovative ideas for the "Coles Little Shop Collectibles" in August. Our Communications Coordinator (now Service Development Officer) Hannah Chalker originally developed the idea to use the Collectibles in communication resources for participants at Distinctive Options. A news article was posted online by Yahoo which was then shared by the NDIS on their Facebook page. Hundreds of the collectibles were posted to Distinctive Options from all around Australia. So many arrived that we were able to share them with neighbouring organisations and schools to use for communication in their own services.



Photos: 1-3) Examples of Hannah's communication resources. 4) A screenshot of the post on the NDIS Facebook page. 5) The call out for collectibles on the Distinctive Options Facebook page.

# THE NDIS - A CEO'S PERSPECTIVE

I've provided a snapshot below of some article headlines over recent years on the NDIS to illustrate the considerable complexities this reform has imposed on governments, the disability sector, and families. By 2019 the community and service providers should have expected most of the issues affecting the NDIS would have been sorted out. Today we seem to be no nearer to a solution than when the scheme started.

The NDIS was touted as the single biggest social reform Australia has ever seen. It was

encouraged and supported by the disability sector, by families and carers, and it had bipartisan support from all political parties. Despite this, problems and issues arose from day one. Unfortunately, many of these problems have continued and remain unresolved years on.

The concept of the NDIS remains intact, but the problems have arisen because of the management from the overseeing government body, the NDIA. To most service provider organisations in the sector, the NDIA is a large

bureaucracy which operates like a runaway train causing damage. So much so, that a number of our international sector peers who have been observing the progress of the reforms in Australia have openly commented that they think the NDIS will never deliver the outcomes it promised. After a number of years since the rollout commenced, some of the Productivity Commission's original recommendations have still not been delivered by the NDIA, in particular that the market should set its own prices.

## **Disability service providers losing confidence in NDIS**

*Probono Australia, December 2017*

"Business confidence in the disability services sector has slumped due to problems with the implementation of the NDIS, according to a new report."

## **Thousands worse off in NDIS**

*The Australian, May 2018*

"The \$22 billion NDIS is failing the nation's most vulnerable people, leaving as many as one in five, many with intellectual and mental disabilities, reporting that the flagship scheme has left them worse off."

## **Advocates ask, why are NDIS funds not being used to fix the scheme?**

*Probono Australia, April 2019*

"Disability groups have welcomed the federal government's \$528 million pledge for the disability royal commission but say a multi-billion dollar underspend of NDIS funds in the budget is a 'national disgrace'."

## **Community speaks up about NDIS issues**

*The Sunbury Leader, March 2019*

"People with a disability and their families spoke about their grievances with the NDIS at a forum in Sunbury last week."

## **Here's what needs to happen to get the NDIS back on track**

*The Conversation, May 2019*

"Prime Minister Scott Morrison pledged that addressing failures in the NDIS would be a priority for the new government. Stuart Robert has assumed the role of minister for the NDIS and will be charged with delivering on this important agenda."

## **NDIS providers welcome price increases**

*Community Care Review, June 2019*

"Minister for the NDIS Stuart Robert announced the increases to service price limits on Tuesday. However CEO David Moody said while he was pleased that prices were starting to reflect some of the true costs of providing quality services for people with disability, there were still problems within the NDIS that needed to be addressed."



Whilst for some families, the NDIS has funded increased opportunities, for others it hasn't, which is confirmed by some of the articles referenced.

For a disability sector which vigorously embraced the concept of an NDIS, the disappointments emanating from the NDIA bureaucracy have been profound. The reality for people who are seeking supports is that in many instances choice is non-existent. Either there is no service provider they can access or, regardless of their funding, no service provider will take them on because of pricing. Yet the NDIS promised greater choice and control for individuals.

The sector continues to ask the NDIA why have they imposed mandated unit prices that the sector must follow, when these prices were even lower than what State Governments were paying. Why has the NDIA imposed a whole lot of other regulations on the sector rather than following the government's philosophy on reducing red tape?

On top of this, the NDIA created roles for NDIS planners to support individuals to develop a plan with appropriate funding. This is yet to work effectively. It goes without saying that there are good planners out there who work in our region.

The NDIA has also set up new funding brokers. These brokers appear to be a law unto themselves, frustrating

both families and service providers by not releasing payments for services in a timely or appropriate manner. Some service providers are even telling families if they opt to use certain funding brokers they will have to find another provider! Choice is a two-way street.

A report released in April 2019 by our peak body, National Disability Services (NDS), titled NDIS Market Dynamics Study, concluded the following key findings:

- 63% of Victorian services are worried they will not be able to provide services
- 54% will have to reduce quality at current NDIS prices
- Only 46% of providers made a surplus last financial year and even fewer (43%) are expecting a profit this year
- Greater risks are materialising for regional providers who, compared to metro and state-wide organisations, are more likely to have made a loss last financial year, expect a loss this year, and expect a reduction in financial reserves
- A stable and sufficient disability workforce is yet to be achieved, with clear supply and sustainability risks emerging
- NDIS pricing, the financial viability of organisations and the availability of a flexible workforce are collectively impacting organisations' decisions to merge or wind-up, with 38% of providers believing it is "very likely or likely" that their organisation will

- complete a merger in the next two years
- Current NDIA strategies may contribute to the emergence of thin markets

When a recent opportunity arose for the Federal Government to use unspent NDIS funds to address some of the issues service providers and families have pursued, the Government decided to channel these unspent funds somewhere else. This was an important opportunity missed.

As alluded to above, the not-for-profit disability sector has been under intense pressure from lower mandatory unit prices to deliver services. Yet the sector still has to meet two annual pay rises imposed by a Modern Award for staff, an impending Portable Long Service Leave Scheme, as well as other escalating operational costs. To compound the issue, NDIS prices are only provided for direct support services. Therefore all administrative staff and costs remain unfunded. The very nature of the NDIS demands services now must have a core commercial operation in order to generate sufficient cash flow to cover all costs, but this is not funded. Quality certification is still demanded, but this is not funded. Mandatory reporting requirements are demanded, but these too are not funded. Costs for operational bases in some settings along with administration are still required, but these are also not funded!

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

## Strategy Overview

Our Strategic Plan is designed to ensure we can grow our services to assist and empower the people we serve. It is built around four key objectives, each with assigned strategies and measures.

## Be Resilient

Ensure our systems and processes support us to grow strategically and sustainably.

- Identify and target niche markets
- Review and continuously improve systems and processes
- Have strong internal and external communication
- Ensure sustainable growth in participant numbers and funding
- Network and develop relationships with external NDIS planners, support coordinators and local area coordinators

## Be Distinctive

Attract the best staff, management and Board by investing in and supporting them to perform at their best, and raise our profile.

- Ensure succession planning, training and development and career pathways
- Have a values based culture that promotes engagement with staff
- Have a strong social media presence
- Participate in consumer focused networking, including expos and conferences
- Invest in marketing

## Be Sustainable

Be a financially sustainable organisation focusing on profit for purpose through diverse income streams and optimal asset utilisation.

- Diversify our income, including new business opportunities, grants, donations and asset utilisation measures
- Ensure systems and processes can monitor funding and expenditure and ensure accounting processes meet organisational needs
- Ensure IT systems fit our needs and future growth

## Be Progressive

Full utilisation of effective systems and processes for the NDIS.

- Fully utilise SupportAbility software for billing, staff and planning
- Provide staff competency/ training in systems and processes

## Balanced Scorecard

Our performance against these objectives are measured using a Balanced Scorecard. The senior management team track outcomes and progress on an Excel spreadsheet, with preset targets and actual results. This is then provided to the Board each month to ensure they have a clear picture on how the organisation is performing. Targets are generally set higher than the expected or average outcome.

## Strategic Performance

This was the second year of our 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. During the previous 12 months we have made strong progress executing the strategic initiatives in our plan. Page 15 highlights our objectives and key outcomes for 2018-2019.

## Strategic Planning Day

On the 27th of April, the Board of Directors and Senior Management Team met on a Saturday for the annual Strategic Planning Day.

The day was different than previous years, with a goal to review the organisation's financial position and spend time evaluating the operating budget for 2019-2020. Four themes were discussed:

1. How to be a financially stable organisation with a focus on profit-for-purpose through diverse income streams and optimal asset use
2. How to ensure systems and processes support the organisation to grow strategically and sustainably, while becoming increasingly commercially-orientated and focusing on core operations
3. How to fully utilise systems and processes for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, including operations, staffing ratios and costings
4. How to attract the best staff, management and Board

# STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

## Be Resilient

Measure	Target	Actual	Result
Board informed of current NDIS issues	≥ 12	33	✱
Participant and family satisfaction percentage	≥ 85%	88.6%	✱
Number of complaints	< 5	10	✱
Number of compliments	≥ 15	31	✱
Review of governance policies	100%	95%	✱
Compliance with funding body requirements	100%	100%	✱
Compliance with ACNC requirements	31/1/19	17/12/18	✱

## Be Distinctive

Measure	Target	Actual	Result
Staff turnover ratio	< 15%	11.7%	✱
Director's attendance	≥ 66%	87.5%	✱
Board review of financial audit	31/10/18	30/10/18	✱
Board review of CEO performance	31/10/18	26/2/19	✱
Review organisational structure	31/5/19	15/5/19	✱
Recruit a CFO	30/9/18	17/9/18	✱
Number of media articles (including Facebook posts)	≥ 12	216	✱
New website	30/9/18	17/12/18	✱
Review marketing plan	31/12/18	26/6/19	✱

## Be Sustainable

Measure	Target	Actual	Result
Cash reserves and cash flow	> \$831.3k	\$1721.8k	✱
Current ratio (liquidity)	> \$2.00	\$2.97	✱
Number of days cash available	> 57	86	✱
Debt collection (number of 60 to 90+ day debtors)	≤ 10%	10.4%	✱
Number of successful legal claims	< 1	0	✱

## Be Progressive

Measure	Target	Actual	Result
SupportAbility software fully functional for billing	100%	100%	✱
SupportAbility used for staff timesheets	31/1/19	Not suitable	✱
Growth in participants accessing services	234	301	✱
Growth in support hours provided	≥ 180,000	171,138	✱

## Exceptions

Measure	Comment
Number of complaints	The number of complaints we received were higher than forecasted, however the majority were due to issues regarding the NDIS transition. We expect this number to decrease in the coming year. We will continue monitoring complaints to assess trends and ensure service improvements are made as required.
SupportAbility used for staff timesheets	Following research and trials, we realised that SupportAbility will not be suitable for timesheets. Instead, we will implement a new integrated online HR and Payroll system in early 2020 which will be used for timesheet management.



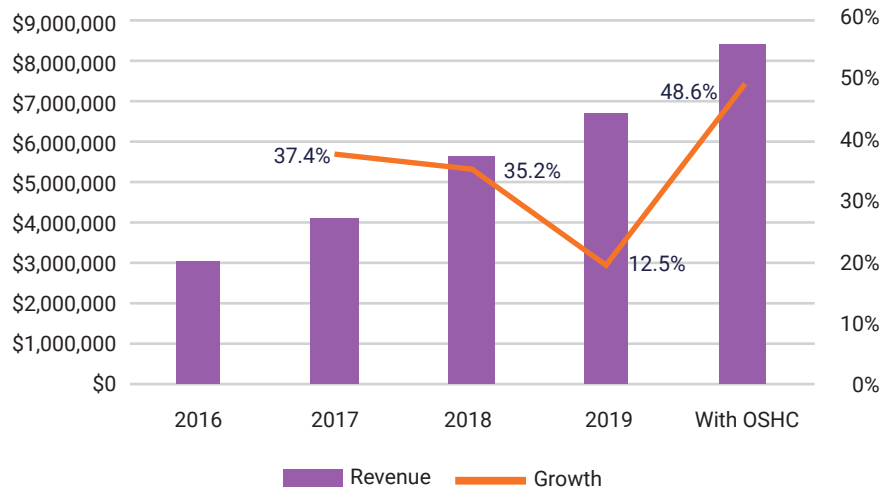
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## Revenue

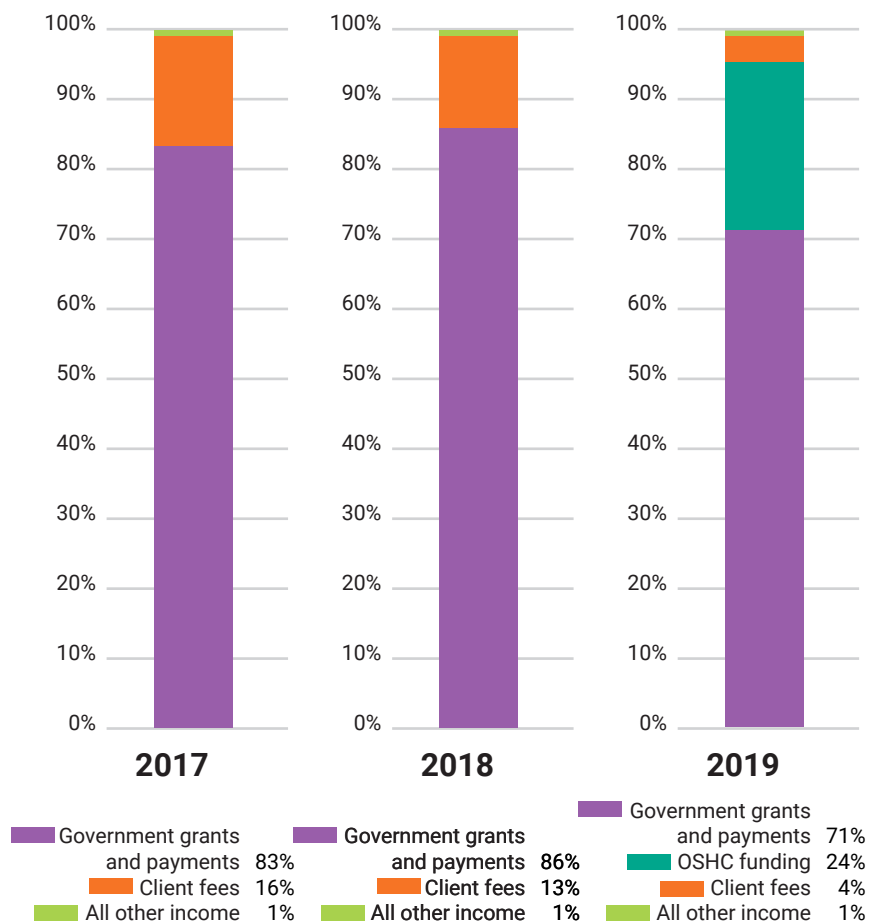
Despite increased competition from existing and new disability service providers, growth in total revenue over the last three years has increased considerably from \$3.0m in 2016 to about \$6.3m in 2019, or at an average of 30.8% per annum (see chart on Revenue and Growth Rate). This excludes the Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) demonstration project. NDIS and other service participant funding has increased at much higher levels than CPI. This is due to the expansion in support services to individuals, which again indicates Distinctive Options is meeting the expectations for quality outcomes. The considerable funding generated by the OSHC contract demonstrated that our organisation is capable of moving quickly into diverse areas, if and when required. It is this flexibility across the whole organisation to adapt to changes and opportunities that has enhanced Distinctive Options' reputation as an innovative quality service provider.

