

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



A whole new level of confidence

Six years ago, our Ballina customer, David, couldn't cook for himself, let alone a group of friends. Today – thanks to support from Northcott – the 42-year-old with mild intellectual disability is living independently, cooking his own dinner, cleaning up and even running social events for his friends and Northcott support workers. It's a whole new life and David couldn't be happier.

When David's father had a serious stroke in 2014 – following several other health issues – it was the wake-up call David needed to seek support to build his independence and explore a new way of life.

"It just made me think – what would I do without my parents?" David recalls.

At that time, David was living with his parents and spending most of his time at home. He hadn't accessed any disability support services. A Local Area Coordinator recommended David contact Northcott – a move that changed his life.

"I was looking for support for life skills – cooking, cleaning. I had no idea what to do. I couldn't cook a sausage back then. I also found it really hard to make friends."

David began participating in Northcott's Everyday Life Skills service, learning basic skills, making friends and building his confidence. Narelle, his Northcott Keyworker, supported him to learn a raft of new skills.

"I slowly got better over the year with Narelle's help. She helped me learn to chop, how to cook a sausage, and how to boil rice. I made good friends too." David says.

In 2018, with a new level of confidence, David started talking to Narelle – who had moved into a Support Coordinator role – about moving out of home. Securing

Supported Independent Living funding was complicated, but after more than a year of pushing by Narelle, David was approved for the funding he needed. In May this year, he moved into housing where he is supported by Northcott.

"It felt great to finally move in. I plan on staying here forever. I like the fact that Northcott supports me. Without 24-hour support I'd struggle with my roommate, I'd struggle with my cooking, I'd struggle with my cleaning, but Northcott supports me through all that. It feels great to be living independently," he says.

"Northcott has supported me massively. I couldn't do anything and slowly they built up my confidence – not only in life skills but also socially.

"I have unlimited respect for all the support workers. I wouldn't be able to do any of this without Northcott and Support Coordination."

David accesses Everyday Life Skills, Coordination of Supports, Therapy and Housing and Supported Living services from Northcott Ballina.



A large photograph of a man with short brown hair, wearing a blue polo shirt, standing outdoors in front of a lush green bush with small pink flowers. The scene is brightly lit with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

CASE STUDY

“NORTHCOTT HAS SUPPORTED ME MASSIVELY. I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING AND SLOWLY THEY BUILT UP MY CONFIDENCE – NOT ONLY IN LIFE SKILLS BUT ALSO SOCIALLY.”



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITY TO REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL AND ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS.

OUR NAME

Northcott is named in honour of the first Australian-born Governor of New South Wales, Lieutenant-General, Sir John Northcott KCMG, KCVO, CB, CtStJ, who was Northcott's Patron from 1946–57.

OUR PURPOSE

Build an inclusive society where people can live the life they choose.

OUR VISION

Grow our services because customers choose us as their provider of choice.

OUR VALUES

INNOVATIVE – because we develop new ideas and solutions with creativity in anticipation of changing needs.

RESPECTFUL – because we believe that everyone's voice is unique and that they have the right to be heard.

BRAVE – because we have the courage to stand up for people with all abilities, even in the face of adversity.

Traditional Custodians

Northcott acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land on which we work. We pay our respects to their Elders - past, present and emerging - and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We also pay tribute to their ongoing connection to land, waters and community.

Annual Report (Part 1) and Financial Report (Part 2)

Together these documents report on Northcott's activities and achievements in relation to our services, support and financial performance during 2019–20. They are written for Northcott's stakeholders, which include existing and potential customers and their families and carers, staff, donors, volunteers, community partners, other service providers and businesses, and government agencies. The Financial Report 2019–20 containing the full financial statements is available at www.northcott.com.au.

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ABOUT NORTHCOTT

Northcott began in 1929 as the NSW Society of Crippled Children. Founded by the Rotary Club of Sydney, the Society's initial work was driven by the polio epidemic and the growing number of children affected by illnesses such as polio and tuberculosis. At that time, Northcott provided services to children who had been isolated or excluded from the community due to illness or disability.

Who is Northcott?

Northcott is a not-for-profit disability service provider that works with customers to realise their potential. As one of Australia's largest not-for-profit disability service organisations, we provide services from metropolitan and regional locations throughout NSW and the ACT. Our work is backed by more than 90 years of experience and expertise in the disability service industry.

A registered NDIS provider, we employ more than 2,000 staff and provide empowering, personalised services to over 12,000 people with disability as well as their families and carers each year.

What do we do?

