Overview

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The past year has highlighted the real strength of the disability services sector in Western Australia. We are the only State or territory government in the nation to operate trials of our own model of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) – our WA NDIS My Way trials are in the Lower South West and, from 1 July 2015, in the Cockburn-Kwinana area. We have good reason for pursuing our own models of the NDIS. Over the past 20 years, we have built what I believe is the strongest disability services system and, through partnership with non-government organisations, the most developed disability services sector in the country. Our unique trial of the NDIS reflects this: it leverages off our locally accessible, relationship based, individualised model of support, built over time as a result of continuing to listen to West Australians with disability [see: Our focus this year on page 11]. It has been so incredibly positive, from my home in the Lower South West, to experience the WA NDIS My Way trial first hand and really see the benefits of our distinctive WA approach.

With so much effort being focused on the WA NDIS My Way trial, it would be easy to overlook some of our other great achievements this year. The establishment of legislation and infrastructure to deliver a comprehensive Disability Justice Service, including the Bennet Brook Disability Justice Centre, is a truly significant achievement that has been years in the making [see: Project in focus on page 32]. It represents a shift in access to justice for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. We have also moved to transition significant portions of directly delivered services to the non-government sector, giving people with disability greater choice and control than ever before [see: Project in focus on page 83].

We have undertaken huge amounts of procurement and grant disbursement to underpin the continuation of a diverse and innovative sector. And we have taken further steps to ensure the appropriate care and well-being of people with disability through the full implementation of our new Quality System, and further development of our enquiries and complaints system.

One of my key areas of focus as Board Chair is connection with the community, and making sure we are taking steps to make our communities more inclusive and accessible for everyone. This is at the core of the State Government’s Count Me In vision [see: Project in focus on page 44]. We promote this vision and its aspirations in many ways, including through our Count Me In Ambassadors program, of which I am patron. This is driven by a passionate and dedicated group of about 29 people, who give up their time to raise understanding and awareness of disability issues.

As well, this year we have established two projects that support these aspirations and are particularly close to my heart. The first is the Changing Places project currently being rolled out across the State [see: Case study on page 60]. As a person with family experience of the impact a lack of appropriate change and bathroom facilities, I am thrilled this project has been established. It will markedly improve the ability of many West Australians to participate in community life.
The other project I'm particularly pleased with is South West Wheels [see: Project in focus on page 189]. Over the years I have had many discussions with families about a lack of accessible transport options, especially in regional areas, for people with disability, limiting or preventing them from accessing supports and services. The development of South West Wheels gives us a real opportunity to try a flexible approach to vehicle use, based around the individual's needs, rather than when a transport service may be available.

I have also been heartened by the outcomes of the Board Chairs forums, where Chairs of disability sector organisations get together to share information, ideas and expand their understanding of issues across the sector. I am proud to lead this forum which helps maintain a well-informed sector, united in its intent for improving opportunities for people with disability.

I also greatly value my continued engagement with people with disability and their families and carers at the Reference Network meetings, held around the State throughout the year as a forum for people to meet directly and privately with the Commission to discuss matters of importance to them.

The balance we have struck this year, in both looking to the future and addressing the here-and-now gives me great faith in the resilience and capacity of the Commission and the wider disability sector in Western Australia. While the coming years certainly hold challenges, I think we’re ready for them.
Reform is a recurring theme in the Disability Services Commission’s 2014–2015 Annual Report. With the full support of the State Government, we have taken a leadership role in planning, preparing and promoting major reforms in the State's disability services system, culminating in the commencement of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) My Way trial in the Lower South West region.

The changes that are currently taking place are, in many respects, a continuation of a reform journey that commenced back in the 1990s. In the early part of that decade the Western Australian disability service system mirrored many other systems across the Western world. It was a supply-driven, rationed system that offered a fixed set of services. There was little opportunity for people seeking services, especially those with severe or profound disability, to design and plan their own support arrangements. They had very little choice and control over the supports they received.

In the early 1990s the winds of change started to blow through the local disability service system. Strong, visionary leaders started to emerge to challenge the status quo. Underpinned by the principles of inclusion, participation, person-centred planning, early intervention and consumer choice, new approaches were trialled and championed.

During the last years of the previous century the local service system commenced a period of transformational change which continues today. Through a combination of local creativity and ideas borrowed from overseas we saw the emergence of new programs and processes that gradually moved the locus of control from the people running the system to the people using the system. Components of our current service system that we now take for granted such as the state-wide Local Area Coordination service, individualised funding, self-management and supported community living were designed and introduced to transform disability services into a demand driven system based on the needs of the individual.

Over the past 25 years the disability services system has continued to grow and develop based on the vision and principles that were established in the 1990s. Importantly, the system we have today suits the Western Australian context. What we now have is a relationship-based support system with local decision making and a strong partnership between the Disability Services Commission and our partner service provider organisations. The Commission, in partnership with the disability sector, is now well placed to continue the reform journey based on the principles of the NDIS.

Our highest priority for 2014–2015 was the implementation of the WA NDIS My Way trial in the Lower South West along with preparation for the trial’s expansion into the Cockburn-Kwinana area. The preliminary outcomes of this trial indicate that the WA NDIS My Way model provides high quality, individualised, cost effective and timely services for people with a disability, with a high level of expressed consumer satisfaction.

The intensive development work required for the WA NDIS My Way trial is also being used as the basis for change across the rest of the disability services system. The Commission will continue to promote and facilitate the ongoing reform of the state-wide service system; a journey that commenced back in the 1990s. The journey continues.
Our year in focus

The National Disability Insurance Scheme

1 July 2014 was a milestone date in the on-going development of the Western Australian disability services system. It was the start date for the trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in WA.

In 2013 the State and Commonwealth governments agreed on a unique arrangement – a comparative trial of two different models over a two year period. This agreement provides WA with the opportunity to learn from both approaches and build upon the positive features of the State’s existing disability services system.