A comparison of income over the past three years shows significant growth in government grants and payments (see chart on Revenue Breakdown Comparison). Some of this underpins the growth in the number of participants being supported by Distinctive Options and the inclusion of the OSHC demonstration project funding. Overall, government grants accounted for 95% of total income.

Revenue and Growth Rate



Revenue Breakdown Comparison



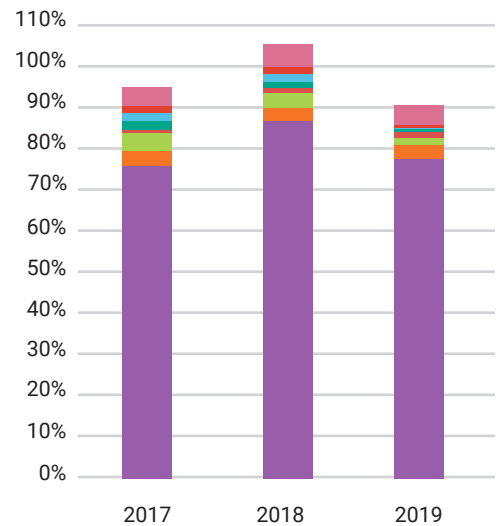
## Expenses

Tight control of all expenses is a requirement for any business, but it is particularly vital for the disability sector. This is because service providers are restricted to only charge support hours based on mandatory NDIS unit prices for providers. A three-year comparison of expense breakdown is provided in the chart showing Expenses as a Percentage of Total Revenue.

Because the disability support sector is a service industry, the most significant expenditure will always be related to employee benefit expenses. Under the conditions imposed by Modern Award requirements, staff hourly rates have been increasing every year in July and December. Unfortunately, funding for support services does not necessarily increase by the same percentages.

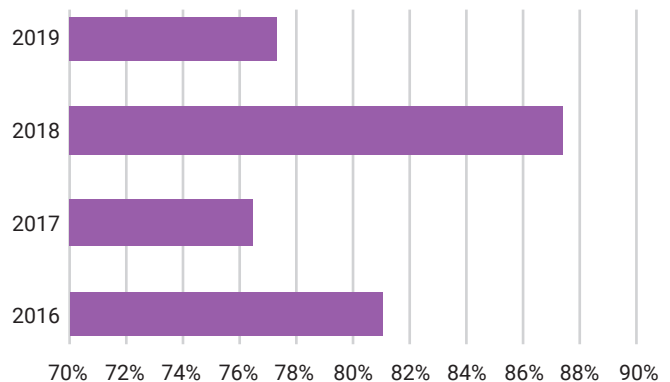
Expenditure in 2018-2019 included redundancy payments following the organisational restructure. Total employee benefits as a percentage of total revenue equated to 76.7% (see chart showing Employee Benefits Expenses as a Percentage of Total Revenue). This is a significant improvement in comparison to the 2017-2019 year which equated to 87.5%. It should be noted that 2017-18 included incorrect overpaid hourly rates to casual staff which artificially increased this cost, as well as raising this expense as a percentage of total revenue. Remedial action on these incorrect overpaid rates was taken in May 2018.

## Expenses as a Percentage of Total Revenue

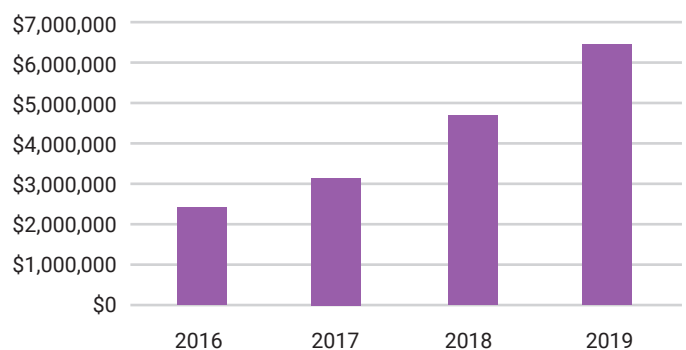


	2017	2018	2019
Employee benefit expenses	76.4%	87.5%	77.4%
Rental expense	4.5%	3.9%	3.1%
Client program costs	3.0%	2.1%	2.0%
Depreciation	1.5%	1.6%	1.3%
Motor vehicle	1.7%	1.4%	0.7%
Consultancy fees	1.9%	1.9%	0.3%
Printing and subscriptions	1.3%	1.0%	0.7%
Other expenses	5.3%	6.8%	4.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.5%</b>	<b>106.2%</b>	<b>90.2%</b>

## Employee Benefits Expenses as a Percentage of Total Revenue



## Employee Benefits Expenses



By way of comparison, the chart at the bottom of Page 17 highlights the increasing cost of employee benefits (see chart on Employee Benefits Expenses).

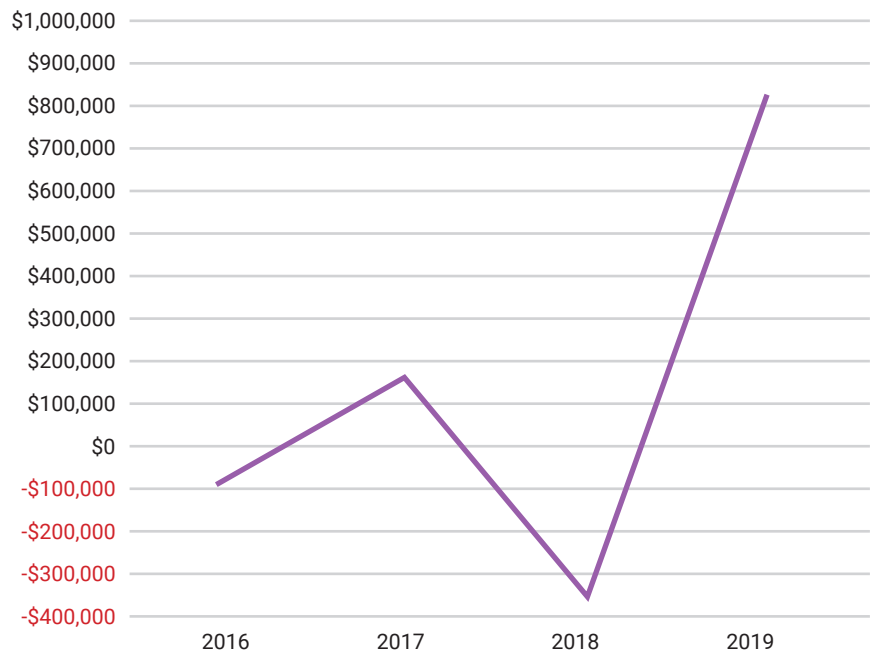
The growth in employee benefit costs reflects the growth in income caused by increased numbers of service participants, and for 2019, the additional one-off OSHC project. It also reflects changes to leave provisions, including a long service leave allowance for casuals.

The blow out in employee benefit expenses shown in 2017-2018, along with the commentary above, shows that for 2018-2019 these expenses are more in line with organisational expectations. All other expenses have generally been well contained.

### Admin vs. Frontline Costs

Funds spent on administration as opposed to front line activities equated to 21.4% of total revenue, compared to 11.8% in 2017-18. Some allocation changes were made in 2018-19, including moving service managers and coordinators under corporate services. This is, in part, why this percentage of administration costs increased this year. Additionally, the costs have increased because the NDIS has forced disability services to use more administrative staff to oversee how NDIS funding

### Operating Surplus/(Deficit) Comparison



systems operate. This is to ensure service supports are viable and sustainable for organisations to deliver. It includes: managing and liaising with people and planners to set up service agreements; monitoring service agreement end dates, ensuring new funding is in place for continuing supports; managing systems used for claiming direct support services from the NDIS portal or from other nominated funding brokers; and managing user pay fees incurred by participants for costs not included in their funding packages.

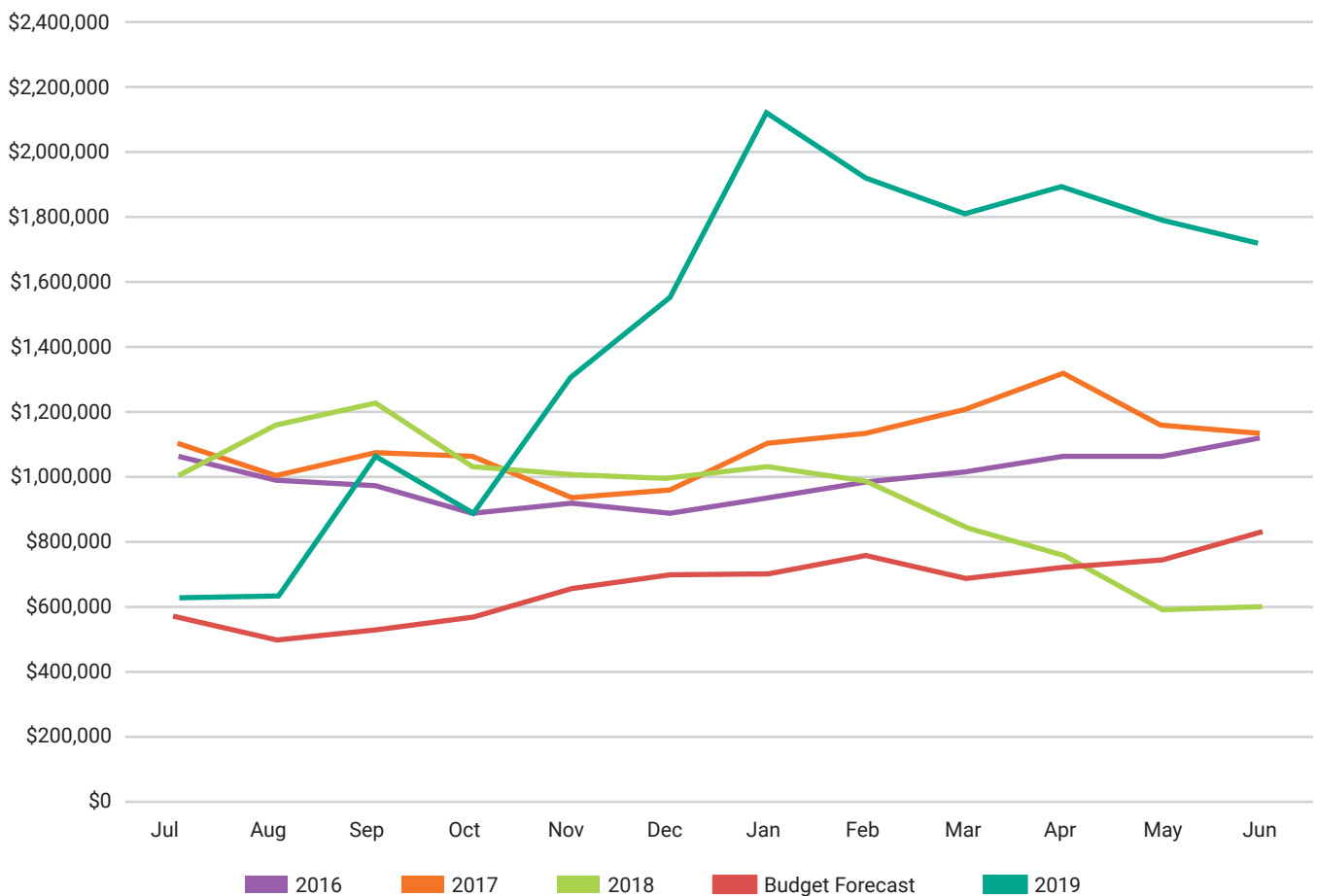
### Operating Surplus/Deficit

For most service providers entering the NDIS, an operating surplus has been a bit of a 'roller coaster' ride with upward and downward trends recorded. Our peak body, National Disability Services, reported in April 2019 that "the financial viability of Victorian providers is under threat, with only 46% having made a surplus last financial year and even fewer (43%) expecting a profit this year."

The Operating Surplus/(Deficit) Comparison chart above depicts the trend in Distinctive Options' income and expenditure and the operating results over this time span.



## Cash Reserves Comparison - July 2015 to June 2019



### Cash and Cash Reserves

Net cash reserves significantly improved during 2019 due to the operating results recorded and commented on above. The graph above illustrates Distinctive Options' cash flow over the past few years (see chart showing Cash Reserves Comparison - July 2015 to June 2019). The reduction in cash reserves in 2018 has been recovered in 2018-2019. This is in part due to remedial actions taken back in May 2018, coupled with the full automation of NDIS support services and associated NDIS claims, along with the growth in service numbers and funding. In addition, the profits generated from the OSHC funding contributed to modest profit results.

As highlighted in the graph, by June 2019 cash reserves were significantly higher than they had been over the past four years and continue to remain at healthy levels at the start of 2019-2020. Distinctive Options only has a handful of service participants still funded by the State Government as they transition into the NDIS. This means the gap in funding, when participants move from State into NDIS funding, now has only had a very minimal impact. In 2017-2018, the gap was significant as one source of funding ceased (State), or was recouped, until NDIS funding was approved and commenced. This gap in funding had a major impact on cash reserves during the 2017-2018 year.

In 2016, State block funding for service participants was consistent and easily calculated. Funding was paid monthly in advance of support services provided. By 2017-2018 under the NDIS, funding was not consistent or easily calculated. Funding was claimed back a month after service supports were provided. Service participants could also enter into many short term service agreements, and it could take months before a new NDIS funding plan was approved. This meant service providers were always playing catch up on funding owed for services provided. Today, service participants are

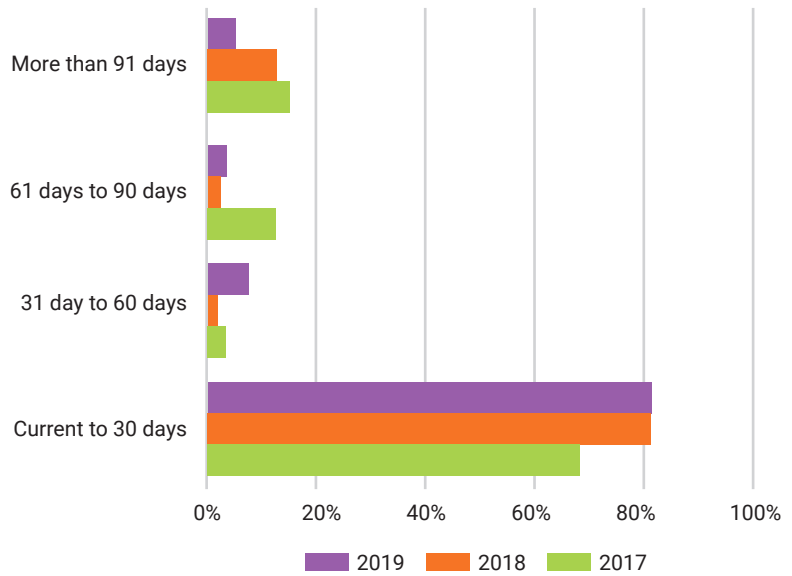
signing much longer service agreements with providers which has reduced a major cash flow issue for organisations.