Northcott provides personalised and dynamic support, delivered by a committed team who optimise and maximise support and services for every customer.

Our experience and expertise gives confidence to our customers that they are in trustworthy hands. Our commitment to innovation and pushing boundaries allows us to tackle challenges creating barriers for our customers to reach their potential.

Northcott's diverse range of service offerings and strong community partnerships give customers easy access to the supports they need or want through a single gateway from our many locations.

What is our promise to each customer?

We work creatively and relentlessly with each customer to unlock, discover and unleash their potential, supporting and empowering them to be the best they can be now and in the future.

Our customers are not numbers, they are unique individuals. We personalise our services to each customer's current and future needs and goals, every single one, to ensure their development and growth.

As advocates for our customers' inclusion, we empower them with confidence, choice and opportunity so they can live their life, as they choose, in their own way.



OUR PATRON

We are proud to have Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, as Northcott's Vice Regal Patron. Her Excellency shares our commitment to supporting people with disability to live the life they choose.

Governors of New South Wales have been associated with Northcott since the first Australian-born Governor of New South Wales, Sir John Northcott, became our Patron in 1947.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year Northcott was proud to celebrate its 90th Anniversary. Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, and Patron of Northcott, kindly hosted a reception at Government House to celebrate the occasion.



A lot happened in the first few months of our 10th decade. Firstly, many of our locations were affected by closures as a result of bushfires, but fortunately there were no major issues. Then came the major impact on our operations from the COVID-19 pandemic. We decided to continue to provide all our services, in order to ensure that customers could continue to access supports if they chose to. This resulted in additional costs (and some revenue drops) across many service areas, however, our reputation for putting the customer first was greatly enhanced.

In January, we acquired Eastern Suburbs service provider, Creativity Inc. This acquisition will not only significantly increase Northcott's scale of operations in the Eastern Suburbs, but expands the range of services and supports that we can offer customers.

While we have not yet been asked to provide specific information for the Royal Commission, we are prepared and have made submissions on issues of importance to our customers and families.

I would like to thank the Board for their wonderful contribution and support, including two Directors who finished with Northcott this year. John Surian retired in May 2020 and made a very strong contribution to Northcott, especially his expertise in property matters. Donna Purcell took up a specialist role with the Human Rights Commission and, in order to avoid any suggestion of conflict of interest, stepped down from our Board.

We welcomed Jeyan Jeevaratnum who rejoined the Board after a short absence abroad. His IT experience will be invaluable as we embark on a major technology upgrade. Joining him is James Christian, who brings a wealth of experience in clinical service, government policy and risk management.

I would like to pay tribute to Kerry Stubbs who stepped down as CEO in August, after 12 years of exemplary service and leadership. Kerry's enormous contribution to Northcott included growing the organisation tenfold, achieving much improved financial sustainability, and greatly enhancing our reputation. Importantly, Kerry led the organisation through the National Disability Insurance Scheme transition and the acquisition of accommodation services from the NSW Government.

On a personal note I would like to thank Kerry for the friendly and constructive way in which she has worked with me. It has been fantastic to have the benefit of a long-term CEO in whom we have had absolute trust and confidence. Kerry developed a strong Executive team during her time at Northcott, and testament to this is the appointment of an internal candidate, Liz Forsyth, to the CEO role. Liz has been associated with Northcott since 2008, working her way up from a family support worker role. Liz has a love for Northcott, its staff and customers. As Chair I'm excited to work closely with her.

I would also like to thank all the hard working Northcott staff for their excellent contributions during what has been an unprecedented and challenging period. The level of commitment to do what is right for our customers is inspiring.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Michael Briggs.

MICHAEL BRIGGS
CHAIRMAN

CEO'S REPORT

The 2019–2020 financial year has been a very interesting and changeable year for Northcott, as it has for every organisation.



We finished the calendar year 2019 in very good shape, with a growing customer base supported by a dedicated and committed workforce. Our plans for the full integration of our workforce through the development of a new Enterprise Agreement were on track, along with many activities to support a productive and effective workforce and continual improvement of our services to better meet customer needs.

Operationally, in January 2020 we were delighted to take the reins of Creativity Inc, a smaller disability service provider based in South-Eastern Sydney. Work throughout 2020 focussed on ensuring a smooth integration of Creativity Inc customers and staff into the Northcott family. We look forward to completing the full integration in November.

However, of course, in early 2020 the whole world was hit with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As an essential service for so many people with disability, this meant for the rest of the 2019–20 year we were fully involved in ensuring that both customers and staff were kept safe, while we continued to offer services and supports.