Our State has long been at the forefront of disability services delivery and began implementing significant reform initiatives well before the agreement for an NDIS was reached. Offering individualised supports and services to people with disability, their families and carers has been at the heart of our business for many years.

During 2014–2015, the State’s WA NDIS My Way model was run by the Disability Services Commission in the Lower South West and the Commonwealth’s NDIS model, run by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), was trialled in the Perth Hills area.

Over the two-year trial period, the anticipated cost of the WA NDIS My Way trial in the Lower South West and Cockburn-Kwinana area is $171.2 million, with $88.3 million being contributed by the State Government, and the remainder by the Commonwealth.

Our focus for 2014–2015 was clear. Collectively our organisation has successfully implemented the State Government’s WA NDIS My Way trial in the Lower South West, with encouraging results and trends emerging. We have also prepared extensively for the trial’s expansion into the Cockburn-Kwinana area from 1 July 2015. Alongside this we have been consciously and actively aligning our business for the future.

WA NDIS My Way – what it’s all about

The WA NDIS My Way model is based on the proven and valued features of the State’s existing disability support system that have been developed during the past 25 years. It’s about getting the best outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers in a way that works for them.

It’s about relationships

We know that effective human service systems rely on strong and respectful relationships with both service providers and the people accessing services. Decades of operating our state-wide Local Area Coordination service has taught us this.

In WA NDIS My Way, individuals can develop a genuine relationship with their NDIS My Way Coordinator. Coordinators work with the person with disability, their family and carers and anyone they wish to have involved to support planning. NDIS My Way Coordinators provide a single point of contact to provide a consistent experience for people, which can be intensive or ‘light touch’, depending on the person’s needs and wishes.

It’s about good planning, networks and community

A person’s WA NDIS My Way journey begins with planning. Detailed planning based on accurate information and a person’s goals and aspirations for their future is fundamental to this approach. The resulting plan incorporates strategies tailored to the individual’s skills, strengths and goals.

To deliver the best outcomes, planning needs to consider more than just a person’s immediate needs and the formal paid supports and services
Disability Services Commission Annual Report 2014–2015
Overview

available. WA NDIS My Way planning has a strong emphasis on building, strengthening and maintaining a person’s connection to their community through informal support networks and linking them with supports and services available in their area.

It’s about choice and control

Every person has unique needs and requirements. Through the WA NDIS My Way planning process, people with disability are in the driving seat and can choose the mix of supports and services that will help them achieve their goals. This contemporary approach has proven to achieve relevant, stable and sustainable support arrangements for people with disability, their families and carers.

It’s about making decisions locally

Making decisions locally, that consider local context and conditions, is a key feature of the WA NDIS My Way model. This is particularly important in a state as large and diverse as WA.

Where decisions are being made by a locally based team, they have the capacity to be highly personalised, flexible and responsive. My Way Coordinators have extensive local knowledge, are well-placed to know what is working for a person and can respond quickly to their changed needs or circumstances.

It’s about individualised funding

We have long understood that individualised funding and self-management are key elements of a contemporary support system. In WA, more than 90 per cent of all disability funding for supports and services is allocated via individualised funding packages. This promotes a high level of choice and control for those who are accessing services.

The relatively high proportion of people who take the opportunity to self-manage part or all of their supports – where people choose to manage their own funds and arrangements – is unique to WA. This is also a testament to the flexible nature of the WA NDIS My Way model, support provided by NDIS My Way coordinators and the confidence people have in using that option.

It’s about partnership with the non-government sector

An important feature of the WA disability service system is our partnership approach with non-government service organisations.

People with disability benefit from the genuine relationship that exists between the Commission and more than 130 non-government organisations responsible for the provision of direct supports and services.

Over the past five years, we’ve worked hard to build on this partnership approach by including disability and mental health service organisations in the design and delivery of the WA NDIS My Way model.

Working closely with these key stakeholders has had a significant and positive impact on the quality and diversity of services available to people with disability in the trial. Engaging service provider organisations as partners in policy and design development has strengthened the WA NDIS My Way model.

It’s about proactively developing our sector

The Commission continues to have a proactive approach to sector planning and development to ensure that people with disability have true choice by being able to access a range of high quality supports and services. This is particularly relevant in regional and remote areas where service provision is often complex and challenging.

The Western Australian disability services sector is undergoing expansion and change, with many existing organisations indicating a willingness to
broaden their operations to meet an increasing demand for services.

**A successful first year of WA NDIS My Way**

It’s been a successful first year and the indicators are encouraging. This year saw 777 people with disability in the Lower South West found eligible for WA NDIS My Way. Feedback from people with disability, their families and carers indicates a high level of satisfaction with the planning process and the delivery of supports. Importantly, 91 per cent of the outcomes listed in individuals’ plans were achieved during this reporting period.

Just a year into the trial, positive and consistent trends are already emerging in a number of key areas including the inclusion of people with psychosocial disability and high rates of self-management.

It has been particularly heartening to see the impact the trial is having on the lives of people with psychosocial disability. The Disability Services Commission has been working with the Mental Health Commission, mental health services, non-government organisations and advocacy organisations to ensure that the WA NDIS My Way model can respond appropriately to the support needs of people with psychosocial disability.

There’s no better illustration of the positive changes the WA NDIS My Way trial is having for people with psychosocial disability than Margaret River man, Ben White. Ben recently shared his story as part of our personal stories video project. To view the short film, visit: www.disability.wa.gov.au > WA NDIS My Way > Personal stories.

The proportion of people choosing to self-manage their individual plan is also encouraging and at 35 per cent, this is significantly higher than the national average. This speaks volumes about the user-friendly WA NDIS My Way approach.

The WA NDIS My Way model aims to deliver supports and services to people with disability within a financially sustainable framework. Early reports from the independent WA actuaries, Taylor Fry, indicate that this is on track.