### Balance Sheet

The most significant change in the balance sheet, as alluded to on the previous page, is the growth in Distinctive Options' cash reserves. This is reflected by the increase in Equity (see Page 62).

One of the other changes from moving into the NDIS means that debtor accounts are much more current. The Debtor Accounts Owing Comparison chart to the right highlights this. The NDIS has forever changed service organisations into commercial

### Debtor Accounts Owing Comparison



businesses, whilst retaining their not-for-profit general philosophies.

The full audited financial reports and notes for the year ended 30 June 2019 are available on our website.



Photos (left to right): Daniel cleans up the peacock yard. Sam and Marnie hold guinea pigs.



# OUR FUTURE

During significant sector changes a number of years ago, a professional disability consultant advised CEOs at a sector meeting that if your organisation still exists today and is viable, then it should be able to survive into the future.

With all that the NDIS has brought on service providers, this advice has never been more relevant. Today Distinctive Options is well placed to continue to grow and develop as a quality service provider into the future. Whilst there are no guarantees, the organisation has been proactive in reviewing its internal operations, matching costs against mandatory pricing and the implications of ensuring adequate cash flows.

To this end, the restructure in 2019 has ensured the best possible launching pad for the organisation to meet future challenges imposed by the NDIS and other bodies.

The fact that Distinctive Options has continued to evolve and grow under the NDIS means that the organisation is nimble and agile in meeting challenges outside of our control. We are also nimble and agile in assessing possible funding options outside of the NDIS that can add value to our organisation.

Our organisation has continued to ensure the delivery of quality services. Distinctive Options has become more selective about which new participants it takes on. There are numerous reasons for this. Funding must cover support costs and service agreements are moving to much longer time spans. More importantly, our organisation must have quality support staff to assist new participants. If the right staff can't be found, Distinctive Options won't take on a new participant if the quality of

support may be compromised.

One of the external challenges the sector has been facing is the scarce market for quality support staff. Organisations are competing with others in the sector and externally, for the same pool of potential staff. Workforce scarcity versus demand remains an Australia-wide issue and one that Distinctive Options will continue to face proactively.

As a niche market provider, Distinctive Options cannot deliver services outside of its scope of expertise. To ensure pathways for service participants, management works tirelessly to develop new options in partnership with other services and agencies. This is an ever evolving world and as new partnerships develop and grow, sometimes older partnerships may diminish if the level of services don't meet expectations.

From a choice perspective, these partnerships are key elements for participants. The partnerships are able to offer participants a much wider scope and choice in the type of services they receive.

Distinctive Options is not just our name - it is our philosophy and service guarantee.



**Photo:** Jack, Dean and Yvette use the giant Scrabble board at Queen Vic Market in Melbourne



# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES NETWORK

Three Rights and Responsibilities (R&R) Network groups are run at Distinctive Options in Sunbury, Bendigo and Kyneton. Now into their 21st year, these self-advocacy groups are designed to represent the views and ideas of participants.

Agendas are tabled and minutes are taken, with participants themselves running the weekly meetings. Agenda items are assigned to individuals, with responsibility over the discussions and actions resting with participants themselves. The Chairperson of the meeting is rotated so each member has the opportunity to lead the meeting. R&R Network positions are declared vacant twice per year, with applicants interviewing for positions and a vote held.

**Everyone takes turns and gets to speak about their important topics - Jarrod**

Regular agenda items across the three groups include

networking, community events, committee updates, celebrations, community concerns, health and wellbeing, safety and maintenance and personal business. This year the groups also added a Welcome to Country at the beginning of each meeting to acknowledge the Traditional Owners.

**I love coming in on a Monday and gaining experience - Emma**

Participants are also invited to provide feedback on organisation issues, including reviewing documents and ideas from a participant's point of view.

**I get to see my friends and speak about important matters - Brittany**

Guest presenters are often invited to meetings and represent a broad cross-section of the community. Over the previous 12 months, guests have included local Councils,

Victoria Police, the Australian Electoral Commission, Community Health Centres and more.

**I really enjoy running this group. I love being able to provide opportunities for people and stand up and voice their concerns and issues. I think it is very important for everyone to be given the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions and I feel that the R&R Network gives people that very chance, not only to voice but also to act - Tara, Bendigo staff member**

Not only do participants practice self-advocacy, they often come up with their own ideas about how to advocate for other people or groups. This included raising over \$200 for the Breast Cancer Foundation by holding a hot chocolate and muffin fundraiser in Sunbury. Other activities included raising money for the Cancer Council, Red Cross, Bread Tags for Wheelchairs and many more!



**Photos (left to right):** Jade and Yvette take minutes. Stephanie and Hannah share ideas. Simone and Stephanie check their notes.

**SERVICES  
AND  
PARTICIPANTS**

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## JULY

- ▶ DO Connect Kyneton launch their radio show at Highlands FM (Page 7)

## AUGUST

- ▶ R&R Network Sunbury raise \$200.85 for the Breast Cancer Foundation (Page 22)
- ▶ Distinctive Options goes viral following a request for Coles Little Shop Collectibles for communication aids (Page 11)

## SEPTEMBER

- ▶ R&R Network Sunbury hold a smoothie and movie fundraiser for the farmers in drought, raising \$172.30 (Page 32)

## OCTOBER

- ▶ A BBQ fundraiser is held at Bunnings to raise money for the Tri State Games
- ▶ DO Connect Kyneton are recognised for their volunteer work at a morning tea held by the United Church Op Shop
- ▶ DO Connect Bendigo, Kyneton, St Albans and Sunbury hold a multi-service meetup in Kyneton

## NOVEMBER

- ▶ The Melbourne Cup Parade is held in Sunbury
- ▶ Participants attend the Remembrance Day ceremony to lay a wreath
- ▶ Eight participants and two staff travel to Port Adelaide for the Tri State Games (Page 34)
- ▶ Sunbury StreetLife Festival is held, with proceeds from the selling of 'business bags' donated to Distinctive Options (Page 32)
- ▶ Our Annual General Meeting is held in Sunbury

## DECEMBER

- ▶ Together on the Green is held in Sunbury to celebrate International Day of People with Disability (Page 57)
- ▶ We receive a grant from Hume City Council to develop and deliver an All Abilities Performing Arts program (Page 43)
- ▶ Christmas celebrations are held across all services for both participants and staff

## JANUARY

- ▶ Stephanie Challis is awarded Young Citizen of the Year at Hume's Australia Day Ceremony (Page 38)

## FEBRUARY

- ▶ Participants and staff travel to Geelong for the Having a Say Conference (Page 2)
- ▶ The new website is launched (Page 48)

## MARCH

- ▶ A girls night is held in Sunbury before International Women's Day (Page 44)
- ▶ Participants and staff volunteer their time at SunFest Sunbury (Page 32)
- ▶ DO Connect Kyneton begin a partnership with Kyneton Library and Bupa Aged Care Kyneton to deliver books to elderly residents

## APRIL

- ▶ Participants and staff travel to Apollo Bay for the organisation's first Wellness Retreat
- ▶ Extended hours activities are held throughout the holiday period
- ▶ Participants in Sunbury attend the local ANZAC Day service to lay a wreath
- ▶ The Board hold an Annual Strategic Planning Day (Page 14)

## MAY

- ▶ DO Connect Bendigo work with Bendigo City Council to produce Sally's Story which is premiered at the VALID Expo in Bendigo (Page 50)
- ▶ Biggest Morning Teas are held in Bendigo, Kyneton and Sunbury to raise money for cancer research (Page 33)
- ▶ The Kyneton service reaches its one year anniversary

## JUNE

- ▶ We receive a Silver Award from the Australasian Reporting Awards for our 2017/18 Annual Report (Page 48)
- ▶ Radio ads for Distinctive Options are launched on air (Page 48)



# SITES AND SERVICES

## DO Connect Bendigo

Bendigo has two community houses - one in central Bendigo and the other in Golden Square. This service provides both group and individual supports to people in the local community. The houses are close to public transport and/or the Central Business District, allowing for easy access to the community for participants. The house in Bendigo also serves as the administrative office for this area.

## DO Connect Kyneton

Our Kyneton service has one community house in the centre of town and provides great access to the community. This house provides both group and individual support options to local participants and acts as the administrative base for this area.

## DO Connect St Albans

We have one community house in St Albans that we run both group and individual supports from. With the train station and town centre in close proximity, it is an ideal location to provide supports to participants who want to access the community.

## DO Connect Sunbury

Our Sunbury service is our largest and longest running, with a group supports building, a community house and our Head Office. Group support programs are provided in all three locations, with Individualised Supports being coordinated from Head Office.

## Individualised Supports

Individualised supports are provided in various locations across our region spanning a wide north west Victorian corridor from St Albans in the south to Bendigo in the north, plus surrounding areas. This service provides one-on-one support for individuals to participate in a broad range of activities both in the home and the community. Common supports and goals include personal care, travel training, leisure and recreation, and support to attend appointments. Individualised Supports are provided to a variety of participants, with ages ranging from 8 to 90.

The most common suburbs where individualised supports were delivered to participants in the previous 12 months were:

- Sunbury
- Woodend
- Eaglehawk
- Kangaroo Flat
- Kyneton
- Lancefield
- Bendigo
- Riddells Creek
- Gisborne
- Golden Square
- Kennington
- Romsey
- Strathfieldsaye
- Daylesford
- Hillside



**Photo:** Nam makes sushi at DO Connect St Albans

# DEMOGRAPHICS

Distinctive Options uses SupportAbility to manage participant information. This is a cloud based system that allows us to create participant profiles, assess goal progress, and plan, monitor and report on participant funding. Having a cloud based system means that our staff can access participant and program information directly from their smart device. Privacy controls ensure that people can only access the information that they need to do their job and entry into the system requires two password blocks. The demographics provided on this page were extracted from Supportability and reflect data from July 2018 to June 2019.

A total of 301 participants received services from Distinctive Options in the 2018-2019 financial year up from 234 the previous year. More information on the service distribution and hours of service provided can be found on Page 28 and 29 of this Annual Report.

## Primary Disability

Primary disability showed slight reductions in the numbers of participants reporting their primary disability as Intellectual Disability and Autism, compared to the previous year. Rates of Down Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy increased by 1% each. Interestingly, Psychiatric Disorders showed up in the

top primary disabilities for the first time, with participants in Bendigo and Kyneton most likely to report this as their primary disability. This is likely associated with increases in people with mental health conditions receiving NDIS funding.

## Gender

The majority of these participants were male, with a similar gender distribution to that in 2017-2018. Males outnumber females in almost all of our services, except for DO Connect Sunbury. We also saw an increase in the number of participants openly reporting their gender as "other".

## Indigenous Status

There was an increase in reported Aboriginal status, with a further four Aboriginal participants compared to the previous year. This may be associated with a review of our Supportability data to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification was being reported and recorded accurately.

## Age Distribution

The age distribution this year was exactly the same from the previous year. With our After School Care services closed, the rates of participants from 0-16 reduced, however around half transferred into our Individualised Supports service. DO Connect St Albans has the youngest participants, with no participants older than 35. In contrast, Individualised Supports have 22 participants older than 56 years of age.

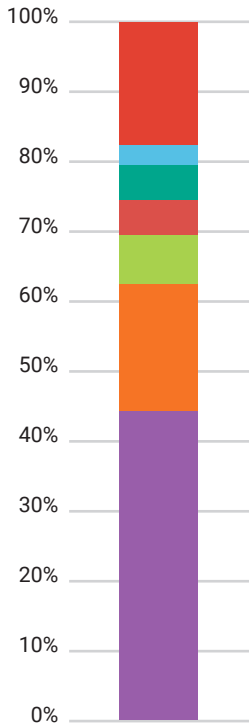
## Service Distribution

After accounting for the restructure, service distribution remained similar to the previous year. DO Connect Bendigo and Kyneton increased their participant numbers significantly, which is related to these sites taking on responsibility for a number of former Outreach participants. Numbers at DO Connect St Albans remained steady. Both DO Connect and Individualised Supports increased their numbers by around 30 participants each.

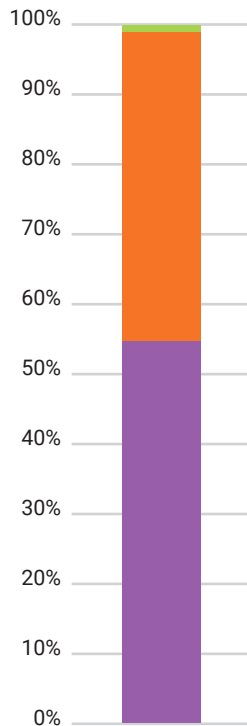
**Photo:** Cody and Reese hang out at the Together on the Green event



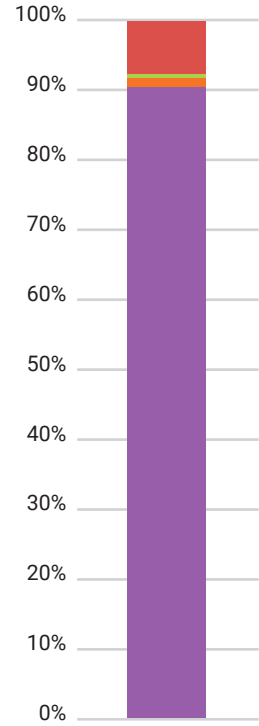
### Primary Disability



### Gender



### Indigenous Status

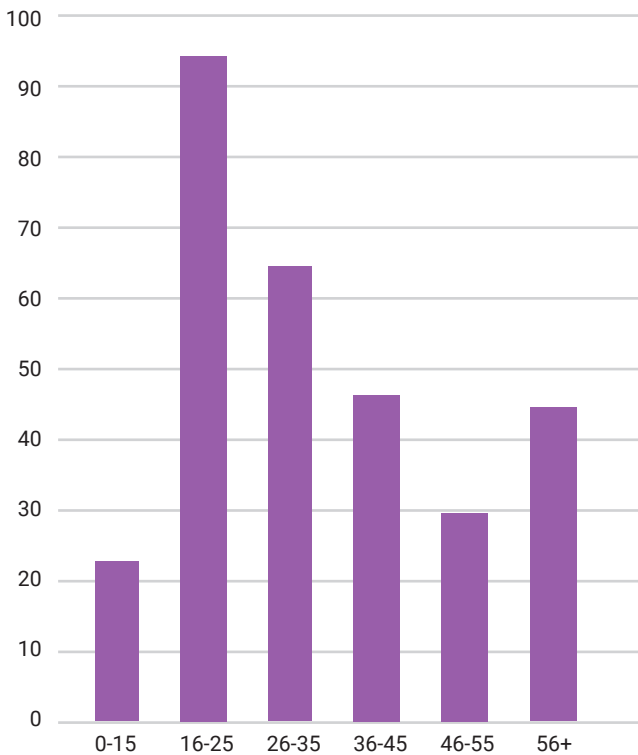


Intellectual Disability	44%	ABI	5%
Autism	18%	Cerebral Palsy	3%
Psychiatric	7%	Other	18%
Down Syndrome	5%		