You will see throughout this Annual Report many examples of all we have achieved in the year, and I commend it to you. In particular, I am proud of the way our teams have responded to the COVID-19 crisis. Despite the challenges, we have managed to keep services open, be innovative and flexible in how we have provided services to people who needed to stay at home, and develop new ways of responding quickly – all with great compassion for our customers.

I left Northcott at the end of August 2020. I am so pleased to leave behind a great organisation where the staff show genuine commitment to delivering services that build our customers' independence and capacity, and who have stepped up wonderfully to the challenges of this year. I thank all staff, and all the customers, who have made my last year at Northcott such a special one.

Finally, I particularly wish to thank our Chairman Michael Briggs, the Northcott Board and my Executive team for all their support during my time with Northcott. I leave with fond memories and great confidence that Northcott will continue to make a difference to the lives of children and adults with disability.

KERRY STUBBS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(resigned August 2020)

90 YEARS OF NORTHCOTT

In 2019, Northcott celebrated 90 years of delivering services and supports for children and adults with disability.

Our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, hosted a cocktail reception at Government House to mark this special milestone. Northcott customers, supporters, Board Members and staff joined Her Excellency for the celebration.



SOME MOMENTS IN OUR HISTORY

1937-1981 – Margaret Reid Hospital

The Society opened the Margaret Reid Orthopaedic Hospital in 1937. It was the only specialist orthopaedic children's hospital in Australia, offering specialised surgery, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, particularly during the polio epidemic.

1943 – Orana Club for teenagers

The Orana Club was one of The Society's first recreational clubs, providing "social and educational experiences" for 100 teenagers and young people with disability. This 1978 photo shows members preparing to head overseas on an adventure.

1999 – The Freewheeler

In 1999, Northcott Equipment Services designed a wheelchair capable of travel in sand, water and snow. It was named the Freewheeler, a name that was decided on through a staff competition. Northcott made the first six Freewheelers before manufacturing passed to another company.

2011 – Homes for younger people

In 2011, Northcott, with help from then Governor of New South Wales and Northcott Patron, Marie Bashir, opened a new disability house in Wagga Wagga. The purpose-built home was part of the Government's initiative to provide more suitable housing for younger people with disability living in aged care facilities.



FROM OUR NEW CEO

It is an honour and privilege to take the reins as Northcott's next Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Northcott is a deeply purpose-driven and values-based organisation that has proudly supported people with disability to achieve their potential for 90 years.

I look forward to leading us into the future, and building on the strong foundations developed by Kerry Stubbs over many years.

Our significant growth this past year, particularly in our Early Childhood Early Intervention, Therapy and Coordination of Supports services, places Northcott in a strong position to continue supporting children and adults with disability, and their families and carers, to live full lives, and feel engaged and included in their communities.

Housing also continues to be a big focus for Northcott. Building on our great work over the past few years, I am confident we can leverage our expertise to make things even better for our customers. I see opportunities to expand and improve our models of support, to create innovative approaches to housing for people with disability, and to be leader in the industry.

The supports and services we deliver for young adults with disability, including our Life Skills and Vocational Skills services, demonstrate our ability to adapt and transform with the changing nature of our world today. By harnessing new technologies and ways of working, we have the opportunity to support young people with disability to thrive in the future.

With the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) now fully implemented, over the coming years we will see further development and change in the system. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will shift from getting people into the scheme, to supporting them to achieve their goals and reach their potential. This is bread and butter to Northcott. I am confident we have the right foundations to continue to grow and succeed, while also broadening our impact for people with disability, their families and communities.

I am excited to lead Northcott into its next stage, work with our fabulous staff and customers, and support the organisation to unleash its full potential.