The Commission continues to work collaboratively with service providers and with people using services to refine and modify the WA NDIS My Way model. Our learnings from the first twelve months in the Lower South West, and extensive preparatory work stand us in good stead for the expansion of the trial into the metropolitan area of Cockburn-Kwinana from 1 July 2015.

**Implementing a Western Australian NDIS**

Planning and implementing the WA NDIS My Way trial and continuing to reform the State’s disability services sector has been a major undertaking. In addition to the strong collaboration with our government and non-government partners, every part of our business has played an important role.

It has required a collaborative Commission-wide effort to get us to where we are today. The developments required to successfully implement the trial to provide the greatest benefit to people with disability have included scheme design, new legislation, Information and Communication Technology investments, staff recruitment and training, enhanced funding processes, policy and program development, and extensive consultation with our multiple stakeholders.
People

A temporary Reform Directorate has been created to drive the WA NDIS My Way trial and broader reform initiatives across the Commission. This has included seconding existing staff members from across the Commission into the directorate and recruiting new staff with specific skills and expertise.

Additionally, the appointment of a second Executive Director Reform has provided a dedicated focus on planning and modelling disability services in WA into the future.

This year has seen the recruitment of additional My Way Coordinators to support the increased number of people who are eligible for support through the WA NDIS My Way trial. In addition to expanding the team in the Lower South West, My Way Coordinators were recruited and are actively preparing to support the 2,700 people who are expected to be eligible for supports and services in the Cockburn-Kwinana area.

Processes

This year we have continued to invest in and improve our data systems and reporting infrastructure, including further staff training and the ongoing migration of data in preparation for the trial's expansion on 1 July 2015. To ensure people in the trial have the full benefit of our individualised approach, we have systematically embedded the WA NDIS My Way planning process throughout all our metropolitan and regional offices. Localised funding decisions call for local accountability in the distribution of funding, so our processes for larger scale local payments were also improved.

Additionally, the Integrated Reporting Framework was established during the period, fulfilling the State’s requirement to report quarterly to the Commonwealth Government on the WA NDIS My Way trial.

Pricing and funding

In partnership with service providers, we have developed specific pricing frameworks for the WA NDIS My Way trial. The frameworks describe clusters of service types and the price that we will pay for those services in the Lower South West and Cockburn-Kwinana areas. They also provide ranges for different models and intensities of supports and services. The support cluster ‘price range’ is used to assess whether the cost of a service is deemed to be value for money.

Another significant body of work in the funding environment was supporting the expansion of service providers in the trial site. On 1 July 2014 there were 11 providers operating in the Lower South West, a figure that more than tripled during the course of the year, with 36 providers registered at the end of the reporting period.

This represents a major achievement in the trial's increased workforce capacity and delivery, not only because of the additional choice and control it offers people over their supports and services, but also because of the contractual arrangements required to support it.

For service providers to receive funding directly from the Commission in the WA NDIS My Way trial site, they are required to be on our Panel Contract for Individually Funded Services, or be contracted to provide Disability Professional Services. Endorsing these additional service providers has required variations to service agreements for some existing providers, and for others, it has meant responding to an open tender process.
Feedback

In addition to ongoing informal engagement at the local level with support groups, service providers, individuals, families and carers, we have utilised a number of different strategies to gauge consumer satisfaction and gather important feedback on the WA NDIS My Way trial. These include surveys, independently facilitated forums and governance and advisory groups.

An independent appeals process is another important component of the trial that was developed during the course of the year.

We engaged the State Solicitor’s Office and Public Sector Commission in the development of the appeals process to ensure it is robust and accessible, and State Cabinet established the panel as a State Government Committee. Panel members have been recruited via expression of interest based on relevant skills and experience. No appeals were received during the first year which is another encouraging indicator of the trial’s positive start.

Keeping people informed

Following on from last year’s WA NDIS My Way information campaign for potentially eligible people in the Lower South West, two further campaigns were run during 2014–2015.

The first was a re-run in the Lower South West. This provided an additional targeted strategy for reaching potentially eligible people, including those who may not self-identify as having a disability or who were previously not eligible for supports and services.

A second campaign was undertaken to reach the 2,700 potentially eligible people in the Cockburn-Kwinana area. Campaign elements ran between April and July 2015 to inform people about the trial’s 1 July start date and to again encourage people to contact us to discuss their eligibility.

Another key communications tool developed during the course of the year was the WA NDIS My Way personal stories video series. The five videos – that collectively had more than 3,000 views on the Commission’s YouTube channel – capture the experience of people with disability, families and carers who are participating in the trial in the Lower South West. They explore WA NDIS My Way planning in action; the role played by My Way Coordinators and highlight the positive outcomes being achieved by individuals. The videos are available to view on the Commission’s website at www.disability.wa.gov.au > WA NDIS My Way > Personal stories.

Delivering the trial in partnership

This planning and implementation of the WA NDIS My Way trial is the product of a genuine and robust partnership between many stakeholders. Just one of these key players is the non-government sector – a partnership that’s explored in greater detail in the ‘WA NDIS My Way – what it’s all about’ section on page 11.

In delivering the trial we’ve also worked with the mainstream government agencies that people with disability routinely engage with, such as the Departments of Health and Education. Working in partnership with mainstream government agencies has yielded a more coordinated approach to services. A standout example of the outcomes from one of these partnerships is the Integrated Education Project between ourselves and the Department of Education which has seen the streamlining of planning processes for children. To learn more, read the Case study on page 53.

To ensure ongoing alignment with core government policy and direction we’ve also maintained strong ties with central government agencies. Our relationship with the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet and Treasury has remained strong during the first year of the trial. In collaboration with these agencies we have undertaken significant modelling, actuarial analysis
and policy development for a financially sustainable approach to disability services into the future.

Comparative evaluation

Overseen by a Joint Steering Committee comprising Commonwealth and State government officials, the Commission’s Strategy Directorate is managing the contract for the independent comparative evaluation of the NDIS trial in Western Australia.