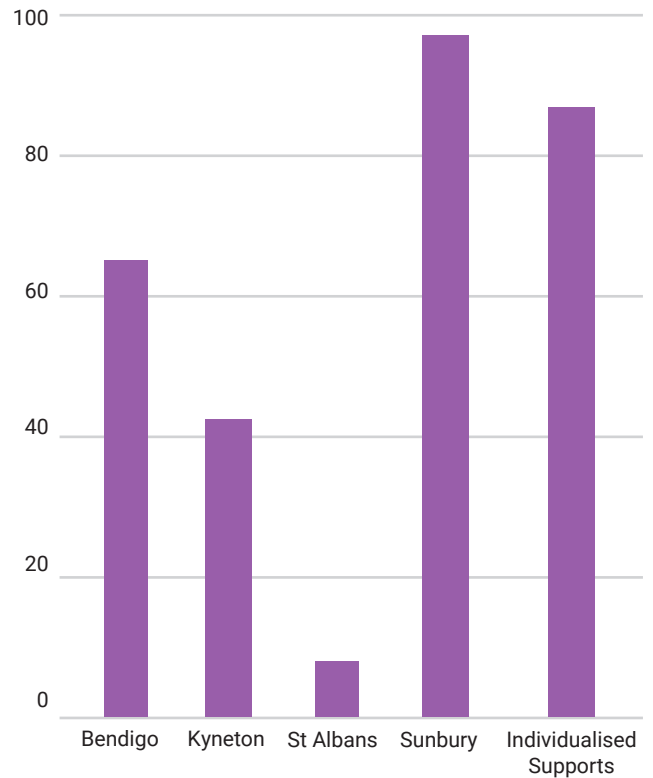
Male	56%
Female	43%
Other	1%

Neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	91%
Aboriginal only	1.3%
Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0.3%
Declined to answer	7.4%

### Age Distribution



### Service Distribution





# SERVICE USE

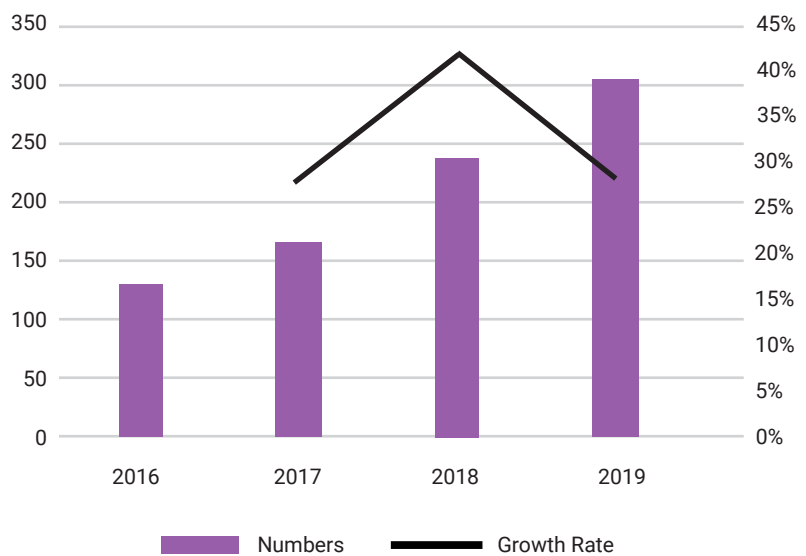
Participant numbers have grown from 129 at the end of June 2016 to 301 by June 2019, or at an average growth rate of 32.8% per year as depicted in the chart to the right. Since 2015, Distinctive Options has recorded positive growth in the number of participants supported each year.

Enquiries for service continue to come through, with the three-year NDIS rollout finally coming to an end. New participants are also choosing to move to Distinctive Options as they move into their second NDIS Plan, with some seeking a change in provider and often recommended to contact us by their Support Coordinator. It is clear that the quality support that we provide to individuals is meeting the expectations of participants and their supporters.

As our restructure did not take place until May 2019, weekly support hours are only reflected in pre-restructure service areas but include post-restructure hour breakdowns. Average weekly support hours show that Lifestyles provided the majority of support hours, with many participants now attending activities outside of the historical service hours of 9am to 3pm.

Outreach hours decreased from the previous year as participants moved their Individualised Support hours into the Connect category from May.

**Participant Numbers and Growth Rate**



## Average Weekly Support Hours

Service	Average Hours
Lifestyles	1862
Outreach	947
Bendigo Community Connect	448
Kyneton Community Connect	260
St Albans Community Connect	118
Sunbury Community Connect	85
Total	3720

The restructure breakdown provided on Page 29 demonstrates this process.

Based on the participant numbers at the end of the 2018/19 year, we expect that average weekly support hours will likely remain steady in the future for DO Connect Sunbury, Individualised Supports and DO Connect St Albans. In contrast, the increase in participant numbers for DO Connect Bendigo and DO Connect Kyneton will likely show significant increases in support hours for the 2019/20 year.

To demonstrate a five year comparison for participant numbers at June 30 each year, service areas both pre- and post-restructure have been provided. A comparison chart is not provided for support hours due to the impact of the NDIS which provides a new calculation for support hours. Trending will become available from the next financial year.

A dash (-) is provided where a program did not yet exist.

## Service Restructure

**DO Connect Sunbury:** Previous Lifestyles and Sunbury Community Connect participants

**Individualised Supports:** Previous Outreach participants in the Sunbury area and any other area that is not further north than Kyneton

**DO Connect Bendigo:** Previous Bendigo Community Connect participants and Outreach participants from the area

**DO Connect Kyneton:** Previous Kyneton Community Connect participants and Outreach participants from the area

**DO Connect St Albans:** Previous St Albans Community Connect participants

## Participant Numbers

Service Pre-Restructure	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	Service Post-Restructure	2018/19
Lifestyles	87	95	96	96	DO Connect Sunbury	96
Outreach	29	35	35	90	Individualised Supports	87
Bendigo Community Connect	-	-	24	21	DO Connect Bendigo	66
Kyneton Community Connect	-	-	-	6	DO Connect Kyneton	43
St Albans Community Connect	-	-	10	8	DO Connect St Albans	9
Sunbury Community Connect	-	-	-	13		
Total	116	130	165	234	Total	301



**Photo:** Simone, Stephanie, Hannah, Jade and Yvette in a Rights & Responsibilities Network meeting in Sunbury

## Human Rights

Distinctive Options is committed to supporting participants to be empowered about their rights and wellbeing. Each of our services and supports are designed to ensure high quality service provision that ensures human rights are respected at all times. We believe that the more informed our participants are about their rights, the greater the likelihood that they will be empowered to make informed choices and

decisions. Measures we take include providing accessible information to participants about their rights and responsibilities, being aware of cultural and communication needs, assisting people to exercise their rights at all times and ensuring comprehensive systems are in place to identify and address any potential human rights breaches. There were no breaches to human rights identified in the previous twelve months.

# PARTICIPANT SURVEY

To ensure that we are providing a high quality service and facilitating continuous improvement, Distinctive Options conducts an annual participant survey to gain valuable feedback from our participants. The 2019 participant survey was conducted in April across all areas of Distinctive Options. The survey specifically asked for feedback from participants, not from families or supporters (who receive a separate survey). A total of 28% of participants chose to respond, up from 24% for the previous survey in 2018.

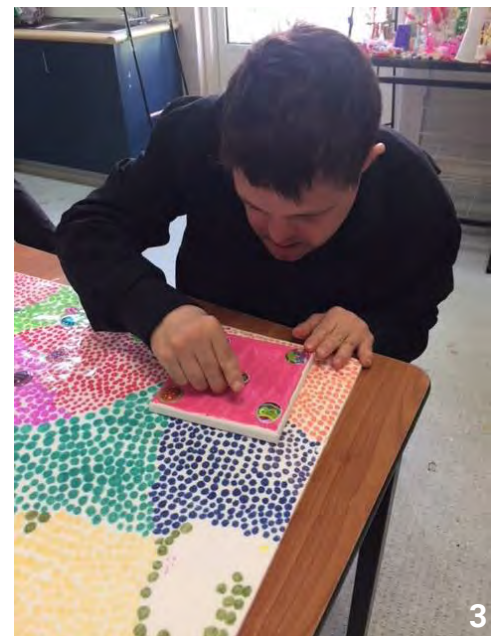
When asked what they like about Distinctive Options, the most common responses included:

- Fun activities
- Staff
- Friends
- Sport
- Community activities
- Being independent and learning
- Familiarity
- Cooking
- Train and bus rides


Our participants suggested that we could improve by:

- Developing more activities
- Providing more emotional/physical support
- Having work experience opportunities
- Having more staff


Recommendations to improve future participant surveys included survey modifications for participants requiring augmentative and alternative formats, the option to complete the survey online or in paper form, and the development of a survey without pictures and presented in a more sophisticated manner for participants without intellectual disabilities.



Do you like Distinctive Options?  tick 1



YES



NO

What I like about Distinctive Options is:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Distinctive Options would be better if....?

\_\_\_\_\_

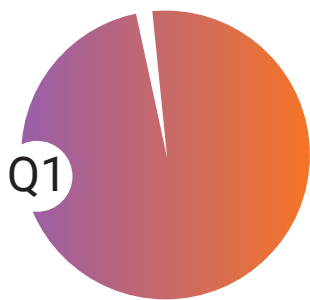
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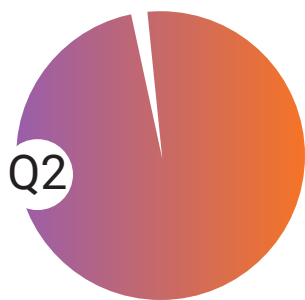
**Photos:** 1) An excerpt from the 2019 Participant Survey. 2) Sam practices setting a table in the survival skills program. 3) Simon works on a mosaic in the Sunbury art room. 4) Lachlan visits a polar bear at Melbourne Museum.



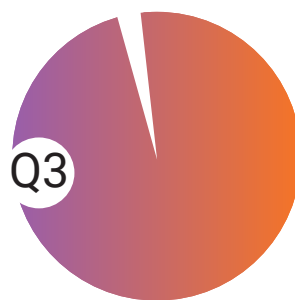
## Participant Survey Responses Excerpt



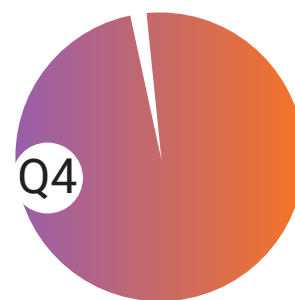
1. Do you like Distinctive Options?  
98% said yes, 2% said no



2. Do staff listen to you?  
96% said yes, 4% said no



3. Do staff make you feel important?  
98% said yes, 2% said no



4. Would you tell a friend to come to this service?  
98% said yes, 2% said no

# BRAD'S TRAVEL TRAINING JOURNEY



Photo: Brad touches on with his Myki at St Albans Train Station

Brad started with Distinctive Options in January this year. He used to travel to his previous day service via the bus transport, which meant that he had to wake up early and leave more than an hour before his program started.

Brad started attending our St Albans service and travelled to and from the service with the support of a staff member every day. Throughout the year, Brad increased his confidence walking to and from the train station and using public transport. With the support of the St Albans team, Brad increased his road safety skills and his awareness and regulation of his feelings when in a crowd of people.

With Brad's birthday looming and his confidence and skills increasing, his family and staff worked at a transition program over the course of three weeks to slowly transition Brad to independent travel. This started with Brad walking from his home to the train station, then catching a train by himself. The staff at St Albans spent a week monitoring his independence before support was discontinued.

Brad now travels to and from Distinctive Options independently without staff support. Brad says he "sometimes felt nervous" when he started walking on his own. Now he tells us that he is "proud" of walking by himself and that he is "happy that I can travel on my own to Distinctive Options".



# COMMUNITY LIFE

Distinctive Options is proud to partner with various organisations and participate in events throughout the year. Both staff and participants give their time to help build a sense of inclusion and belonging. Here are just a few of our highlights.

## Sunbury StreetLife Festival

The Sunbury StreetLife Festival is held annually in November on one of Sunbury's main streets. The free festival offers local business displays, live entertainments, hands-on workshops and various fun activities, and aims to promote Sunbury's history, businesses and community. Participants and staff volunteered their time, partnering with Sunbury Community Health to run the Communi-TEA van and with Sunbury Fruit Market to make smoothies using bikes. Each year, the festival organisers develop 'business bags' and 'deals booklets' with items donated by local organisations and donate the proceeds to two community service organisations. This year, they chose Distinctive Options to be one of those lucky recipients, raising \$1000 for our service.





## SunFest

SunFest is an annual three-day festival that has been running in Sunbury for over 40 years. This free event provides fun and entertainment for all ages, including amusement rides, a Grand Street Parade, live music, local entertainment and a fireworks display.

In March, participants from Distinctive Options partnered with Sunbury Community Health to run the Communi-TEA van at SunFest. Volunteering their time, the participants offered iced tea and a chat to members of the public to encourage them to start talking and build community connections.

## Kyneton Daffodil and Arts Festival

Participants from DO Connect Kyneton delivered 2000 pamphlets around Kyneton to raise awareness of the annual Spring community event which offers visual and performing arts, crafts, gardens, flower shows and markets in September.

## Biggest Morning Tea

DO Connect Bendigo hosted their Biggest Morning Tea fundraiser in May for the second year in a row. All funds raised at The Biggest Morning Tea go to support the work of the Cancer Council. Two groups worked together to plan and make sandwiches, cupcakes, dips and fruit platters. Invites to family and friends were sent out prior to the event. With a great turnout, the group raised over \$200.

## Helping Our Farmers

R&R Network in Sunbury held a smoothie and movie fundraiser in September for our farmers in drought. \$172.30 was raised and donated to the Rotary Australian Disaster Fund!



**Photos:** 1) Rob mixes smoothies using the bike. 2) Lucy and Daniel chat outside the Communi-TEA van. 3) Yvette offers iced tea to the community. 4) The business bags ready to be purchased. 5) Ben from Distinctive Options and Bernie from Sunbury Community Health pose for a photo. 6) Tim, Tania and Alex deliver pamphlets around Kyneton. 7) Heidi and Tayla show off their certificate from the Cancer Council. 8) Sam, Emma and Sarah taste test the smoothies.



# TRI STATE GAMES

During the first week of November, 8 participants and 2 staff travelled to Port Adelaide to join in the annual Tri State Games. This week-long sporting event provides up to 300 adults with a disability the chance to compete in various sports including basketball, swimming, track & field, table tennis and many more.



1

The event began with an opening ceremony that included a street parade and raising on the Tri State Games flag. Distinctive Options' Team Galaxy participated in dozens of events throughout the week, resulting in 8 gold medals, 6 silver medals, 11 bronze medals and 1 personal best. During their downtime, they went out for dinner, partied at discos and met many new people from around Australia.



