

ASCENT GROUP 64th ANNUAL REPORT

It's been a big year



ascent



2019 marked 64 years of Ascent providing quality support for people with disability to help them achieve their goals while enjoying an ordinary life with greater independence and more involvement in the community.

The NDIS moved from Transition to Roll Out with the introduction of new participants, increased government oversight, regulation and public scrutiny.

In July 2018

- The NDIS became available to all eligible people in NSW with a disability
- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission commenced operating in NSW

In April 2019

- the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP:
 - o Announced the establishment of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
 - o Appointed The Hon Stuart Robert MP. The first ever Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

This year Ascent has remained committed to the people we have supported over many years, while providing new participants with individualised support services.

As a registered NDIS provider we have invested in manpower and technology to understand, then manage the continuous development of the NDIS while undertaking numerous revisions of service delivery to ensure we are providing quality support.



OUR VISION

We aspire to be the leading provider of Disability Services and Community Support in the New England and North Western NSW.

OUR MISSION

We provide quality support for people with disabilities, to enable the pursuit of their goals and aspirations.

OUR PARTICIPANTS

We support people with a disability, their families, their carers, and others identified with need of our support.

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Chairman's Report 2018/2019

It is my pleasure to present the Chairman's Report to this the 64th Annual General Meeting of The Ascent Group

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), after some three years, is starting to settle down with the Government throwing more resources at it. Many of the teething problems have either been resolved or at least on the way to being so. Interestingly the anticipated growth within the scheme as forecast by the Government, has not occurred. By all relevant criteria The Ascent Group has had a strong year and is geared up to deliver quality services if and when the expected growth happens.

Since the start of the NDIS the number of participants for whom we are providing services has increased markedly, which we believe indicates a general acceptance of the quality of our service. We, however, are continually fine tuning our operation in an effort to maintain and improve all aspects of those services.

Over the past year or so a number of service providers have ceased operating in some of the areas we are involved in. This has meant that we have inherited both participants and staff from those organisations.

As usual, the performance of Ascent has been underpinned by the dedication, hard work and skill of our senior management, executive staff and direct support workers. They have my sincere thanks. I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their dedicated contributions during the year.

I commend this report to you.

Huntly Gordon
CHAIRMAN



Chief Executive Officer's Report 2018-2019

2018/19 has been a frustratingly anticlimactic year which has ended much as it began. Like all progressive Service Providers in the Disability Sector, we had invested and were prepared to offer support to meet the forecast influx of new eligible participants who would be entering the NDIS from July 2018. As has now been widely reported initial demand for the NDIS has proven to have been well below the scheme's actuarial prediction.

During the year we experienced an ongoing frustration with the administration of the NDIS despite working relentlessly to understand the planning and pricing processes while implementing the many changes, then adjusting to the numerous revisions of these changes.

However, despite these frustrations, plus enduring the ongoing delays and inconsistent outcomes around plan reviews, we have been able through the dedication of our hard-working staff, to continue to provide quality support and deliver all services under the NDIS in a sustainable and viable manner.

We have seen during the year, that many service providers have backed out of the NDIS or have become selective in their offering to reflect only services which are more profitable. We have not exited from any of our services and will be continuing to offer a broad suite of diverse support options. We believe it is important, as a prominent regional organisation with a proud history, that we maintain the willingness and capability to offer a response and solution to individual need.

While the forecast demand for traditional services, in the areas of Accommodation Support and Employment Support, did not materialise from new participants we did see increased demand for Plan Management and Support Coordination throughout the year.

Through a combination of improved plan packages being offered on review and a steady approval on new plan packages for 1:1 "drop in" support and community access support, we have been able to expand this service division. Critical to the viability of providing a flexible, short notice fee for support service, is great customer response and rostering efficiency. The increased demand and growth allowed us to restructure and resource our "drop in" management team, purchase two new vehicles and fully implement our upgraded rostering software. It has become evident that the NDIS is willing to provide this type of support to allow people with disability to become more independent to live in their own home and enjoy improved community inclusion.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the great Ascent Team of dedicated staff who continue to work tirelessly to provide Quality Support to our clients, their families and carers.

Peter Westbrook
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Financial Performance

During 2018-19 the Organisation has concentrated on maturing our financial practices within the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) environment. A greater focus has been placed on capturing and managing our income, to achieve this we have introduced a number of additional tools.

The Organisation recorded an operating surplus of \$48,782, with both income and expenses increasing during the year.