Collection of data to inform the evaluation began this year from both the State and Commonwealth-run NDIS trial sites. The evaluation, being undertaken by Stantons International, will run until August 2016, with an interim report set to be released in 2015–2016. The outcome of the comparative trials in WA will provide important lessons to strengthen the development of future delivery of services to people with disability.

The impact of the WA NDIS My Way trial on wider system reforms

The principles of an NDIS have underpinned the Commission’s decision-making about the future of disability service delivery in WA for some time.

The projects we have invested in during the course of the year have been part of wider system reforms that are aligned with our WA NDIS My Way model. From our funding processes, to how services are delivered, we are shaping our business for the future.

Funding mechanisms

This year has seen further work to align how the Commission funds individuals with the NDIS principles of reasonable and necessary support and increased choice and control for people with disability, their families and carers.

The reliance on the Combined Application Process (CAP) as a mechanism for funding individuals (see page 38) is being reduced in favour of a more equitable approach using individualised planning and localised decision-making. The ‘my options’ initiative is progressing this transition between the two funding mechanisms. It enables people, who were highly ranked but unsuccessful in the CAP process, to engage in planning in line with WA NDIS My Way principles, with access to renewable, reviewable funding.

Service reviews

In addition, there have been reviews of our policies on funded recreation and advocacy services to ensure they continue to align with the principles of the NDIS and are delivered appropriately into the future.

Recreation services were reviewed with a view to assessing their flexibility in meeting users’ needs, cognisant of their current block funded approach. Current contracts have been extended and providers have been invited to join the Panel Contract for Individually Funded Services. This provides them with the opportunity to transition to an individualised model that is aligned with the future of disability services in WA. Ultimately, this provides a greater range of recreation strategies and control over how people with disability engage with providers.

The advocacy services review included internal and external consultation to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of our current approach. As a result a new tender for services was released in May 2015 which introduced independent, individual advocacy across four target groups. This approach aligns with the advocacy model proposed under the NDIS.
Overview

Individualised, locally planned services

**Individualised planning**

To align with the planning process being used in the WA NDIS My Way trial, people supported by our LAC service throughout the rest of the State are also being engaged in individualised planning processes to determine reasonable and necessary supports.

This ensures that people’s unique needs, circumstances and goals for the future are being considered and that supports and services are linked to the strategies that will best deliver them.

Local Area Coordinators (LACs) are also focused on enhancing people’s family and community networks as part of their supports and services mix.

As at 30 June the state-wide target of 90 per cent of individuals connected with our LAC service having a current plan had been achieved.

**Localised decision making**

Localised decision making processes, as are used in the WA NDIS My Way trial, have been expanded into the LAC service.

Although much of the State is still operating in an environment of rationed funding, the localised decision making process sees decisions about the allocation of resources, including funding, made at a local level rather than through a centralised process. This allows recognition of local and personal circumstances, and supports decisions being made by people who know and understand the person and their needs. Processes and training have been established to ensure that local decision-making provides equitable and consistent access to funding and reasonable and necessary supports across the State, as per the principles of the NDIS.

National Quality and Safeguarding framework consultation

All state governments are committed to developing a Quality and Safeguarding framework for the NDIS to ensure a consistent approach across the nation.

Throughout 2014–2015 we worked with the rest of the country to progress a national consultation on a proposed Framework. The consultation – which included six public forums across WA – ensured the voices of people with disability, families, carers, advocates and service providers were heard.

The outcomes of the consultations will be considered and inform the development of the final national approach.

Establishing a new direction for service delivery

This year has seen the Services Directorate embedded into our structure. It has been reshaped to provide a reduced, but comprehensive service element. It also focuses on the establishment of consultancy and capacity building services to reflect the future of disability services delivery in WA in light of the NDIS and government policy to primarily fund and facilitate services.

*For an in depth look at these changes, read the Project in focus on page 146.*

Transitioning services to the non-government sector

Another key project that was progressed during 2014–2015 was the transition of 60 per cent of the Commission’s accommodation services to the non-government sector. The project, which began in 2013–2014 has now seen 61 people transition to a new service provider of their choice. Underpinning this project are the NDIS principles of choice and control.

*For more about this project, see the Project in focus on page 83.*
Similarly the successful transition of 60 per cent of Commission-delivered Early Childhood Development services to the sector was also finalised in this period. Aligning the timing of the transition from a Commission-provided service to a new provider with the end of the school year meant that no gaps to service delivery were encountered.

Again, this is consistent with national trends and supports the ongoing expansion of the non-government disability sector to give people with disability increased choice of services.

Housing

Reviewing our approach to housing for people with disability, in the context of disability reform, has been another project throughout the reporting period. The NDIS will see increased numbers of people receiving funding to support their independence, which will in turn create more demand for housing options. These options will need to be flexible and cost effective.

A range of projects has been undertaken to support this including the Age Appropriate Housing Strategy (see page 44), the Community Disability Housing Program and the Ancillary Dwellings Initiative (see page 167).

Other areas of focus

In addition to the work we’ve done to deliver the WA NDIS My Way trial and positioning ourselves for the future, we’ve also made progress and achieved outcomes in other important areas.

A range of initiatives and projects have been delivered this year under the banner of Count Me In – our articulation of the State, Territory and Commonwealth government agreed National Disability Strategy (NDS).

Count Me In is our vision for an inclusive, accessible and welcoming Western Australia.

For a more in depth look, read the Project in focus on page 77, as well as the WAFL Round and Changing Places Case studies on pages 60 and 61 respectively.

Our Disability Justice Service is now fully operational and during the past year supported people with disability who came into contact with the justice system.

The team provided important supports and services to vulnerable people through an in-reach service, and will also support people in the disability justice centre when it becomes operational in the next reporting period.

The Project in focus on page 32 provides more information about this service.
In focus: WA NDIS My Way

Kevin’s story

Busselton man Kevin Sambell, 63, has seen his life improve significantly since joining the WA NDIS My Way trial. Mr Sambell, who was born deaf, had been socially isolated in his community for many years because of his challenges with communication.