2

Going to the Tri State Games would not be possible without the hard work and enthusiasm of Gail Scott, one of our long serving staff members. Planning begins months in advance, including organising the team, booking accommodation, designing uniforms and running a Bunnings BBQ to raise funds. Gail says "I wouldn't be anywhere else the week the Tri State Games are on!" We are very grateful for the time and effort Gail provides every year to ensure this event can happen!



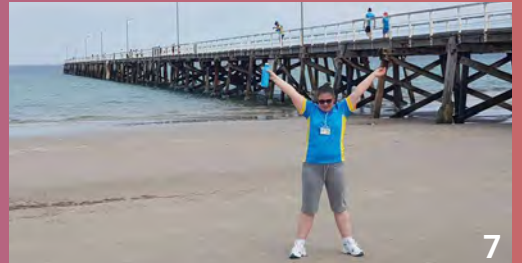
3



4



6



7

## ATHLETE LIST

- Stefan G ●●●●
- Ben F ●●●●●●
- Andrew N ●●●●●●
- Savannah C ●●●●●●
- Corinne M ●●●●●●
- Anna D ●●●●●● PB
- Andrea A ●●●●●●
- Paris R ●●●●●●



5



8

**Photos:** 1) Ben swims freestyle. 2) Andrew plays t-ball. 3) Savannah competes in the table tennis. 4) Team Galaxy show off their medals. 5) Andrea lines up for a photo with Gail and Sam. 6&7) The team chills out at the beach. 8) Everyone gives a thumbs up under the Team Galaxy marquee.

# **HUMAN RESOURCES**



# SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM



The Senior Management Team are tasked with providing leadership and direction to Distinctive Options. They ensure the organisation works towards the goals of the Strategic Plan and monitor our budget and risks.

## **Alma Tuazon - Chief Financial Officer**

Alma was hired in September 2018 following an identified need to have a senior manager who could support Distinctive Options through the impact of the NDIS. Her role is to analyse and review financial data, report on financial performance, prepare budgets and monitor expenditure and costs. She provides financial information to the Board and other shareholders, ensuring the organisation's financial health and security. Alma holds a Bachelor in Accounting and a Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance and Investments. She also has experience in quality and risk management, marketing, IT and business development.

**Photo:** Alma Tuazon, Rick Dunn and Ernie Metcalf

## **Rick Dunn - Executive Manager - Support Services**

Rick has worked for Distinctive Options for almost 20 years. He holds qualifications in business, education, human resources and project management and is responsible for a variety of key management tasks at Distinctive Options, including operations management, strategic advising and general oversight of each of the service areas of the organisation. Rick acts as the Authorised Program Officer for reporting to the Office of the Senior Practitioner and the Authorised Officer for the Client Incident Management System (CIMS). He is a member of the NDS - NDIS Issues and Sector Reform Committee.

## **Ernie Metcalf - Chief Executive Officer**

Ernie has worked for Distinctive Options since the end of 2016. He holds a Master of Business Management and has over 15 years of experience in the disability sector. In his role as CEO, Ernie is responsible for the organisation's entire operations and reports directly to the Chairperson and Board of Directors. He oversees business development and growth, strategic planning and leadership. Ernie holds membership to the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL), National Disability Services (NDS) and Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). He is also a founding member of a Victorian Disability Services CEO Best Practice Network.



# EXECUTIVE MANAGER - SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

On a recent rainy day I found myself by the fire with my son Mitch watching the original movie version of Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory"\*. In a pivotal scene, Wonka's guests are led into the Everlasting Gobstopper Laboratory and I couldn't help but reflect on the NDIS.

Inside the laboratory was the great Gobstopper Machine - a massive contraption of kaleidoscopic spinning wheels, pumping pistons, conveyor belts, belching steam whistles, flailing levers, bubbling vats; chaotic in its perpetual motion and symphonic wonder. How does one even design such a complex machine let alone expect others to understand how it works? And what of the fictional Everlasting Gobstopper itself? A candy that not only changes colours and flavours, but can never be finished and never gets any smaller!

The NDIS promises to be the most significant disability reform in a generation and we have already seen the tremendous impact it is having in the lives of people with disability but it is most certainly a wondrously and endlessly complex system for users and providers alike.

Over the past 12 months, Distinctive Options has absorbed and implemented a raft of changed requirements, guidelines and compliance obligations as the system's architects continue to tinker with and refine the scheme. Many of these changes are referenced elsewhere in this Report but most notably include the:

- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
- NDIS Code of Conduct for Providers and Workers
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission



- NDIS Complaints Management and Resolution Rules
- NDIS Incident Management and Reportable Incident Management Rules
- NDIS Positive Behaviour Support Capability Framework (Restrictive Practices)

This is not an exhaustive list by any stretch and each item relates directly to disability practice/support services, underpinned by hundreds of pages of new nationally mandated and interdependent requirements. It is left to individual service providers to translate these into concise and workable policies, procedures and work instructions while allowing for further adaptation as subsequent refinements are made and versions released



**Photo:** An assortment of Everlasting Gobstoppers

by the NDIA and Quality and Safeguards Commission. Although it may sound contradictory, the experience of 'change' within the disability sector has forever been its one constant feature. Overlay this with the equally fluid and more general imperatives of operating in a pressing commercial environment, ensuring Occupational Health and Safety and Industrial Relations obligations are maintained, privacy and confidentiality information management systems are in place and one begins to fully appreciate the dynamic and challenging environment in which we operate.

In the face of such relentless change and focus on critical business/compliance obligations, one could easily lose sight of the very purpose of all of this machinery. What good is Wonka's magnificent contraption if the candy it produces is unpalatable or even inedible?

The fact of the matter is that a machine can only do what it is designed to do. The secret of Wonka's Everlasting Gobstopper is not in the machine but in the alchemy applied by Wonka to produce the magical Gobstopper. Gears, levers, gauges and switches are no substitute for passion, pride, aspiration and inspiration.

This Annual Report is full of brilliant examples of alchemy at work in the quality of support provided by our front-line staff whose passion, joy, creativity and skill creates the opportunity and foundation for all of the stories and achievements sprinkled so generously throughout these pages.

I commend our tireless Service Leaders who face daily challenges with integrity, optimism and endless energy in seeking to maintain our reputation as a provider of distinction and who will shape

the future of disability services not just for our participants but for all people with disability seeking to live their best life.

We should not be distracted or discouraged by the endless complexity and fluidity of the current service environment, for it has always been this way. Our shared mission and vision, as always, is only ever realised in an ongoing conversation with each participant and through the application of creative thinking and planning, determined action and a commitment to all that is possible.

*"We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams" - Willy Wonka*

**Rick Dunn**  
**Executive Manager - Support Services**

\*If you haven't seen or recently watched the 1971 version of "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" then you should - it's much better than the more recent and dreadful 2005 remake.

## Young Citizen of the Year

Stephanie Challis was named Hume Young Citizen of the Year at the Hume Australia Day Awards. She joined Distinctive Options in 2012 and has been an active member of the R&R Network, advocating for disability access in the community. Hume Mayor Carly Moore said Stephanie was a "voice and champion for access and inclusion". Stephanie says that she is passionate about making sure the community is accessible for everyone.



Photos (left to right): Stephanie at the Awards Ceremony. Stephanie with the Hume Mayor.

# OUR PEOPLE

## Staff

We ended the year with 202 staff members (52.4 Full Time Equivalent), an increase from 157 at June 30 2018. As demonstrated in the charts at the bottom of these pages, the majority of our staff are female. There is a fairly even distribution of age groups. Most disability support services run with a high level of its workforce casualised. In Distinctive Options' case our staff levels for 2018/19 showed approximately 64% were casual staff. A large part of this casualisation is caused by a number of short term funding agreements with service participants. As longer service agreements become the norm, casual staff numbers are expected to decrease as some of these

staff will move into permanent part time roles. Almost 60% of our staff pool work for Individualised Supports, with many participants receiving supports from a number of staff, compared to group support services where a single staff member supports multiple participants.

Staff turnover for 2018/19 was 11.7%. Four permanent staff left Distinctive Options during the year plus three redundancies. This compares favourably with a higher turnover rate across the sector generally in excess of 20%.

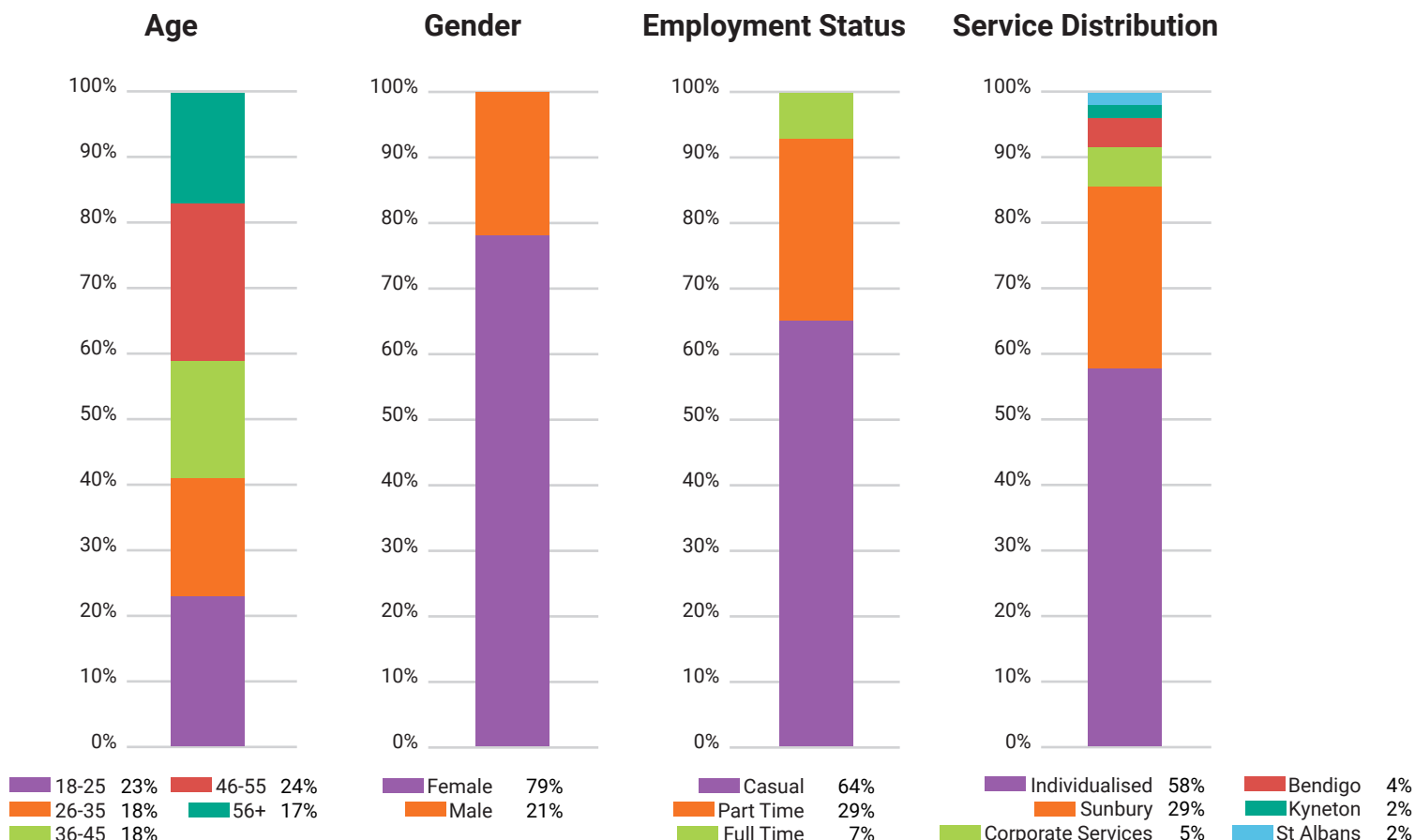
There were no industrial relations issues during the year, down from two in the previous year.

## Restructure

As highlighted in the Message from the CEO at the beginning of this report, a total organisation restructure occurred in May 2019.

The purpose of this restructure was to:

1. Ensure long term growth of Distinctive Options
2. Meet the funding constraints imposed by the NDIS mandatory unit prices
3. Develop a more robust commercial operation that ensure accurate and prompt fund claiming and debt collection for service provision, allowing for strong cash flow to pay staff and other operational costs





The restructure focused on unfunded non-contact roles, along with changes to service distribution and titles (see page 29 for a breakdown of service changes). Four middle management positions were made redundant, with two people affected choosing to take redundancy packages. The remaining two managers were redeployed in new positions. Changes to coordinator roles were made, with the creation of new positions to support the change in service distribution. Similarly, corporate staff roles were updated, with new positions including a Development Officer and an NDIS Intake Coordinator. Staff, participants and families have supported the changes and proven that Distinctive Options is an adaptable and robust organisation that will continue to grow and thrive under the mandatory pricing regime of the NDIS.

### Awards and Wages

Distinctive Options is covered by the modern Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SCHADS) for all disability support workers and some managers and administrative staff. The conditions of a 2009 certified agreement are still applicable for some employees. During the provision of Outside School Hours Care services, relevant staff were covered by the Children's Services Award 2010 (CSA). Salary rates increased twice throughout the year for employees under the SCHADS Award and once for those under the CSA.



**Photo:** Hannah, Gail and Louise pose for a photo at the Melbourne Cup Day Parade in November

Superannuation is paid at 9.5% of salaries as per legislation.

Salary sacrifice is available to all staff according to Fringe Benefits guidelines for charities. Towards the end of 2018, Distinctive Options ceased providing salary sacrifice arrangements internally and contracted the services of AccessPay, a leading provider of salary packaging to the not-for-profit sector.

### Volunteers

Distinctive Options is grateful to the involvement of volunteers who support our organisation in continuing to provide high quality services. Volunteer roles this year included Board membership and program support with participants. All volunteers are screened before they can begin and each person is supported by a structured induction program. Between July 2018 and June 2019, approximately eight volunteers supported our organisation.

This number remains steady from the previous financial year, however it is expected to increase as Distinctive Options begins to campaign for more volunteer involvement in the coming months. We are very grateful for the meaningful contributions made by each volunteer at our service.

### Traineeships

One staff member was employed as a trainee, specialising in business studies. The staff member was offered permanent employment with Distinctive Options following the completion of their course and now works full time in our Sunbury office.

### Probity

Distinctive Options is required to undertake a number of probity checks to ensure the safety of all participants. This year, these probity checks included Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme (DWES) checks, Victorian Police checks and Working With Children Checks (WWCC).



**Photo:** Lucy shows off the Distinctive Options Instagram cutout at the Sunbury Participant Christmas Party

All staff and volunteers who have contact with participants must have a DWES Check and a Police Check before they can begin work at Distinctive Options. Those who will work with children also require a WWCC.