The Organisation remains in a sound financial position, with net assets of \$3,300,973 at financial year end. This includes Cash and Cash Equivalents of \$1,829,703 providing sufficient liquidity to cover the Company's current liabilities, including employee entitlements.

In summary, the operating results for the year are as follows:

	2018-19	2017-18
Total Income	8,442,703	8,384,010
Total Expenditure	8,393,921	8,331,385
Surplus	48,782	52,625

Financial Position

A summary of the Financial Position of the company as at 30 June 2019 is as follows:

	2018-19	2017-18
Current Assets	2,385,379	2,123,916
Non-Current Assets	2,199,668	2,310,080
Total Assets	4,585,047	4,433,996
Current Liabilities	1,003,803	884,216
Non-Current Liabilities	280,271	297,590
Total Liabilities	1,284,074	1,181,806
Net Assets	3,300,973	3,252,192

Cash Position

During 2018-19 cash increased by \$337,577 at the end of the financial year. Net cash from operating activities was \$474,700, offset by investment in capital activities of \$115,371.

The current ratio (that is current assets divided by current liabilities) provides an indicator of our ability to satisfy our obligations in the short term. During 2018-19 our current ratio remained relatively steady at 2.37 from 2.40 in 2017-18, this places us in a really healthy financial position.

Outlook

The Organisation is continuing to adapt to the challenges of operating within the NDIS environment however we are financially well placed to work through the changes that are occurring. The Organisation continues to maintain a strong financial position.

Will Warrick
TREASURER

Board of Directors and Senior Management Team



Huntly Gordon, *Chairman*



Rick Mills, *Vice Chairman*



Will Warrick, *Treasurer*



Brian McRae



Jennifer Bailey



Hugh Beattie



Bob Locke



Therese McGuren



Peter Westbrook,
Chief Executive Officer



Michelle Cooper,
Chief Operating Officer

NDIS

The NDIS is now fully available across NSW to help eligible people, who are living with disability, get care and supports they need to enjoy an ordinary life in their community.

Ascent is a registered provider for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providing Quality support to over 230 people with disability.

During the year we assisted all the people we support and their families to undergo the annual review their NDIS plan.

Ascent offers a broad range of support including:

- Assistance with daily life
- Accessing the community
- Providing social and recreational support
- Finding and keeping a job
- Behaviour management
- Carer respite

Additionally

Ascent can provide you with Support Coordination to help you understand your NDIS Plan and work out the best way to spend your funds so that you can achieve your goals

Ascent can provide you with Plan Management as a great option to maximize the flexibility of your NDIS plan without the administrative burden of self-management.



Care for Children

Ascent is providing quality support to children with disability and their families. Assistance is provided with personal activities and support to develop life skills or to participate inclusively in the community.

Ascent can offer families a comprehensive choice of supports designed to suit individual requirements.

We can also offer a choice of professional support staff who can work with you, in your home and in the community.

Individual support can be available to you daily, in the evening or on weekends. We will work with you to plan your regular support requirements and respond to your shorter term needs

At Ascent, we believe that family involvement is essential for the wellbeing and happiness of the children we support and is at heart of what we do.

We encourage young people to plan for an exciting future, by supporting them to build valuable skills for life, work, and community involvement.

Activities may include art, music, sport or social activities and are offered on an individual or group basis.



ACACIA PARK ENTERPRISES

Finding & Keeping a Job

Ascent specialises in providing Supported Employment opportunities for people with disability at Acacia Park Enterprises.

Acacia Park Enterprises provides supported employment for around 40 employees who live with disability. We are committed to providing ongoing quality employment and training opportunities for our employees. A diverse range of job opportunities are available to match a wide array of career aspirations.

Our business activities include Digital Printing, Car Detailing, Grounds maintenance, cleaning secure document destruction and recycling.



Ascent Digital Print

Ascent Digital Print is kept busy providing a high quality service to our valued customers.

Skills are gained while working with our state of the art digital printing system, to provide our customers with a fast turnaround, high quality printing service.

Getting a Job at ASCENT will:

- Identify and assess your strengths and work skills.
- Create an individual training plan to increase your skills.
- Teach you how to do the job.
- Pay you a wage for the work you do.
- Support you with your career development.

Jobs available in our commercial services include:

- Digital Printing, copying and mail out service
- Secure destruction of confidential documents
- Recycling of office paper and cardboard
- Car Detailing
- Grounds maintenance and cleaning



Housing and Supported Independent Living

Ascent provides general assistance with daily life and activities to enable people with disability to live inclusively within their local community. Our support is designed to meet individual needs and maximise independence.