Mr Sambell (pictured below) worked with NDIS My Way Coordinator Jill Brighton to identify his goals and the supports he needed to reach them. “Having a support person help with communication has made all the difference to Kevin’s inclusion and enjoyment of activities,” Ms Brighton said.

Mr Sambell now independently plays indoor bowls and table tennis and does tai chi at Busselton’s Senior Citizens Centre, does volunteer work, goes fishing and is developing his passion for photography.

Building on Mr Sambell’s support networks is part of the NDIS My Way plan. Mr Sambell’s neighbour now regularly checks in on him and alerts his support worker if necessary, and he is more confident about connecting with mainstream services.

“Thanks to stronger community connections, highly personalised planning and better links with natural support networks and mainstream services, Mr Sambell is reaching his goals and looking forward to more opportunities in 2015,” Ms Brighton said.

Ben’s story

The expansion of eligibility criteria under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to include people with psychosocial disability is having positive effects for people in the WA NDIS My Way trial.

Margaret River man Ben White (pictured below) is enjoying a healthier, more rewarding life thanks to the personal plan developed with his NDIS My Way Coordinator. Before receiving WA NDIS My Way supports and services, Mr White, who has schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder and an acquired brain injury, had weight and dental issues and was under constant threat of eviction from his unit.

“Ben was operating at survival level and dependent on me coming to the rescue,” said his mother Veronica Ninham, who lives in Canberra. “I worried that if I could no longer visit regularly, Ben would become homeless.”

With a more planned approach, Mr White has a better quality of life. His support worker helps him remember his psychiatric appointments and medication, and his My Way Coordinator helped him develop an individualised plan that has improved his quality of life. “Through planning, Ben has renewed his passion for painting and the highlight of his WA NDIS My Way journey was his first solo art exhibition, where he sold most of the paintings,” Mrs Ninham said.
Operational structure

Responsible Minister
The Hon Helen Morton MLC, Minister for Disability Services.

Legislation
The Disability Services Commission was established under the Disability Services Act 1993, which identifies its five primary functions as being policy development, service provision, funding and accountability, promotion of equal access community education and consumer advocacy.

Administered legislation
The Commission administers the Disability Services Act 1993 and associated Regulations. It also has significant responsibilities under the Declared Places (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 2015. The Commission is listed as a government department for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Management Act 1994, State Superannuation Act 2000 and the Government Employees Housing Act 1964.

Other key legislation impacting activities
In the performance of its functions, the Commission complies with the following relevant written laws:

- Auditor General Act 2006
- Carers Recognition Act 2004
- Contaminated Sites Act 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- Financial Management Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 1992
- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003
- Public Sector Management Act 1994
- State Records Act 2000
- State Supply Commission Act 1991
- Workers’ Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981
- Declared Places (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 2015
- Electoral Act 1907 (section 175ZE)
- Legal Deposit Act 2012 (section 8).
Overview

Corporate structure

Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability
Chairperson: Dr Rachel Skoss

Minister for Disability Services
Hon Helen Morton MLC

Disability Services Commission Board
Chairperson: Bruce Langoulant

Referenct Networks

Disability Services Commission

Director General
Dr Ron Chalmers

Executive Directors

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<tr>
<td>Marion Hailes-MacDonald</td>
<td>Jon Peach</td>
<td>Sam Ciminata</td>
<td>Wendy Murray</td>
<td>Chris Yates</td>
<td>Robyn Massey – Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributes funding and purchases supports and services for people with disability</td>
<td>Provides supports and services including therapy, justice services, accommodation and consultancy</td>
<td>Delivers financial services, human resources services and workforce planning</td>
<td>Delivers strategic policy advice to government and the sector, reporting, quality and Count Me In</td>
<td>Manages the state-wide Local Area Coordination program and the implementation of the WA NDIS My Way trial</td>
<td>Simone Spencer – Planning</td>
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Leads the development of the WA NDIS My Way trial and the planning for the future of disability services in WA
Agency structure and governance

Operational governance

The Disability Services Commission reports to government as represented by the Minister for Disability Services.

The organisational restructure of the 2013–2014 financial year was fully operationalised during the reporting period. These changes have resulted in administrative efficiencies and have supported the Commission’s ability to deliver appropriate, high quality supports and services to West Australians with disability.

Disability Services Commission Board

The Disability Services Commission Board meets monthly and comprises nine members who, collectively, are responsible for overseeing the Commission’s governance.

At least five members of the Board have disability themselves, have a relative with disability, have recent experience as a carer or are an advocate for people with disability, as specified in the Disability Services Act 1993.

Bruce Langoulant is the Board’s Chairperson and has held this position for seven years as at 30 June 2015.

The Board has formal responsibilities for significant financial decisions, aspects of the Commission’s quality system and significant procurement decisions. Board members each have a Commission Directorate they maintain a working relationship with to ensure that collectively, they have a holistic understanding of the Commission’s operations.

The Board takes an active role in the Commission’s ongoing connection with the West Australian community and in public engagement and inclusion initiatives. The Board also holds regular reference network meetings in regional and metropolitan WA to provide direct community access to senior Commission representatives. People with disability, their families and carers, and service providers are welcome at these opportunities to raise their perspectives and any concerns with the Board.

Corporate Executive

Our Corporate Executive comprises the Director General and the Commission’s seven Executive Directors. Together, they are responsible for guiding the agency to deliver outcomes of benefit to West Australians with disability, their families and carers. The Corporate Executive sets the Commission’s strategic direction and priorities, and oversees the day-to-day operations of the organisation. The Corporate Executive, through the Director General is responsible to both the Commission’s Board and the Minister for Disability Services.

Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability (MACD) is accountable directly to the Minister for Disability Services. It represents people with disability, their families and carers. The MACD investigates both self-identified and Ministerially directed issues and provides independent advice and perspectives to the Minister on matters relevant to people with disability. Members are appointed by State Cabinet.