From July 1 2019, new NDIS screening requirements will begin to apply, including a proposed NDIS Worker Screening Check that will supersede the current requirements. This Check will be portable across states and will have ongoing real-time monitoring.

## Policies and Procedures

Distinctive Options has a Quality Management System (QMS) that holds all of our policies and procedures. These documents address a range of issues affecting the organisation, including human resources, fleet management, finance, governance, operations and more. The policies and procedures are

reviewed regularly and are subject to internal and external audits (see Page 47).

## Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment

Distinctive Options is committed to providing a workplace free from discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying. Clear information and processes around reporting and responding to these are provided to all employees within the Human Resources Policy and Procedure.

Behaviour that constitutes discrimination, harassment or bullying will never be tolerated at Distinctive Options and any person found to have engaged in these behaviours will face disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

## Equal Employment

Distinctive Options provides equal opportunity in employment to people without discrimination based on personal characteristics protected under state and federal legislation, including age, disability, gender identity, parental status, race, religion and sexual orientation.

## Professional Development

It must be recognised that the NDIS has had a significant impact on the budget for professional development at Distinctive Options. Funding for staff training is not included in NDIS unit prices, therefore making it extremely difficult to provide for. Organisation-wide staff training days previously

occurred four days per year. From January 1 2019, this decreased to just one official training day per year. This is yet another negative effect of the NDIS on providers.

Despite this, Distinctive Options remains committed to providing professional development opportunities to all staff, including the provision of annual first aid and CPR training. Some of the professional development accessed by staff this financial year included:

- 1 Aboriginal Cultural Safety
- 2 Mental Health First Aid
- 3 Supporting Decision Making
- 4 Quality and Safeguarding
- 5 Protecting Children
- 6 Sensory Workshop

Staff are encouraged to apply for external training opportunities that interest them and are relevant to their role. The organisation also encourages support staff to complete a Certificate IV or higher in disability by subsidising the costs of this training in most cases.

## Staff and Volunteer Induction and Orientation

A structured induction and orientation program is offered to all new employees and volunteers at Distinctive Options. This helps to ensure a seamless transition into the organisation and aims to provide a robust introduction into our workplace practices and structures. The induction and orientation process includes learning about OHS, Supportability, the NDIS Code of Conduct, Zero Tolerance, incident management and much more.



From July 1 2019, all new staff and volunteers will be required to complete the NDIS Worker Orientation Module 'Quality, Safety and You' as part of their induction. This module is a requirement from the NDIS Commission for all NDIS employees to educate them on their obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct.

### Supervision and Monitoring

Supervision and mentoring is an essential component of our employee performance management framework. These practices ensure that employees have ongoing opportunities to discuss their workplace performance and any issues or challenges that they are facing. Supervision and monitoring occurs both formally and informally, either directly with the line manager or in a group setting.

### Staff Survey

All employees were invited to participate in a voluntary and confidential survey during the month of March. Forty-six staff chose to participate in the survey which collected demographic data and asked staff for their opinions on satisfaction and engagement, quality management and human resources, management and leadership, interviews with Board members, marketing updates and the impact of the NDIS. A majority reported believing that their job makes a positive difference in other people's lives and that their work is meaningful. They agreed that the work they do is challenging, stimulating

and rewarding, and that they get a sense of personal satisfaction from their work. Staff reported difficulties with increased workloads and compliance requirements due to the NDIS, limited time to complete journal entries on the Client Management System, a lack of job security and high participant to staff ratios. These challenges were all reported to Management for consideration in future planning, however NDIS funding does not provide any income to support these critical functions.

### Occupational Health and Safety

Distinctive Options is committed to providing an environment that is safe for all staff, participants and visitors, in alignment with the Commonwealth's Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Our Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Coordinator continued to ensure ongoing OHS compliance across the organisation. The OHS Coordinator oversees an OHS Officer at each service area, ensuring dedicated attention to each location's safety needs.

Occupational violence and manual handling are very common risks to employees in the disability sector. For this reason, we have clear policies, procedures and work instructions in place to ensure

staff, participants and visitors are kept safe at all times.

An OHS Schedule outlines the OHS practices of the organisation, including meetings, electrical test and tag, emergency evacuation drills and first aid/spill kit checks. Strict processes are in place for fleet management and machine use, and first aid training is provided to staff across the organisation as required. Staff were again encouraged to access free Flu vaccinations, with three employees choosing to be reimbursed for flu vaccinations they personally organised. This is a low uptake and we hope to increase this in 2020.

The significant increase in lost time from the previous year (as shown in the table below) is predominately due to a single employee who required WorkCover after an injury exacerbated an existing condition.

### Staff Newsletters

Monthly staff newsletters continued to be written and shared by the Development Officer this year. We began to use the MailChimp platform for this process as we can access more data and have a more professional layout. Topics this year included the restructure, NDIS, cultural and religious events, marketing and information about mental health in the workplace.

### OHS Data

OHS Measure	17/18	18/19
Lost time	26 hours	738 hours
Lost-time injuries	1	1
Serious injuries	0	0
Manual handling injuries	0	0



## Flexible Work Practices

Flexible working arrangements are available to employees, including flexible hours, the possibility of working from home, the opportunity to move from full time to part time employment and any other reasonable arrangement. These flexible work arrangements have become more popular this financial year and have enabled several employees to better balance their work, personal life and family commitments.

## Gender Issues

Distinctive Options demonstrates its commitment to equality in the workplace with a number of women holding key roles. This includes the CFO position, as well as a majority of coordinator roles across services. Gender diversity is also actively encouraged on the Board. Our Human Resources processes ensure that staff are paid according to role responsibilities and individual qualifications and experience.

## Family and Domestic Violence Reform

In line with the National Employment Standards, all staff now have access to five days of unpaid leave per year to deal with family and domestic violence. A new policy and procedure was created to detail our support for staff experiencing family and domestic violence.

# ALL ABILITIES GRANT

Hume City Council provide grants to help community organisations carry out projects and activities throughout the municipality. We were very grateful to receive almost \$6000 from Hume for a Partnership Grant. This funding allowed us to partner with the Council to develop and deliver an All Abilities Performing Arts Group in Broadmeadows.

The group participate in weekly workshops to develop performances for the community. Their first public performance at the Together on the Green event in Sunbury was a great success and a lot of fun for everyone involved. Now into its sixth month, the program is delivering tangible outcomes for participants, including increased self-confidence and social opportunities, greater resilience and improved health outcomes. Skill development has also been evidenced, with improvements to public transport use, functional literacy and money handling.



**Photos:** 1) A Certificate of Recognition from Hume City Council. 2) At the Awards Night. 3) The All Abilities Performing Arts Group sing and dance at the Day on the Green event in Sunbury.



# GIRL CODE

Our Girl Code group were recognised by a local Sunbury newspaper for their efforts in supporting crisis relief centre CareWorks Sunbury.

The group designed and created flyers and boxes to collect health and sanitary products for women and families in Sunbury and Macedon Ranges, and also raised \$468 for CareWorks to continue helping vulnerable women.

(News article published by Star Weekly on 3 December 2018.)

## Caring women band together



A DISTINCTIVE OPTIONS GROUP HAS BEEN FUNDRAISING FOR CARE WORKS. PICTURED ARE FROM LEFT STEPHANIE, MARG, SIMONE, AMY AND BARBARA.

A 'girls night' was held in Sunbury as an extended hours activity. The group arrived in their pyjamas, put on face masks, painted their nails and settled in for delicious food and drinks.



1

Photos: 1) Monique, Laura, Marnie and Hannah with some of the products they collected. 2) The girls give a cheers. 3) The Girls Night lightbox.



2

We gave a shout out to the girls of Distinctive Options on International Women's Day in March.

A collage posted on Facebook (see left) received almost 70 'likes' and received a total 'reach' of 985 people.



3

**OPERATIONS**



# OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

## Accreditations and Government Issues

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provide funding to the majority of participants. Some funding is also provided by the Department of Health (DOH) who fund the Continuity of Support program for participants aged 65+. Distinctive Options is compliant with all regulators, with the full NDIA transition expected to be completed from July 2019.

The management team work diligently throughout the year to ensure that the organisation is compliant with legislation. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation takes place through regular internal reviews and audits. These activities ensure that we are able to meet state and federal legislation requirements at all times.

## Impact of Government Policies

Distinctive Options is required to comply with standards, service delivery contracts and legislative obligations from both state and federal bodies. The organisation continued to balance the requirements of the NDIA and DHHS, with transition arrangements to begin from July 2019. Distinctive Options continues to undertake the required quality assurance processes through regular independent audits against government standards.

The organisation is further guided by legislation, regulation and standards regarding child protection, participant welfare, privacy and confidentiality, health and safety, industrial relations and records management.

As a charity, Distinctive Options also meets the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), including submission of an Annual Financial Statement and other documentation. Financial and accounting matters are further subject to the requirements of the Corporations Act 2001 and the Australian Accounting Standards.

## Research and Development

Distinctive Options actively participates in a variety of partnerships and networks that contribute to our research and development. These opportunities allow us to stay well-informed of the latest updates occurring across the disability sector throughout

Australia and internationally.

As a member of the peak body National Disability Services (NDS), our management and key staff are actively involved in various activities where important issues are discussed.

The CEO and members of the management team are active participants in the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL), a forum that brings together leaders from across the world to discuss best practice models and innovations.

The Executive Manager Support Services is also a member of the NDS - NDIS Issues and Sector Reform Committee, whilst the CEO is a member of the Harvard Business Review Advisory Council and the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). The HBR Advisory Council brings leaders together to share their opinions on current business issues and research findings.



**Photo:** The Rights & Responsibilities Network in Kyneton holding a Biggest Morning Tea fundraiser

## Continuous Improvement

An important component of our Quality Management System (QMS) are regular audits and ongoing continuous improvements.

This year, we undertook two external audits:

- Human Services Standards Maintenance Audit
- AS/NZS ISO 9001: 2016 Audit

Twenty-one internal audits were also conducted this year in a range of areas including human resources, incident management, complaints and feedback, child safety, governance. Each found potential improvements to be made which were discussed with senior management and implemented across the organisation.

Continuous improvements identified were communicated to staff via email, through the staff newsletter or at staff meetings.

Staff involved in quality have been working hard to prepare the organisation for the full implementation of the NDIS in July 2019. This includes a full review and update of our QMS and a decision to cease ISO accreditation in place of NDIS certification which acts similarly to ISO.

## Privacy Issues

Distinctive Options is compliant with the following privacy legislation: Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), Information Privacy Act 2000, Health Records Act 2001 and the Australian Privacy Principles 2014.

We also act according to the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme and NDIS requirements including the Code of Conduct and the Practice Standards. We treat all individuals with dignity and respect, maintaining the confidentiality of all employee, volunteer and participant information at all times. No privacy breaches occurred this year.

## Environmental Responsibility and Sustainability

With a goal to integrate sustainable development into all of our activities, we are committed to minimising our impact on the environment.

Some of the measures we have implemented at Distinctive Options are:

- Conserving natural resources by reusing and recycling, including recycling toner cartridges, double-sided printing and using electronic communication where possible
- Using energy responsibly
- Working with suppliers who promote sound environmental practices
- Supporting all of our participants to act in an environmentally responsible manner

## Technology

Distinctive Options continues to deliver efficient and reliable technology services to support and enable business operations to deliver quality supports to participants. We renewed our engagement with BigFish Technology who

assist us with IT services and support our IT development projects.

We continue to use Supportability as a Client Management System. This cloud system can be accessed on desktop, tablet and mobile devices. Staff use SupportAbility to record participant activities, progress on participant goals and to sign off on shifts. As well as managing participant information, the software integrates with the NDIA and allows for processing of NDIS claims. Recent developments allowed us to integrate Supportability with two other systems, Zed Axis and Reckon, allowing us to automate our billing of NDIS participants. Timely invoices are now produced every fortnight and sent to financial intermediaries and families. The linkage of these three systems has produced significant efficiencies in the billing process and ensured a steady stream of cash flow to strengthen our financial sustainability.

With the growth of the business and subsequent increase in staffing numbers, Distinctive Options has embarked on a new technology project to establish our Human Resources database. We have engaged HR3, an integrated Human Resources (HR) and payroll solution to create a seamless workflow. HR3 will boost HR capabilities with organisation chart, workflows, skills, training, property and more. HR3 offers a robust module that will seamlessly integrate

with our payroll software with comprehensive features set to efficiently manage and develop employees. This project is currently under way with payroll expected to go live in December 2019 and HR in 2020.

### **Australasian Reporting Awards**

Distinctive Options received a silver award in recognition for outstanding work in the production of the 2018 Annual Report. This was extremely exciting for the organisation, with the certificate now taking

pride of place in our Head Office. The Award assures us that we are providing high quality reporting to our stakeholders through the Annual Report.



## **MARKETING**

### **Marketing Plan**

Distinctive Options has a Strategic Marketing Plan and a Marketing Report. The Strategic Marketing Plan describes our marketing priorities, strategies, actions and goals, while the report tracks our monthly progress regarding marketing actions. These documents are managed by the Marketing and Fundraising Committee (Page 56) who ensure that the organisation is on track to meet our marketing goals. Marketing activities this year included Facebook posts, fleet advertising, newspaper articles and advertisements, an updated website, attendance at expos and a new radio campaign with LightFM. There are plans in place to conduct a movie fundraiser in late July and barbecue fundraisers in the local community.



### **New Website**

We launched our new website in February after spending many months perfecting it. We now have a much more modern and visually appealing page, with the ability to alter text size and conduct searches. Now managed through WordPress, the website can be maintained internally by the Development Officer, allowing us to make changes and add content whenever this is required.

### **Brand Awareness**

Distinctive Options continued to work on increasing our brand awareness through printed and online material, video production and attendance at events. With the restructure occurring in 2019, new materials were required. These are currently in progress and will include updated pamphlets and banners.

### **Events**

Our coordinators attended expos and information sessions throughout the year with a goal to promote

Distinctive Options to a wider audience. This year, we hosted stalls at events including the Melton Care Expo and Hume City Council Expo, as well as mini expos at local specialist schools.

### **Facebook**

Distinctive Options actively uses Facebook to provide information about our services and participants, with around five posts added per week. Staff volunteer their time to contribute to the page and to respond to the messages and comments left by the public. We are extremely grateful for those that give their time to raise awareness of our organisation.

Facebook 'likes' continued to increase, from 1197 to 1575 at June 30 2018 and 2019 respectively. Reach (the total number of people seeing our posts on their newsfeeds) increased to an average of 841 per day (up from 584 the previous year) and hit almost 17,000 in late August following our call for Coles Collectibles.



# RISK MANAGEMENT

Distinctive Options recognises risk management as an integral part of good organisation management. The CEO and Board of Directors are responsible for overall risk management through the implementation and monitoring of a strategic and operational risk framework. They oversee a variety of activities to ensure that all risks are effectively identified, analysed, treated, monitored and communicated.