Ascent can provide support with daily life and activities to enable you to live inclusively within your local community. Support is designed around your NDIS plan to meet your individual needs and achieve outcomes.

Support can be provided on an outreach basis, where staff can assist you in your own home with specific tasks, such as budgeting, cooking, domestic chores and managing appointments.

Formal support may only be for a small part of everyday life, with other activities being managed independently or with assistance from networks of your family, friends and community. Formal support could be for as little as 1-2 hours per week.

Higher intensity accommodation support can be provided for up to 24 hours per day within small group home residences, where residents require medium to high levels of assistance to complete basic self-care and domestic routines. Staff may provide one-on-one support with all daily household activities, as well as facilitating social and leisure opportunities in the community. They may also assist with tasks like banking, shopping and attending appointments, and with accessing activities such as supported employment.



LifeSkills & Community Participation

Ascent specialises in providing support to adults living with disability, injury, or social disadvantage to achieve their goals, increase their independence, and participate as a valued member of their community.

We can offer you a range of services that will support you in learning everyday skills including:

- Improved daily living skills in the community
- Improved relationships
- Increased social and community participation
- Improved life choices
- Transport to access daily activities

Support can be provided individually or in group activities both centre based or in the community.

Individual Skills Development

We can offer you centre-based skills development support to learn and participate in activities independently.

Group support or activities

Activities are designed to allow you to participate in a wide range of enjoyable activities such as cooking, gardening, music, art and craft, sport or fitness.

You are supported to access the community and events

We provide skill development for you to become more independent and improve your skills in:

- Cooking
- Budgeting
- Time Management
- Travel
- Social interaction
- Caring for health and wellbeing
- Being independent in everyday activities
- Communication with others

We work in partnerships with many local organisations such as NERAM (New England Regional Art Museum) and NECOM (New England Conservatorium of Music) to deliver a wide range of activities and programs.

We have a specialist Clinical Team comprising a Registered Nurse, Behaviour Specialist and Psychologist who work with families and participants to develop personalised medical and behaviour plans, supports and strategies.



Ascent Community Care

Ascent Community Care operates Commonwealth Home Support Programs (CHSP) in the New England Region for older people living in their own homes.

Ascent Community Care programs, are available for people who are :

- Over 65 years old
- Over 55 years old for Indigenous People
- Living at home
- Need assistance to maintain independence

The Ascent Programs Include:

Centre Based Day Care

This group meets each Monday at the Uralla Community Centre and participates in activities of their choice. This may include exercises, gardening, bingo, craft, puzzles, and several other options. Activities vary according to the wishes of those attending. There is also a monthly outing and special themed days. Morning tea and lunch is provided and usually cooked fresh on the premises by volunteers.

Social Support

The Social Support program is a volunteer-run service, which offers assistance within the person's home or for community access. Help is individually tailored to each person's specific needs. These services can include letter-writing, making phone calls, shopping, attending a concert, a daily call to check on well-being, and so on.

Community Transport

In addition to our other useful programs, Ascent Community Care volunteers provide transport to and from a client's home and any appointment they may have. This can include medical appointments, dates with friends or family, attendance at the Centre Based Day Care program, or any other social occasion.

Minor Home Maintenance & Gardening Service

Sometimes you only need a little bit of support to continue living in your own home. This service aims to keep the user's home and yard in a safe, tidy and habitable condition by performing small but necessary chores. In the garden, this can include mowing lawns, pruning plants, and other maintenance. In the home, tasks may include changing light bulbs, replacing tap washers, cleaning gutters, sweeping chimneys and so on.

Flexible Respite

Respite care is about offering support to both you and your carer. Ascent can provide supervision and assistance to you when it is needed. Your carer may or may not be present during the delivery of this service.



How can you help?

There are many ways for you to be involved or to support our work including—Providing us with Ideas and Feedback, Using our Services, Becoming a Member, Volunteering, making Donations of money or goods and Bequests. Your contribution, however large or small, is truly appreciated.

If you would like to donate, your generous donation will ensure we are able to continue providing that “extra” support for people, who live with a disability, to lead a normal life.

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE TO

Direct Deposit: National Australia Bank

BSB: 082-407

Account: 64111-8228

Account Name: The Ascent Group Australia

Please use YOUR NAME and “DONATION” as reference.

Alternatively, please forward cheques to:

The Ascent Group

PO Box 18, ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Thank you for your kind consideration





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