The Council comprises 14 members, drawn from interested people who have skills, experience or knowledge of disability including people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and advocates.

The Disability Services Commission’s Board Chairperson and the Commission’s Director General meet regularly with Council members and the MACD is represented on the Commission’s Board.

MACD staff are supported by the Commission with administrative staff and resourcing based in the Commission’s West Perth head office.
Our directorates

The Commission pursues its mission through six directorates. They reflect its core functions as a funder, provider and coordinator of disability services, in addition to its significant current reform role in shaping the future of disability services for West Australians.

In addition to the six directorates, the Office of the Director General undertakes strategic engagement, coordination and support to the broader Commission.

The Funding Directorate is responsible for prioritising funding and purchasing supports and services for people with disability. It manages the Commission’s contracts for service provision, including significant procurement activities.

The Services Directorate provides direct services to people with disability, including accommodation services, metropolitan and regional therapy services, positive behaviour support and consultancy services. It also includes the newly established Disability Justice Service.

The Business Directorate delivers the Commission’s financial, human resources and workforce planning and information, ICT services. It also undertakes organisational procurement and asset management.

The Strategy Directorate provides strategic advice to government and the sector on disability related policies and develops and implements strategic initiatives to support Count Me In. It manages the Commission’s external non-financial performance reporting requirements and coordinates the evaluation of initiatives and policies.

The Operations Directorate manages the State-wide LAC service which works at individual, family, community and government levels, supporting people with disability to live good lives in their communities. Importantly, the Operations Directorate is also responsible for implementing the WA NDIS My Way trial in the Lower South West and the Cockburn-Kwinana area at the local level.

The Disability Reform Directorate leads development of the WA NDIS My Way trial and planning for the future of disability services in Western Australia.
Board members

Bruce Langoulant

Bruce is the Board’s Chairperson. He has 40 years’ experience in small business, with an emphasis on the advertising and financial services industries. Bruce has an adult daughter with disability and in addition to his work with the Commission is Chairperson of The Meningitis Centre and President of the International Confederation of Meningitis Organisations.

Bruce has been reappointed as Board Chair, with his current term scheduled to expire in June 2018. Attended 10 meetings in 2014–2015.

Kathy Hough

Kathy is the Board’s Deputy Chairperson. Kathy’s more than 30 years of supporting people with disability includes direct care, host family and CEO roles for disability sector organisations. Kathy is a strong advocate for equity of access to quality services in regional areas and is a Strategic Consultant at EPIC (Empowering People in Communities), a Pilbara-based not-for-profit organisation providing support for people with disability and their families.


Russell Aubrey

Russell is the Mayor of the City of Melville — first elected to the Council in 1991. Russell is passionate about disability employment, which, in addition to its commitment to accessibility, is a focus for the City of Melville. He retired from a teaching career at Wesley College in 2012, where he taught senior mathematics and was Head of Careers during his tenure. Russell is the Chair of the Commission Board’s Audit and Risk Committee.


Dr Rachel Skoss

Rachel is the Chairperson of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability. The mother of a child with disability, she is a passionate advocate for children with additional needs, and their families. Rachel works in applied research and evaluation at the Telethon Kids Institute, with a particular interest in delivery of disability and mainstream services, and how research can inform policy and practice.

Her term expires December 2015. Attended 10 meetings in 2014–2015

Sandra Jensen

Sandra has a strong background in working with disability service providers as well as in children’s services. She is a Board member of the Parents Learning and Educational Development Group and has served on the management committees of Geographe Community Centre Inc. and Nurtureworks in the State’s South West. Sandra has two daughters, one of whom has disability.


Melissa Northcott

Melissa is a City of Armadale Councillor and a Count Me In Ambassador. She is very active in the community, playing official roles in many local organisations and committees including as Chair of the City of Armadale’s Disability Advisory Team and as a member of Main Roads WA Customer Service Advisory Council. Melissa is a keen fundraiser and has undertaken significant work in this respect.

Melissa has her own personal experience of disability and is a strong advocate for creating accessible communities.

Laura was a Board member for six years, completing her term in December 2014. She has personal experience of disability, and was an active board member, particularly in relation to reference network meetings. Trained as a social worker, Laura has worked as a locum at Royal Perth Hospital and a supervising case manager in the Human Rights Division of WA’s State Administrative Tribunal. Laura has very strong academic and workplace experience in human rights issues and has undertaken advanced studies in human rights for people with disability. She attended six meetings in 2014–2015.

Gavin is a consultant who works nationally and internationally in the field of health sector reform. As the CEO and Managing Director of statutory compensation schemes and hospitals, he has extensive experience in disability services, governance, health system planning and financial management. He undertakes substantial work in regional and remote Western Australia and the Northern Territory and works extensively with Aboriginal communities. His term expires December 2017. Attended 10 meetings in 2014–2015.

Julie is a consultant working predominantly in the health and human services sector. She graduated as an Occupational Therapist and spent 15 years in various clinical roles including work with remote communities in the Kimberley and North Queensland. She has held senior roles in health, rehabilitation and radiology – most recently as divisional CEO of a large rehabilitation and employment services company. Julie has more than 12 years Board experience including directorships at Panorama Health and the Independent Living Centre of WA. Her term expires December 2017. Attended 10 meetings in 2014–2015.

Crispin is a former member of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability and the Perth Stadium Access and Inclusion User Group, and joined the Board in February 2015. He is the Information Communication Technology Project Officer at the Department of Sport and Recreation. Crispin is a C5/6 quadriplegic and his life experiences as a person with disability has led him to become a passionate advocate in the areas of access and inclusion, engaging service providers and employing support workers. His term expires January 2018. Attended five meetings in 2014–2015.

Laura Miller

Crispin Roberts

Gavin Robins

Julie Carr

Laura Miller
Our leadership team

Dr Ron Chalmers
Director General

Ron's work during his tenure of nearly nine years as Director General has strategically positioned the Commission to effectively shape and implement the most significant reforms in the history of disability services in Western Australia. His extensive experience in the development and expansion of community-based services, collaborative approach and enduring passion to enable West Australians with disability to have access to world-class supports and services have been fundamental in successfully executing his role.