As part of the risk management process, Distinctive Options:

- Promotes good risk management practices
- Implements procedures to reduce risk
- Recognises all staff are responsible for risk management
- Encourages the reporting of potential risks
- Trains staff in proactive and preventative practice

## Risk Register

Distinctive Options maintains a Risk Register that records all identified risks to the organisation. There are four categories of risk:

1. Business viability and sustainability
2. Values, ethics and reputation
3. Information technology management
4. Occupational health and safety

The Risk Register provides details about each risk, who is responsible for managing the risk and the treatments and controls to be implemented.



**Photo:** Kim leads an emergency evacuation drill in Bendigo

## Strategic and Business Planning

Detailed reporting processes from management to the Board occur monthly, quarterly and annually. This focuses on performance towards strategic objectives and the budget. Financial reporting is particularly important, with monthly results analysed and revised forecasts developed regularly.

## Internal Auditing

Internal auditing processes are in place to ensure that the organisation is compliant with all quality requirements, including the National Insurance Disability Service Standards and the Child Safe Standards. Audits are prioritised according to risk and are conducted across all areas of the organisation, including governance, finance, operations, systems, processes and controls.

## 2018/19 RISKS

Some of the most significant potential risks that we identified and effectively managed this year using the risk framework include:

- Loss of government funding or financial mismanagement
- Participant or staff injury
- NDIA funding limits viability
- Failure to maintain compliance or certification requirements
- Participant numbers increase beyond service capacity
- Technology failure resulting in loss of records
- Service locations face significant increases in rent
- Theft or damage to equipment
- Vehicle accident leading to injury

# FILM MAKING WITH THE PROFESSIONALS



Film making requires strong communication and teamwork skills, let alone operating a camera and adding sound effects in the editing suite. Participants from DO Connect Bendigo managed all these skills while working in partnership with local film makers Hebron Films to produce a short documentary on local up and coming dance teacher Sally Brockley Moon.

Jarrold Stephens, Cailee Mitchell and Heidi Mansbridge captured Sally's dynamic dance moves with hand held cameras in low light conditions with music volumes pumped up to the max and dancers freewheeling all around. Tayla Justice, James Wragg and Jamie Forder picked up some new skills in the editing suite, trimming clips, adjusting sound levels and adding final credits.

The film launched at the Bendigo VALID expo on 9th May 2019 and we hope to screen it again at the Geelong VALID expo in 2020. Copies are also available for a small fee, by request from DO Connect Bendigo.

For Sally the film might be the perfect resume, for Z fit studios it could be a useful promotional tool, but for participants it's an opportunity to work behind the camera for a change – to be the story makers, not just the subjects of someone else's story.

Staff member Julian Williams is currently supporting the DO Connect Bendigo film makers with a new project –an adjunct to DO's "Speak Up" film which facilitates discussion around rights and responsibilities.

Sally's Story was funded by the City of Greater Bendigo, with logistical support from members of the Diversity Video Group - a sub group of the Disability Services Peer Network. We thank John Wills, Kim Muller, Meg Irwin and Jasmine Noske for their support, as well as Daniel Rees, Disability Inclusion Officer with City of Greater Bendigo for bringing it all together.



**Photos (top to bottom):** Jamie as his hero John Cena in a still from his short biopic. Jamie and crew brushing up on their on-camera interview skills. Jamie, Caleb, Julian and Hebron Films staff editing Sally's Story. Jamie and Tayla in the editing suite with Caleb Maxwell from Hebron Films.

**GOVERNANCE**



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Photo:** Graham, Derek, Kalma, Anthony, Nancy, Simon and Terry (Darren not pictured)

## **Anthony Aboud**

**MBA**

**Chairperson**

Now in his sixth year as a Director and fourth year as Chairperson, Anthony brings over twenty years of experience in banking and financial services to the board. He has held a number of senior leadership roles spanning strategy, operations, process improvement, sales, transformational change and customer experience.

Anthony holds a Masters of Business Administration and a Six Sigma Black Belt. He is currently working as General Manager Business Process Transformation at the National Australia Bank, utilising his financial services and change management background.

## **Simon McKenzie**

**BCom, GradDip (LegPrac)**

**Deputy Chairperson**

**Member of the Governance and Risk Committee**

Simon is an admitted lawyer with a commerce degree and a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Simon currently manages the office of the Public Transport Ombudsman which helps people resolve disputes about public transport issues including accessibility, and previously worked for the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

He brings solid experience in dispute resolution, stakeholder engagement, customer advocacy, company operations and regulatory affairs. He has a proven track record in team management and leadership through organisational change.

## **Terry Rodrigues**

**BCom**

**Member of the Audit and Finance Committee**

Our current longest serving Director, Terry joined the Board in 2012 and retired from the public service in 2015 after 24 years. Throughout his career, Terry held operational, supervisory, investigative and managerial roles at Melbourne and Darwin Airport.

Terry brings a wealth of knowledge around policy and procedural matters. He is experienced in audits, risk management issues and the development and execution of operational endeavours.

Terry previously worked in the banking sector in Karachi where he was employed as an accounts officer in Pakistan.

## **Darren Quigley**

**CPA, BBus (AccLaw),**

**AdvDip (FinPlan)**

**Chairperson of the Audit and Finance Committee**

Darren has been a Director for over five years. He specialises in accounting and law, with over 25 years of experience in senior financial management roles, predominately in the public sector.

Darren is a Certified Practising Accountant. He has a degree in business majoring in accounting and law, as well as an advanced diploma in financial planning.

Darren currently works for the Department of Education as a facilities manager. He is a black belt karate instructor and volunteers for the State Emergency Service in Sunbury.

## **Kalma Rathouski**

**MSocSc**

**Chairperson of the Marketing and Fundraising Committee**

Kalma is into her fourth year as a Board member at Distinctive Options. She holds a Masters in Social Science and has almost 15 years of experience in working for the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman where she gained experience in conflict resolution, investigations, stakeholders and communications. Kalma is currently taking time away from paid work to care for her family. She has a keen passion for social justice and became interested in disability after spending several months in a wheelchair following an accident.

## **Derek Jones**

**FCPA**

**Chairperson of the Governance and Risk Committee**

**Part Time Member of the Audit and Finance Committee**

Derek is a finance professional who has been a Director with Distinctive Options for over three years. He has had a significant career in both the public and private sectors, including 15 years as a Finance Manager and Chief Financial Officer of Sustainability Victoria.

Derek is currently working part time in a financial role.

Derek's areas of expertise include financial reporting, risk management, strategic planning, governance, compliance and ensuring organisations meet strategic objectives.

## **Graham Holt**

**Member of the Marketing and Fundraising Committee**

Graham brings over 30 years of national and international experience in customer service, marketing and communications, project delivery, change management and organisational capacity building.

He is currently employed as the General Manager Customer and Community Relations at Western Water where he is responsible for managing customer support programs, community engagement, network operations and water supply management.

Graham has a strong understanding of occupational health and safety, the impact of culture and the implementation of KPIs.

## **Nancy Peat**

**AdvDip (FinPlan)**

**Member of the Marketing and Fundraising Committee**

Nancy has extensive experience in financial services, previously employed with Mercer Australia and Shadforth Financial Group. Joining the Board to give back to the community and gain valuable experience, Nancy brings valuable skills in business development, relationship building, financial management and marketing capabilities.

Nancy has a personal connection to the disability sector, with a grandson who has Autism Spectrum Disorder. She participates in a variety of volunteering opportunities, including assisting the homeless and raising money for diabetes.

# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Distinctive Options is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and registered as a charity under the Australian and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Act 2012. Ultimate responsibility for the organisation rests with the Board of Directors.

## The Role of the Board

The Board are tasked with ensuring Distinctive Options achieves its objectives whilst mitigating risks. As a group, the Board provides strategic leadership and goals for the organisation, monitoring business activities and financial position and ensuring that all actions are achievable, implemented and monitored. A Board Charter is in place that describes the Board's responsibilities which each member takes very seriously.

## Board Committees

The Board operates three committees that are dedicated to specific areas of the business. Each Committee has Terms of Reference that are reviewed annually. They meet regularly to discuss relevant issues and provide recommendations to the Board for consideration. Corporate Services staff also attend Committee meetings where appropriate. A description of these Committees and their 2018-2019 activities is provided on Page 56.

## Board Meetings

The Board holds a minimum of 12 meetings per year, with no scheduled meetings for the month of January. Additional meetings are held as required. One additional meeting was called this year in mid-August in response to the financial loss in the 2017-2018 financial year to address appointing a CFO, review organisational structure and review cash flow. This year, the Strategic Planning Day meeting was categorised as a Board meeting and therefore was not considered an additional Board activity.

The CEO attended all Board meetings. Once employed, the CFO also attended Board meetings, allowing her to present financial information to the Board as required. The Board agenda is developed by the CEO whilst minutes are taken and disseminated by the CFO. Board member attendance at meetings is disclosed in the table at the bottom of this page.

## Board Members

Each Board member volunteers their time to Distinctive Options. They receive no remuneration for their services, but may receive reimbursement for reasonable costs incurred due to Board activities. The Constitution provides an indemnity to the Directors and specifies that:

- There must be a minimum of five members (see five year comparison of Board member numbers at the bottom of Page 55)
- No employees, including the CEO, can be a director of the company
- Directors are appointed for up to three terms of three years each
- Membership expires at the ninth Annual General Meeting (AGM) following their appointment to the Board
- Board meeting attendance is a minimum of 67% of Board meetings per annum

The names of each Board member, their appointment date and their maximum term expiry are provided below.

## Attendance at Board Meetings

Director	Eligible	Attended
Anthony Aboud	13	12
Simon McKenzie	13	12
Terry Rodrigues	13	12
Darren Quigley	13	13
Kalma Rathouski	13	11
Derek Jones	13	12
Graham Holt	13	12
Nancy Peat	13	11

## Director Terms

Director	Appointment Date	Max Term Expires
Terry Rodrigues	4th June 2012	AGM 2020
Anthony Aboud	12th March 2013	AGM 2021
Darren Quigley	9th June 2014	AGM 2022
Kalma Rathouski	16th March 2015	AGM 2023
Derek Jones	23rd February 2016	AGM 2024
Graham Holt	27th February 2018	AGM 2026
Simon McKenzie	27th March 2018	AGM 2026
Nancy Peat	24th April 2018	AGM 2026



## Director Renominations

Director re-nominations took place in November at the Annual General Meeting. Anthony Aboud re-nominated for a final 3-year term and Derek Jones re-nominated for a second 3-year term. Simon McKenzie was appointed as the Deputy Chairperson.

## The Chairperson

The Board Chairperson is elected by the Board and is responsible for ensuring that the Board provides high quality governance and vision to Distinctive Options, that meetings are effective, that members are skilled, and that matters are considered in a timely and transparent manner. This years' Board Chairperson was Anthony Aboud.

## Accountability

As the governing body, the Board is accountable to:

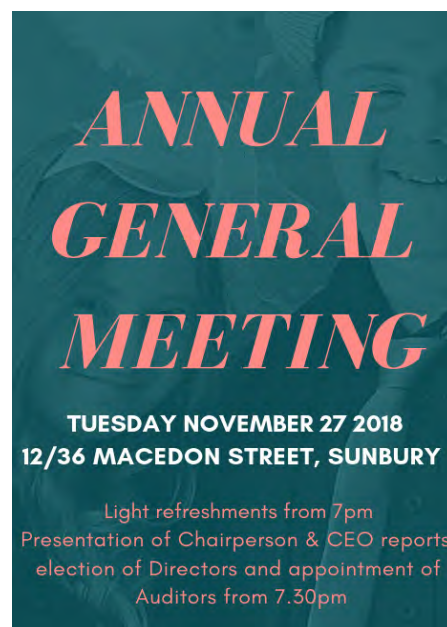
- The members of Distinctive Options
- The community
- Relevant government funding bodies, including the National Disability Insurance Agency and the Department of Health and Human Services
- The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- The laws (as amended) relating to the Charities Act, Corporations Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Disability Services Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Privacy Act and industrial relations

## Conduct, Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Board members are required to comply with the relevant laws and codes of conduct. They must act with integrity, good faith, fairness and honesty at all times. They are required to be diligent, attend meetings and devote sufficient time to preparing for meetings. Each Director is aware of the Code of Conduct and the Governance Policy that describes ethical practice, conflicts of interest and confidentiality. Conflicts of interest are a standing agenda item and must be declared, recorded and responded to in accordance with the Governance Policy. A register of conflicts of interest is maintained by the CEO. Directors are also required to complete a Confidentiality Agreement as part of their induction to the Board. There were no identified breaches or corruption this year.

## Independent Advice

The Board accesses independent advice from a number of sources and for a variety of reasons. For financial matters, advice was typically sought from financial auditors. For legal matters, advice was sought from VMIA. For industrial relations, advice was sought from Workplace Legal and Moores Legal Service. For risk management, advice was sought from Saward Dawson.



**Photo:** The 2018 Annual General Meeting invitation

## Board Review and Development

The Board periodically reviews its own performance for its development and quality assurance. This year, Leadership Victoria were engaged to provide a Board Mentoring Program. Julie Green attended the September Board meeting to present a report on Director responsibilities and the role of the Board. Throughout the year she also met regularly with the Chairperson to provide mentoring and advice.

## Management Responsibility

The Board formally delegates responsibility for daily operations to the CEO and the Senior Management Team (refer to Page 36 of this Annual Report for more information). The CEO is also delegated to act as the Company Secretary/Public Officer.

## Director Numbers

Year	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Members	8	8	7	8	8

# BOARD COMMITTEES

## Audit and Finance Committee

**Members:** Darren Quigley (Chairperson), Terry Rodrigues, Derek Jones (part time)

The role of the Audit and Finance Committee is to review financial reports, endorse budgets, ensure the organisation has adequate funds and resources, liaise with the financial auditor, monitor liquidity and viability ratios and review new business cases.

This year, the Audit and Finance Committee:

- Reviewed and approved the annual budget
- Conducted monthly reviews of financial reports and organisation viability

In September, the Board agreed to change the Committee's name from Audit and Risk to Audit and Finance, thus transferring the Committee's focus from risk to finance. The responsibility for risk was moved to the Governance and Risk Committee.

## Governance and Risk Committee

**Members:** Derek Jones (Chairperson), Simon McKenzie

The Governance and Risk Committee is responsible for reviewing governance and risk documents, overseeing the appointment and recruitment of Directors, holding the CEO accountable for implementing risk and business plans, ensuring the Board has a succession plan in place, ensuring regular evaluations of Board performance and reviewing external quality assurance reports and findings.

This year, the Governance and Risk Committee:

- Reviewed almost all Governance policies
- Reviewed general governance practices

In September, the Committee changed their name from Governance to Governance and Risk, with the Committee becoming responsible for focusing on risk management at Distinctive Options.

## Marketing and Fundraising Committee

**Members:** Kalma Rathouski (Chairperson), Graham Holt, Nancy Peat

This year, the Marketing and Fundraising Committee:

- Revised the Strategic Marketing Plan
- Developed and implemented a Communication and Engagement Plan
- Developed and implemented a Fundraising Action Plan

The Marketing and Fundraising Committee is responsible for reviewing marketing and fundraising strategies and plans, reviewing and acting upon participant and supporter feedback surveys and developing and monitoring the Fundraising Action Plan.