LIZ FORSYTH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

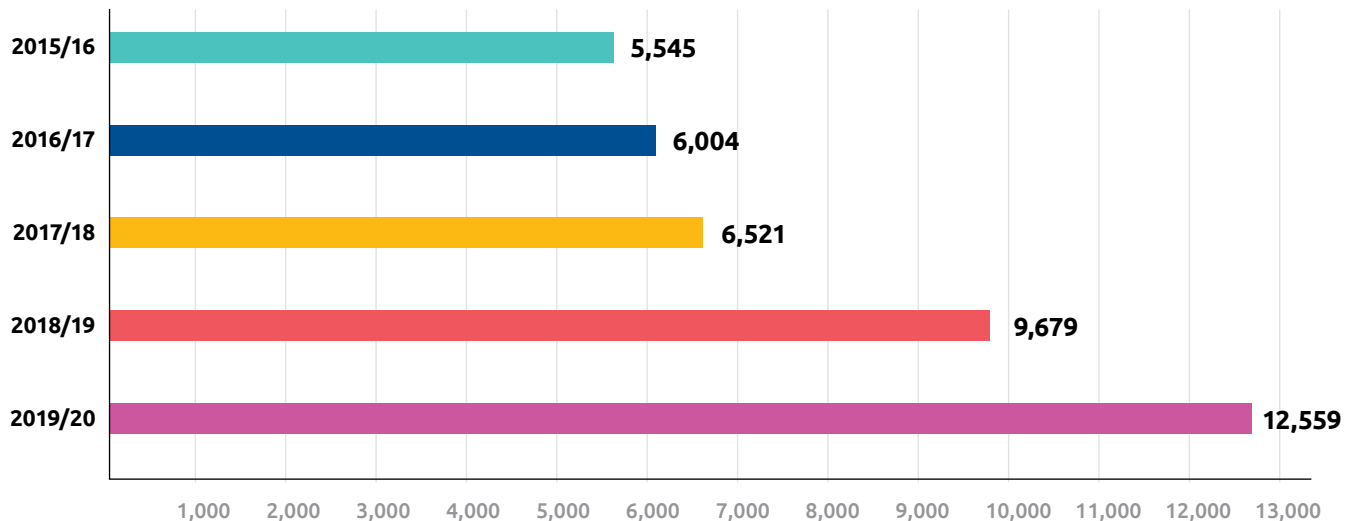
(Appointed September 2020)



OUR CUSTOMERS

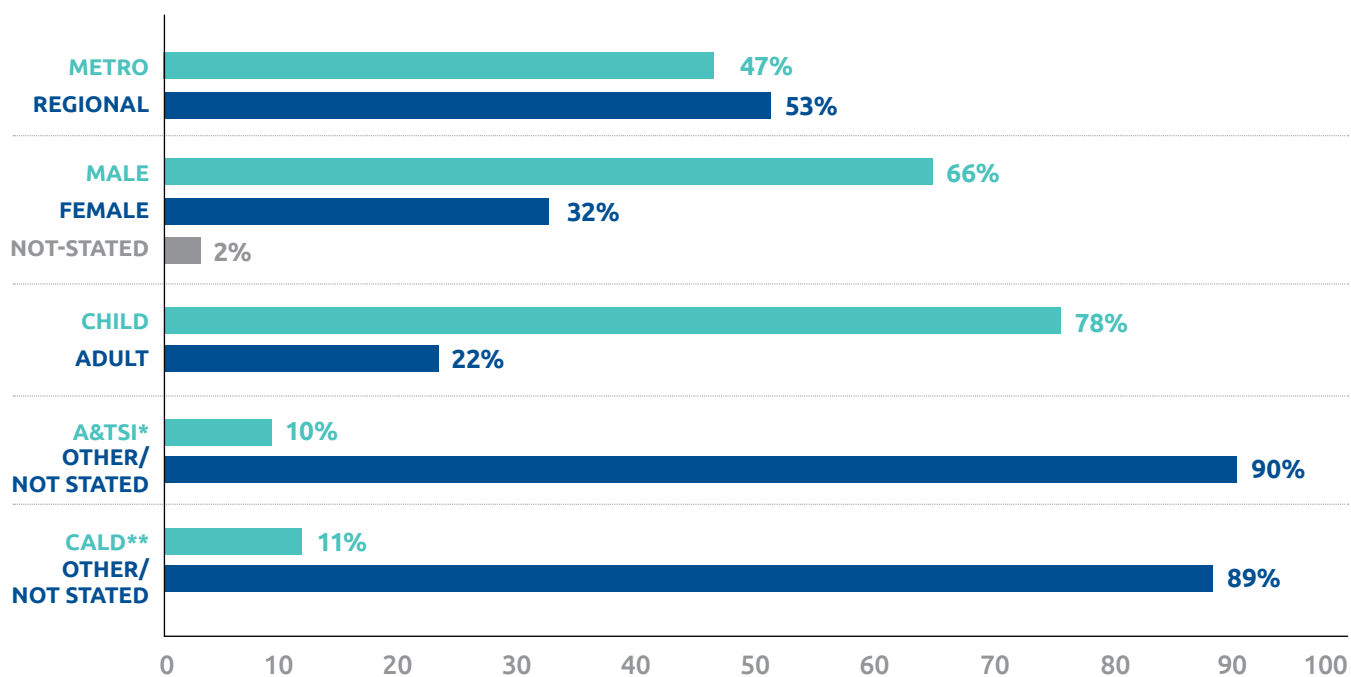
This year, our products, services and supports assisted more than 12,000 children and adults with disability, plus thousands more family members and carers. The significant growth on the previous year is attributable to our Early Childhood Early Intervention service, which reached considerably more families this financial year. We also transitioned more than 200 customers from Creativity Inc through its acquisition in January 2020.

NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS WE SUPPORTED

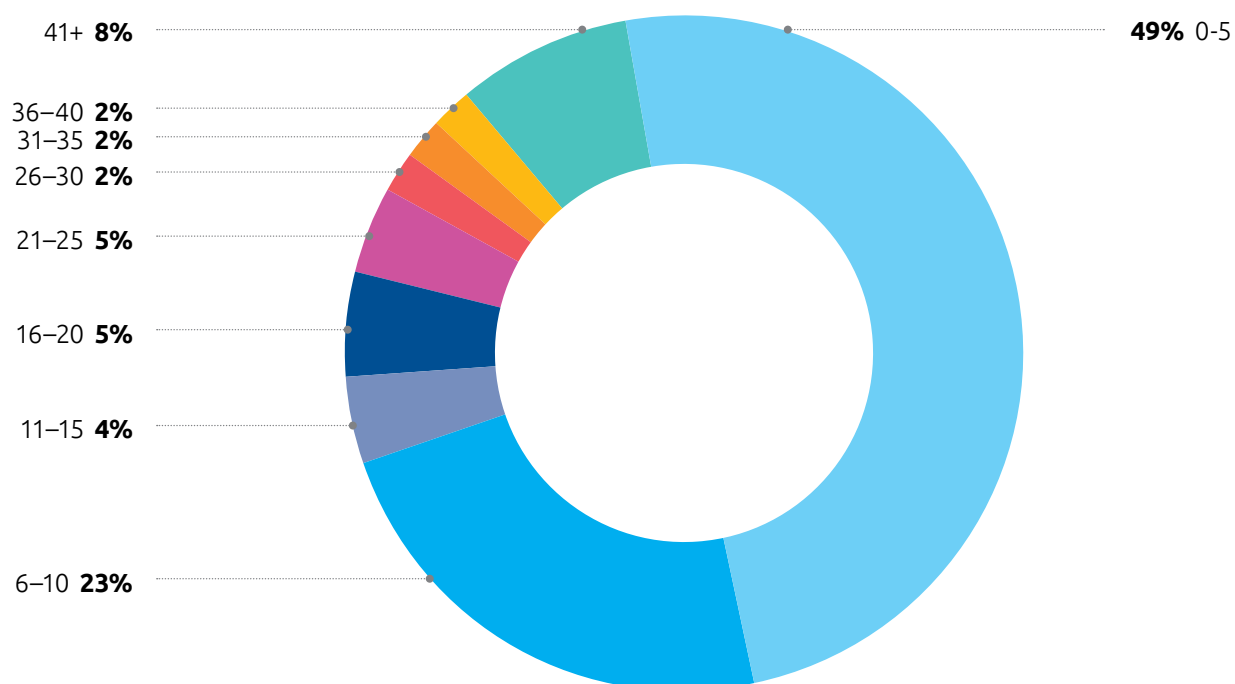


OUR CUSTOMERS' DEMOGRAPHICS 2019–20

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ** Culturally and Linguistically Diverse



OUR CUSTOMERS' AGES 2019–20



MANAGING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As an essential service providing supports for people with disability, Northcott's full range of products and services continued to operate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure the safety of both staff and customers, we introduced new safety precautions, policies and procedures. We also developed new ways to deliver our services so customers can continue to work towards their goals.

Across our organisation, staff have demonstrated dedication to our customers, as well as great initiative, innovation, care and flexibility as we work through this pandemic. Below are a few of the measures implemented to ensure our organisation was able to best manage this challenging and troubling time.

Coordination Team

A dedicated COVID-19 Coordination Team was formed at the start of the outbreak. This multi-disciplinary team provides guidance and support to customers and staff on a range of topics, from NSW Health updates to Northcott policies and general health and wellbeing advice.

Communications

Clear communication of key messages and critical information from our CEO to staff and customers has been a key priority of the Coordination Team. This includes explanations of Public Health Orders, as well as sharing other information to ensure the continued health and safety of Northcott customers and staff. Information is updated on our website and intranet, and regular email communications are sent as required.