PhD in the inclusion of children with severe and profound disabilities into mainstream schooling. Master of Education, Graduate Diploma of Education Administration, Graduate Diploma of Education, Bachelor of Arts.
Length of service: 24 years

Jon Peach
Executive Director Services

Jon has significant experience managing complex service environments across multiple disciplines in both Australia and the UK. His broad knowledge, within client-focused service environments, has been instrumental in leading change in the Commission’s Services Directorate to ensure world class government services are delivered into the future. In the past year, Jon’s team has made significant progress in reforming the Commissions’ accommodation service in preparation for the NDIS, and has also opened the State’s first Disability Justice Centre.

Master of Social Policy and Criminology. Executive Master of Public Administration.
Length of service: 12 months

Marion Hailes-MacDonald
Executive Director Funding

Marion has extensive experience across the disability sector having managed high support accommodation services, introduced innovative programs and worked closely with community organisations to develop services and supports. She has contributed to and led significant funding and policy direction and reform across state and national agendas, including the rollout of the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy and the NDIS. Marion’s team works with the disability sector to expand services and choices for individuals within the context of the NDIS.

Bachelor of Science, Master of Commerce, Executive Master of Public Administration, Graduate Diploma Business, Diploma Government Procurement and Graduate Australian Institute of Company Directors
Length of Service: 30 years

Sam Ciminata
Executive Director Business

Sam's extensive experience in economic, financial and asset management has seen his directorate develop and implement key ICT systems required to support the operational and reporting requirements of the WA NDIS My Way trial. He also oversees the management of the trial’s funding arrangements between the State and Commonwealth governments. Sam’s responsibility also extends to managing the Commission’s human and capital resources and the Occupational Safety and Health and risk management functions.

Bachelor of Business in Finance and Economics
Length of service: 15 years
Simone’s background in shaping and managing complex State Government reform projects provides the Commission with significant strategic expertise, through her secondment from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. She is responsible for managing the Commission’s interface with the Commonwealth Government and planning for the future of disability services in Western Australia, including oversight of the NDIS reform agenda.

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Politics and Economics.
Length of service: Nine months

Wendy Murray
Executive Director Strategy
Building on an early career working with long term unemployed and young people with disability in the classroom, Wendy has 15 years executive leadership experience in social justice services. A wide range of people who experience disadvantage have benefited from the innovative programs and services, major projects and policy initiatives she led. Wendy supports the development of future disability services in WA through policy, performance reporting, information management, initiatives and implementation of the NDIS Integrated Reporting Framework.

Bachelor of Arts and Post Graduate Diploma of Education.
Length of service: Four years

Chris Yates
Executive Director Operations
Chris has a strong background in direct service delivery, community engagement, and strategic planning and leadership across both the disability and education sectors. Chris is responsible for the Operations Directorate, working on planning, coordination and community inclusion for more than 11,000 people with a disability throughout WA. Chris’ team also leads the on-the-ground delivery of the State’s WA NDIS My Way trial.

Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education and Master of Education Management.
Length of service: 19 years

Robyn Massey
Executive Director Reform Implementation
Robyn is responsible for the development and implementation of the WA NDIS My Way trial. Her extensive experience and knowledge of service provision, particularly in regional and remote areas, has supported her in the effective delivery of this major State Government reform. In addition to her long career in disability services, Robyn also has significant experience in the field of education.

Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education.
Length of service: 23 years

Simone Spencer
Executive Director Reform Planning
Simone’s background in shaping and managing complex State Government reform projects provides the Commission with significant strategic expertise, through her secondment from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. She is responsible for managing the Commission’s interface with the Commonwealth Government and planning for the future of disability services in Western Australia, including oversight of the NDIS reform agenda.

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Politics and Economics.
Length of service: Nine months

Disability Services Commission Annual Report 2014–2015
Performance management framework

Outcome based management framework

Our work contributes to the achievement of the Government Goal – Results-based service delivery: Greater focus on achieving results in key service delivery areas for the benefit of all West Australians.

For 2014–2015, we were funded to achieve two outcomes (described below). These outcomes are delivered through our five defined service areas, as highlighted in the diagram on the following page.

The first outcome we are funded to achieve is that people with disability access appropriate services and supports that promote their wellbeing and choice and control over their lives. The activities of four service areas contribute to this outcome being achieved: Accommodation Support, Community-focused Support, Coordination and Individual Support and Family Support.

Our Access and Inclusion service area supports our contribution to the second outcome – the West Australian community is inclusive of people with disability.

The Commission’s performance across these outcomes is measured using key effectiveness and efficiency indicators across the five service areas.

Effectiveness indicators

Our effectiveness indicators provide a measure of the extent to which its activities are achieving, or have made progress towards achieving the government outcomes.

Efficiency indicators

Our efficiency indicators provide a measure of the resources required to achieve government outcomes.
## Government Goal:
Results-based service delivery
Greater focus on achieving results in key service delivery areas for the benefit of all West Australians.

### Outcome 1
People with disability access appropriate services and supports that promote their wellbeing and choice and control over their lives.

### Service 1:
**Accommodation support**
- Hostel
- Emergency accommodation
- Community residential (group homes)

### Service 2:
**Community-focused supports**
- Supported community living
- Alternatives to employment
- Supporting school leavers
- Recreation

### Service 3:
**Coordination and individual support**
- Local Area Coordination
- WA NDIS My Way
- Disability professional services (therapy)
- Community aids and equipment

### Service 4:
**Family support**
- Family support
- Respite

### Service 5:
**Access and inclusion**
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plans
- Community and service improvement projects

### Outcome 2
The West Australian community is inclusive of people with disability.
Changes to the outcome based management framework

No changes were made to our outcome based management (OBM) framework in this reporting period.