In September, the Committee changed their name from Strategy and Marketing to Marketing and Fundraising, with the Committee moving their focus on fundraising activities for the organisation.

The number of meetings held and attendance rates of Board members are detailed below.

### Audit and Finance Meetings

Director	Eligible	Attended
Darren Quigley	9	9
Terry Rodrigues	9	8
Derek Jones	5	2
Anthony Aboud	2	2

### Governance and Risk Meetings

Director	Eligible	Attended
Derek Jones	5	5
Simon McKenzie	5	5

### Marketing and Fundraising Meetings

Director	Eligible	Attended
Kalma Rathouski	7	7
Graham Holt	7	4
Nancy Peat	7	6



# TOGETHER ON THE GREEN

On the 3rd of December, Distinctive Options partnered with Sunbury Community Health to celebrate International Day of People with Disability. This year's theme was "empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". We chose to host Together On The Green - three hours of fun in the centre of town. We provided free food, drinks and games across the Village Green for everyone in the community to share. Sunbury Community Health's Communi-TEA van was there to provide delicious iced tea. A dance and song performance was provided by our All Abilities Dance Group and Christmas carols were provided by In Sync Choir. Long-time staff member Kevin also brought out his banjo and provided some tunes for the afternoon.



1



2



3



4



5

**Photos:** 1) Emma works the barbecue. 2) The Performing Arts group sing "This Is Me". 3) Adam checks out the Communi-TEA van and giant chess. 4) Stefan, Lucy, Corinne, Paris and Sarah line up for a photo. 5) Kevin plays the banjo for the crowd.



# VOLUNTEERING FOR GOOD



Our Sunbury service has had some great success in our volunteering activities. One of our volunteering groups, run by staff member Gwen, focuses on providing random acts of kindness to people in the local community. The group partnered with Coles Sunbury to organise participants to assist shoppers with carrying bags, pushing trolleys and loading bags into cars. Positive feedback from the community has come through, with Michael thanking the group and saying "It made my day. Maybe we can all learn from such strategies".



The group also volunteer at the St Andrews Drop In Centre in Sunbury. The participants made cups of tea and coffee and serve morning tea to community members. Drop In Centre Coordinator Jan is grateful for the help provided, explaining that the group helps to "keep the community of Sunbury a friendly and welcoming town".



Our second volunteering group recently collaborated with the local Winter Night Shelter project who provide a place to eat and sleep to local people experiencing homelessness. The group prepared food for several weeks that was then taken and served to the shelter's guests. Participant Jessica told us how she made "muffins and dips" for the project which was gratefully received by the project Coordinators.



This group also visited the Salvation Army in Melbourne this year and have plans to create even more volunteering opportunities in the future to support people experiencing homelessness.

**Photos (top to bottom):** Maurice and Anna serve scones and tea at the Drop-In Centre. Caitlin helps dry the dishes after morning tea. The group help people in the community to put their shopping in their cars. Chris, Yvette, staff member Sharon, Jessica and Matt with some food for the Winter Night Shelter.

# FINANCES

# STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS

Year Ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Revenue	8,282,170	5,587,539
Employee benefit expenses	(6,408,567)	(4,890,414)
Participant program costs	(167,129)	(115,832)
Rental expense	(253,141)	(217,944)
Depreciation expenses	(106,537)	(91,343)
Motor vehicle expenses	(55,457)	(77,542)
Telephone	(58,179)	(42,803)
Staff amenities	(21,104)	(26,840)
Computer expenses	(124,343)	(108,405)
Consultancy fees	(28,804)	(10,621)
Training	(20,785)	(28,693)
Repairs and maintenance	(27,252)	(23,974)
Printing	(25,194)	(40,115)
Subscriptions	(29,012)	(15,098)
Equipment leases	(7,302)	(11,232)
Board of Management costs	(1,887)	(7,181)
Other expenses	(125,898)	(227,725)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>821,579</b>	<b>(348,223)</b>
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>821,579</b>	<b>(348,223)</b>

\*The full financial information and accompanying notes can be viewed online at <https://www.distinctiveoptions.com.au/about-us/publications/>

ABN: 89 090 842 470



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As At 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,340,628	223,100
Trade and other receivables	504,910	698,652
Financial assets	381,222	380,639
Other current assets	27,694	11,467
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>2,254,454</b>	<b>1,313,858</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Plant and equipment	274,442	348,624
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>274,442</b>	<b>348,624</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>2,528,896</b>	<b>1,662,482</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	324,830	336,423
Provisions	415,042	367,675
Other liabilities	65,685	61,815
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>805,557</b>	<b>765,913</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	74,784	69,593
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>74,784</b>	<b>69,593</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>880,341</b>	<b>835,506</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,648,555</b>	<b>826,976</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained earnings	1,648,555	826,976
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>1,648,555</b>	<b>826,976</b>

\*The full financial information and accompanying notes can be viewed online at <https://www.distinctiveoptions.com.au/about-us/publications/>

ABN: 89 090 842 470

# STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
2019		
Balance 1 July 2018	826,976	826,976
Surplus for the year	821,579	821,579
<b>Balance 30 July 2019</b>	<b>1,648,555</b>	<b>1,648,555</b>
2018		
Balance 1 July 2017	1,175,199	1,175,199
Deficit for the year	(348,223)	(348,223)
<b>Balance 30 July 2018</b>	<b>826,976</b>	<b>826,976</b>

# STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>Cash Flows From Operating Activities</b>		
Receipts from customers, government and other funding	8,780,275	5,455,415
Payments to suppliers and employees	(7,644,798)	(5,852,455)
Interest received	14,990	23,099
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>1,150,467</b>	<b>(373,941)</b>
<b>Cash Flows From Investing Activities</b>		
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	–	603
Payment for property, plant and equipment	(32,356)	(138,432)
Redemption/(Placement) of term deposits	(583)	370,820
<b>Net cash used by investing activities</b>	<b>(32,939)</b>	<b>232,991</b>
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents Held</b>	<b>1,117,528</b>	<b>(140,950)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	223,100	364,050
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year</b>	<b>1,340,628</b>	<b>223,100</b>

\*The full financial information and accompanying notes can be viewed online at <https://www.distinctiveoptions.com.au/about-us/publications/>

ABN: 89 090 842 470

# DIRECTOR'S DECLARATION

## Principal Activities

Distinctive Options' principal activities are to provide viable and sustainable disability support services to people in line with the organisation's Constitution and as a registered public benevolent institution (charity) and a deductible gift recipient.

## Short and Long Term Objectives

Under Distinctive Options' strategic plan, its short and long term objectives are centred on the strategic intent to grow our services to assist and empower those we support, helping them to achieve their potential to gain equality and inclusion in the community.

## Strategy for Achieving the Objectives

Distinctive Options' strategy for achieving the objectives is contained within the organisation's Strategic Plan around four key pillars: Be Resilient, Be Distinctive, Be Sustainable and Be Progressive. Distinctive Options has key strategic objectives which underpin these pillars.

## Performance Measures

Distinctive Options uses a Balanced Scorecard to measure operational performance against the strategic objectives. A summary of the results from the Balanced Scorecard are contained within the Annual Report. Some of these performance measures are based around maintaining and growing Distinctive Options' competitive advantage.

## Members' Guarantee

Distinctive Options is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of, and for the purpose of winding up of the company, the amount capable of being called up from each member and any person or association who ceased to be a member in the year prior to winding up, is limited to \$NIL for members that are corporations and \$20 for all other members, subject to the provisions of the company's constitution.

At June 30 2019, the collective liability of members was \$160 (2018: \$160).

## Board of Directors

Details and skills relating to each Director are included in the Annual Report in the Governance section.

## Other Items

The CEO is the appointed company secretary and public officer for Distinctive Options.

## Meetings of Directors

During the 2018-2019 financial year, 34 meetings of Directors (including Committee meetings) were held. Each Director's attendance rate at meetings is provided in the Governance section of the Annual Report. Board meetings are generally held on the final Tuesday of each month, commencing at 6:30pm, at the head office, Suite 12, 36 Macedon Street, Sunbury.

## Auditor's Independence Declaration

The lead auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 30 June 2019 can be found on Page 65.



# DIRECTOR'S DECLARATION

## Distinctive Options Ltd

ABN: 89 090 842 470

### Directors' Declaration

In the opinion of the Directors of Distinctive Options Ltd:

- a) The financial statements and notes of Distinctive Options are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
- i) Giving a true and fair view of its financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
  - ii) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*; and
- b) There are reasonable grounds to believe that Distinctive Options Ltd will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors.

Director .....  Anthony Abaid Chairperson.

Director .....  DARREN QUIGLEY, FCPA - CHAIR OF AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dated this 29 day of October 2019

# AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

## Distinctive Options Ltd

ABN: 89 090 842 470

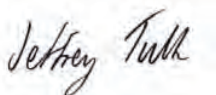
### Auditors Independence Declaration

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2019 there have been no contraventions of:

- a. the auditor independence requirements of the 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- b. any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Seward Dawson



Jeffrey Tulk  
Partner

Blackburn  
Dated: 29 October 2019

# BUILDING INDEPENDENCE



Ryan joined Distinctive Options in 2018, looking for supports to help him live independently. He wanted to learn how to cook, wash his clothes, manage a budget, go grocery shopping and engage in social activities. Our Individualised Supports service matched him with several carefully selected male support workers who we believed would be able to act as positive role models whilst building relationships with Ryan.

Ryan believes that the Individualised Supports service has helped him to "become better at looking after myself" and that "I am now feeling a lot better about myself and feeling happier". He is proud to say that he now regularly cooks tacos for himself with minimal support.



One of his support workers, Nicholas, has seen the change in Ryan as well. He explains "Ryan's progressing well. When I started, I'd suggest 'Let's do your washing' and Ryan would say 'Nah, let's watch TV'. Now, Ryan is initiating it himself. At the start, Ryan required a lot of prompting to engage in his daily living tasks. Now the prompts are more question-based and put the responsibility back onto Ryan as to what the next step is".

As Ryan increases his independence, support workers create new goals and strategies for him. The goal is to reduce Ryan's reliance on others and to take more responsibility over his own life. Consistent routines and participating in physical activity has been extremely useful in maintaining his mental health and motivation. He would eventually like to move out into his own home within a supported independent living model.



Regarding Distinctive Options, Ryan tells us "I like that Distinctive Options provide staff that I can connect with, share similar interests and are of similar age. My last provider would send carers who weren't suitable at all and knew nothing about sport, which is important to me". Some of Ryan's highlights this year were going to St Kilda's Open Air Cinema and getting a tattoo of his favourite football team - Western Bulldogs.



**Photos:** 1) Support worker Nicholas supports Ryan to bake muffins. 2) Ryan takes care of the garden. 3) Ryan gets his long-awaited tattoo. 4) Ryan makes tacos by himself. 5) Support worker Cameron and Ryan at the stove.



# INDEX

## Definitions

Accreditation	Validation that an organisation meets Australian or international quality standards
Balanced scorecard	Framework for measuring performance against strategic goals
Carer	Someone who provides support to a person with disability in their daily life who is not contracted as a paid or voluntary worker
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction for which a response or resolution is expected
Continuous improvement	A structured ongoing effort to improve processes and services
Governance	The system by which an organisation is controlled, operates and is held to account
Incident	Acts, omissions or events that occur in connection with support delivery that have or could have caused harm
NDIA	The organisation who implements the NDIS
NDIS	A new way to provide funding to people with a significant and permanent disability
NDIS plan	A plan that describes the participant's goals and needs, and the supports that the NDIS will fund for them
NDIS provider	A person or organisation that provides supports to people with disability under the NDIS
Risk management	A process used to identify, assess and treat risks to the organisation
Sector	The organisations providing disability supports and the peak bodies that represent them
Standards	Specific requirements about how an organisation should function
Strategy	An organisation's plan for achieving its vision
Worker	Employees, contractors and volunteers engaged by a provider

## Acronyms

ABN	Australian Business Number
ACN	Australian Company Number
ACNC	Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NDS	National Disability Services
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
QMS	Quality Management System
R&R	Rights and Responsibilities

## Index

Auditor's declaration	65
Balanced scorecard	14
Board of Directors	52
Cash flow	62
Committees	56
Community	32
Compliments	6
Continuous improvement	47
Environment	47
Equal employment	41
Equity	62
Events	24
Facebook	48
Feedback	6
Financial overview	16
Future	21
Governance	54
Having a Say Conference	3
History	4
Human rights	29
Map	25
Marketing	48
Mission	4
Occupational Health and Safety	42
Organisation chart	5
Participant survey	30
Policies and procedures	41
Privacy	47
Professional development	41
Profit or loss	60
R&R Network	22
Research	46
Restructure	39
Risk management	49
Staff	39
Stakeholders	5
Strategy	14
Sustainability	47
Technology	47
Tri-State Games	34
Values	4
Volunteers	40
Website	49

# THANK YOU

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support this year.

## Government Funders

National Disability Insurance Agency  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Australian Government Department of Health

## Grant Providers

Department of Education and Training  
Hume City Council

## Donors

Hume City Council  
Sunbury StreetLife Festival

## In Kind Supporters

Bunnings



**Photo:** Ebonie, Marnie and Darren are supported by Bunnings Sunbury in a working bee at the Sunbury service



# GET INVOLVED

## Donate

Every donation we receive is an investment in providing great services to people with disability. As a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) organisation, all donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Donations can be made through our Giving Fund at [www.paypal.com/au/fundraiser/charity/3500192](http://www.paypal.com/au/fundraiser/charity/3500192)

## Leave a Bequest

You can choose to leave a bequest to Distinctive Options in your Will. This legacy provides a significant contribution to the work that we do in the community and helps to secure the future of Distinctive Options. Call us today on 03 9740 7100 for more information.

## Volunteer

Distinctive Options values the contributions of volunteers to support the work that we do. You can play a significant role in improving the lives of people with a disability by sharing your time and skills. We are always seeking volunteers to work directly with our participants and to support our community and fundraising activities. More information is provided online at [www.distinctiveoptions.com.au/careers-and-volunteers](http://www.distinctiveoptions.com.au/careers-and-volunteers)

## Work With Us

Distinctive Options offers staff exceptional opportunities to develop their career in the disability sector and to gain problem solving skills, people management skills and innovative practice experience. We offer a supportive team environment and flexible work hours. More information is provided online at [www.distinctiveoptions.com.au/careers-and-volunteers](http://www.distinctiveoptions.com.au/careers-and-volunteers)

## Spread the Word

If you like what you read in this report, please let other people know about us and the services that we provide.

**Photos (top to bottom):** Jessica shows off her flower crown at the Melbourne Cup Parade. Steven gets up close to a joey in Sunbury. Dominic and Matt play a game of football at the Having A Say Conference in Geelong.





## Get In Touch

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We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation who are the custodians of the land on which this report was created.