New policies, processes and training

Our policies and processes in response to COVID-19 are guided by NSW Public Health. Measures adopted include increased cleaning in our sites, social distancing, and health screening in offices and centres. To ensure staff and visitors to our office have up-to-date and accurate information, we display posters to promote good hand hygiene and reminders of COVID-19 symptoms. Where possible, staff who are able to work from home have been encouraged to do so.

To reduce risks, all staff have completed mandatory infection control training. Frontline workers have completed mandatory personal protective equipment training, and self-screening for flu or COVID-19 symptoms must be undertaken before attending any Northcott premises.

If staff show or experience any COVID-19 symptoms, they must not enter a Northcott site and must be tested for COVID-19. Similarly, visitors to any Northcott location are screened prior to entry.

The COVID-19 Coordination Team produced response protocols and guidelines for staff to follow if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in our staff or customer base. An interactive workshop was delivered to educate staff on these guidelines.

Northcott tracks all suspected, confirmed, negative and recovered cases of COVID-19 to ensure we can swiftly implement contact tracing and respond in a timely manner in the instance of a positive COVID-19 case.

Special Response Team

We established a Special Response Team to act as a mobile, contingent workforce, upskilled to provide immediate and direct support to customers with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis. Our aim was to have a group of dedicated staff who could support the needs of customers who rely on our essential services – particularly those living in our housing services – quickly and safely. We called for volunteers from across the organisation and provided training, information and supervision. The Special Response Team will remain active as the pandemic continues.

Service delivery

Northcott's services and products are essential for the people and families we support. Ensuring our customers can continue to access services without visiting our facilities or seeing staff in person are important elements in how we are managing the COVID-19 health crisis. As much as possible, we have continued to operate as normal, implementing social distancing protocols and other measures for the health and safety of all involved. However, for customers who wish to stay home but still remain connected with Northcott, we have adapted many services and products to be delivered remotely via telehealth or other online technology, such as Zoom or Skype. Full details of how each service was adapted are included in the Products and Services section.

Staff wellbeing

Looking after the wellbeing of our staff – and facilitating ways for teams to stay connected while working from home – has been a priority for managers. At the same time, we have made sure those staff working directly with customers (the majority of our workforce) have felt safe and supported. Fun, engaging and motivational activities were rolled out organisation-wide and within teams to ensure staff morale was maintained.

NEW SUPPORT ASSISTANT PAID INTERNSHIP

One of the early impacts of the COVID-19 lockdown was the closure of day programs run by other providers. This meant many people living in our houses were forced to stay home without the support they would normally have. We quickly recognised a need for more support workers in our houses and developed a fast-tracked internship program to address the workforce shortage.



Working with Western Sydney University, our Recruitment team designed a paid internship program to train support assistants. The program targeted workers from other sectors such as hospitality, who had lost their jobs due to the pandemic and had no prior experience working with people with disability.

Combining two days of training with two days of on-the-job work experience, the program initially ran over four weeks with participants achieving four units of competency in a Certificate III in Individual Support, plus the opportunity to become a casual support worker with Northcott after completion.

More than half the participants in the first cohort of the program joined our workforce as support workers in June, with others from further cohorts following. With ongoing demand for support workers, our Recruitment team further refined the model and continued to offer the paid internship over several months.

The program is a great example of Northcott's ability to be responsive, innovative and flexible.

COORDINATION OF SUPPORTS

Assisting customers to get the most from their NDIS plan.

Our Coordination of Supports service has continued to grow, reaching more customers, expanding in regional areas and offering new types of support.

A change in the funding structure by the National Insurance Disability Scheme (NDIS), introduced in March 2020, means that many customers who previously couldn't use their funding to access this type of support are now able to access our service. Our team has been able to reach a new cohort of customers and assist them to access opportunities not possible without the extra support and knowledge shared by our experts.

Increased demand for Coordination of Supports – both as a result of COVID-19 and the new NDIS funding structure – saw our team record its highest ever revenue in the final quarter of the financial year.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Coordination of Supports was highly sought after from the start of the pandemic. Many customers needed timely assistance to alter or adapt their supports to meet changes to services and their needs.

For the safety of customers and our support coordinators, we cancelled all non-essential face-to-face appointments and transitioned customers to phone meetings where possible. Both our staff and customers adjusted smoothly to the new way of working.



HIGHLIGHTS

Support to live independently

Many of our support coordinators have assisted customers who wish to live independently to access appropriate NDIS funding to achieve this goal. Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) and Supported Independent Living (SIL) applications can be long and complicated. Northcott is aiming to position itself as a leader in Support Coordination for these types of funding applications.