Work has been undertaken, however, in preparation for a revised OBM structure to be implemented in the 2016–2017 financial year. These refinements will reflect reforms that are underway and make the organisation’s reporting clearer and more accountable. The revised framework will provide adjusted efficiency and effectiveness indicators that will provide a greater level of information about performance.

Ultimately, the new structure will provide comparability of our activities over time so that its performance in assisting people with disability, their families and carers can be better assessed.

Shared responsibility with other agencies

Our strong and collaborative relationship with the non-government sector and significant rigour in our service procurement practices have resulted in the Commission playing a leading role in the delivery of the State Government’s Delivering Community Services in Partnership policy.

Our partnership approach with the non-government sector ensures service viability and a co-production approach, leading to choice and control for service users across the State.

Other government agencies

Our work with other organisations takes many forms, from memoranda of understanding and service level agreements to shared protocols and collaborative project delivery. Several specific programs that define our shared responsibility arrangements with other government agencies include:

- a partnership with the Department of Corrective Services to build collaboration, share information and develop a Memorandum of Understanding that will support smooth functioning of the Disability Justice Service
- a revised Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Child Protection and Family Support (DCPFS) in relation to young people under 18 in the care of the CEO of DCPFS is nearing finalisation
- a partnership with the Public Sector Commission to review and renew the Disability Employment Strategy 2013–2015
- a tripartite agreement between the Department of Health, DCPFS and the Commission in support of the Children who Are dependent on Technology and Cared for at Home (CATCH) program
- through the Community Disability Housing Program, working with the Department of Housing to provide long-term rental housing for people with disability who require ongoing support to live in the community.

Community partnerships

A range of community partnerships also demonstrate a commitment to this shared responsibility. These include partnerships with:

- WA Local Government Association (WALGA) to deliver Community Infrastructure grants to improve access to public places, facilities and spaces for people with disability. We are also working with WALGA to implement the Changing Places project across the State. See page 60 for more.
- VisAbility to deliver the two rounds of Community Inclusion and Participation Grants for new projects to extend opportunities for people with disability to take part in arts, recreation and business activities
People with Disability WA to conduct a feasibility study into an independent support person program for people with intellectual disability who come into contact with the justice system, and to provide dedicated advocacy support for people taking part in the Commission’s transition of some accommodation services to the non-government sector.

Local Government Managers Australia on a local government employment strategy to deliver improved outcomes for the employment of people with disability in the community. The initiative involves research into trends and perceptions, a pilot employment project and a series of workshops outlining opportunities to progress employment strategies as part of their Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

National Disability Services WA, as a major partner in planning for the future, is actively involved in connecting us with the sector, and with people with disability, their families and carers.

**WA NDIS My Way trial**

The Commission continues to work in partnership with other government agencies to operationalise the State Government’s contributions to WA NDIS My Way.

The Commission is developing agreements with the Mental Health Commission and the Departments of Education, Health and Transport. These working arrangements support cooperation and a streamlined journey for individuals within the various service systems.

Underpinning these arrangements are the principles of appropriate information sharing, timely communication and decision-making and the timely provision of appropriate supports in a responsible fiscal environment.
People with disability who come into contact with the justice system have had access to greater supports as our Disability Justice Service, established in 2012, has become an integral part of our business. The Service provides long-term sustainable supports and services which aim to meet the needs of people with disability who are in contact with the justice system. The Service is operated outside the parameters of the NDIS and is not affected by the NDIS trials.

The Service provides support to people in custody through in-reach services and will soon begin supporting people at the State’s first disability justice centre, in Caversham. A new prevention and diversion service is expected to begin operating in 2015–2016. It will include both individual support and support during court processes as well as looking at ways to enhance the experience of those people with disability who are witnesses to crime or, more unfortunately, victims of crime.

The Service uses tailored approaches to meet individual needs, and delivers these through therapeutic and mentoring approaches and, where appropriate, partnerships with non-government organisations. The Service has begun providing disability awareness training to prison officers and advice to the Department of Corrective Services about how to identify people who need the Service’s expertise. The Service also works with the justice sector to identify those who may be eligible for Commission services.

In 2014–2015, the Service comprised 36 staff members, including the service manager and the staff who will provide 24/7 support at the disability justice centre. In the same period, the Service provided support to 88 people in custody and 150 people in the community. In 2015–2016 the Service plans to broaden the scope of the in-reach service (which began operating in 2009) to work more closely with the Department of Corrective Services and the Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board (MIARB). The in-reach team works with people with disability to develop individualised support plans and coordinate supports and services. The Service also provides advocacy, proposes strategies and, if there is a leave of absence order, coordinates supports for the person to access the community. Individual plans, developed to assist people progress through the MIARB process, are considered by the MIARB, which make orders accordingly. Because of this process, two people progressed through to conditional release orders during this financial year. Disability sector organisations are now supporting these people in the community.

The development of the disability justice centre has been the Service’s key project in 2014–2015. It will be the State’s first ‘declared place’ and provides for people with disability found unfit to plead to a crime they have been accused of. Once the centre is open, the MIARB will have three options for people in this situation: release them into the community, hold them in prison, or place them in a ‘declared place’. Previously, people who were not to be released into the community were placed in prison, often for far longer than if they had been sentenced.

The centre will operate under the provisions of the Declared Places (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 2015, which was passed by State Parliament in February 2015. Up to 10 people will be able to be accommodated in the centre, which will be a home-
like, secure environment. As well as personalised supports and services, residents will be given the opportunity to gain behavioural skills to meet community standards. Some people may still remain in prison. This could be because they present too high a risk to the community; because they are better served by remaining in a regional prison, so they are closer to their family; may be incompatible with existing residents; or because the centre would not be the right environment for them. The placement of each resident follows careful consideration and then a recommendation by the MIARB to the Minister for Disability Services for approval.

The centre’s outdoor area provides opportunities for a diverse range of activities.

The accommodation units are designed to support people to learn life skills.