New products

We introduced new products under our Coordination of Supports umbrella, including Our Capacity Building, Training in Plan and Financial Management and Assistance with Accommodation and Tenancy Obligations. These additional products have enabled our team to support a broader range of NDIS participants with different funding packages.

Service delivery

We have reached new customers located outside our main service centres with the introduction of more phone meetings. We plan to continue to offer our Coordination of Supports service this way for those customers who prefer this access method.

IN THE YEAR AHEAD

We anticipate continued high demand for our Support Coordination services with ongoing uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 crisis and after its impact on services and supports for people with disability.

As a way to develop and grow our service, we will explore potential new products that will support our customers to make the best use of their NDIS plan and funding.

“OUR TEAM HAS BEEN ABLE TO REACH A NEW COHORT OF CUSTOMERS AND ASSIST THEM TO ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES.”

Taking away the stress

After a lifetime of managing disability services for her two adult children, Alex and Sui, accessing Northcott's Coordination of Supports service has been life-changing for Janet. Her Northcott Support Coordinator, Jo, has not only found suitable supports for Alex and Sui, but handing over tasks has freed Janet up to spend more quality time with her children.

Janet's son Alex (30) has autism, epilepsy and Type 1 diabetes. Her daughter Sui (28) has Down Syndrome. After years of negative experiences with providers, Janet has self-managed the pair's supports for most of their lives, including when the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was introduced. She admits it's been stressful, time-consuming and frustrating. Despite the difficulties, Janet felt managing the plans herself was the best approach – until she met Jo, a Support Coordinator from Northcott.

"For Alex's plan review, the NDIA suggested I get a support coordinator. I'd had a few dramas in my life and wasn't coping as well as I could have. The NDIA saw it as a way to take pressure off me – but of course, I didn't see it that way at the time," she explains.

"I was very negative. When I met Jo, I was very upfront with her and said 'I'm not happy with this. I'm doing it because the NDIA is telling me I have to'. I said I'm an inclusionist and I told her how I work. But then we clicked because she was also interested in horses."

Janet gave Jo the hard task of finding a suitable behaviour support therapist for Alex, support she had struggled to find herself.

"I set this really high bar for Jo, but she came up with an organisation and chased them when they didn't get back to us – it took a lot of pressure off me. The therapist is brilliant for Alex. That's made a huge difference for me," she says.

Janet was so happy with the Coordination of Supports service that when the time came to review Sui's plan, she didn't think twice about enlisting Jo as her support coordinator again.

"It works really well because I don't have to spend time researching. Jo helps me get all the information I need without me having to spend hours on the internet. I hadn't seen the NDIS work like that."

Jo was able to find a specialist speech therapist for Sui who met Janet's request for being skilled in Auslan, Augmentative Assistive Communication (ACC) and Proloquo2go. The therapist is making great progress with Sui's communication skills.

"I wouldn't have found the behaviour support and speech therapists without Jo. She came to me with the names of therapists, what they do and don't do. It was my job to meet with them to see if they were appropriate.

"When both organisations took a while to respond, Jo hassled them so I didn't have to. She's saved me a lot of calls and I didn't have to put pressure on them. For the plan reviews, Jo chased all the reports – that's a massive amount of time."

Janet says the best outcome has been getting time back with her family. "It's given me a lot of quality time with the kids, rather than trying to get everything in place. That has been huge. Jo's support means I can actually be a mum rather than a support coordinator.

"I absolutely recommend using a support coordinator. It's been really beneficial for me, and I've still got the reins and feel in control."



**CASE
STUDY**



EARLY CHILDHOOD EARLY INTERVENTION

Supporting young children and families in the early years.

Northcott is an NDIS Partner in the Community delivering Early Childhood Early Intervention services and supports for children aged 0-6 years.

Our ECEI coordinators support families to understand the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), access funding and find the most appropriate services and supports for their young children. Our ECEI Community Engagement and Capacity Building team build connections in the community to support families to access services, build their skills and knowledge to support their children and promote this important service to families with young children.

This financial year was our second year running this service for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

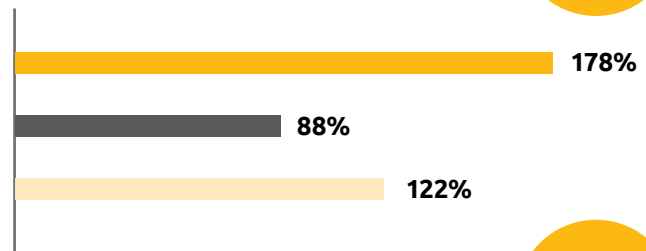
COVID-19 IMPACT

For the safety of customers and staff during the pandemic, we suspended face-to-face meetings and transitioned families to online or phone-based meetings. This new way of engaging with families has been well received, with some staff reporting their customers felt more comfortable sharing their information over the phone.

Our Community Engagement and Capacity Building team, who have been unable to get and out about in communities, have connected with their networks and partners online. Additionally, work has been undertaken to develop a series of videos to reach and engage with families and partners who they are not able to visit in person.

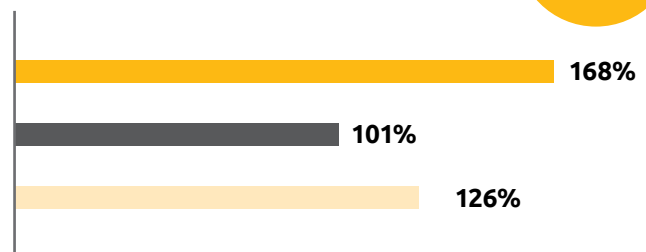
FIRST NDIS PLANS

RANKED
#1



PLAN REVIEWS

RANKED
#2



- Northcott
- National Average
- State Average

HIGHLIGHTS

Performance targets

With our processes and procedures put in place during our first year of delivering this service, this financial year saw our team achieve many positive outcomes for families and children, and exceed our performance targets.

In May, we were proud to learn our team ranked No. 1 and No. 2 respectively across all ECEI partners in Australia in terms of supporting families with their first NDIS plans and plan reviews.

In our first two years of delivering NDIS ECEI services, our team assisted more than 11,400 children and their families. Support from our ECEI coordinators resulted in more than 6,400 children having their first NDIS plans approved.

Customer satisfaction survey

After every face-to-face appointment the families we support are invited to provide their feedback on our service. This survey is conducted using Ratelt, a survey app accessed via a tablet device at the entrance of our offices or sent to families by our coordinators after the appointment.

Over the year, 2,068 families completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 14.95% and a positive feedback rating of 98%. From March-July 2020, the response rate was impacted by COVID-19, but we hope to see increased participation in the coming year.

Providing support to Victorian customers

In September 2019, a team of our ECEI coordinators travelled to Melbourne to support 250 families develop their first NDIS plans for their children. We partnered with the Brotherhood of St Laurence on this important project.



“SUPPORT FROM OUR ECEI COORDINATORS RESULTED IN MORE THAN 6,400 CHILDREN HAVING THEIR FIRST NDIS PLANS APPROVED.”

Support and connections

Two-year-old Sullivan (pictured below right) and Ashaea (pictured right) were born a month apart. Both children are supported by a Northcott Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Coordinator to access services and supports through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Knowing the benefit sharing stories can have for parents, our ECEI Coordinator connected the children's mothers, Tenneayle and Penny.

Penny and her husband Ash moved to Port Macquarie with their three young daughters. Just a few months earlier, their daughter Ashaea had been diagnosed with hemiplegia unilateral cerebral palsy. Although they would be closer to relatives, Penny and Ash were worried about moving to a small regional town with little knowledge of the supports and services available for their daughter.

A month after settling in, Penny connected with Northcott for support with finding services and submitting her daughter's first NDIS plan.

"I was feeling nervous because we were really starting from scratch. I called Northcott and our ECEI Coordinator helped with the rest. She took a lot of the stress of finding services off me."

Northcott's ECEI Coordinator worked with Penny to build Ashaea's first NDIS plan and find suitable therapists to support her development. She also sought consent to connect Penny with Tenneayle, another local mother with a son also diagnosed with hemiplegia unilateral cerebral palsy.

"I just loved thinking of Sullivan and Ashaea being able to grow up together and not feel the weight of their disability or that they are different. I wanted them to have each other," the ECEI Coordinator says.

"I also knew Tenneayle and Penny had the same concerns for their children."

From the moment the mothers connected, they started sharing stories about their journey, discovering that Sullivan and Ashaea's conditions were almost identical.

"It was really good to connect with Tenneayle...she understood everything that I was going through. Initially we would talk every few days, messaging constantly for hours, comparing scenarios and stories. It felt really good to know there was someone else who was going through the same thing," Penny says.

Northcott has supported Tenneayle and Penny to access physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists for Sullivan and Ashaea, as well as identify other supports to help with the children's development. An ECEI Coordinator is now supporting both mothers with each child's second NDIS plan.

"From our first meeting with Northcott, we felt at ease and knew we were in the right hands. After a child receives a diagnosis it can be an extremely isolating situation. It has been so wonderful to have Penny as a support and to have someone that understands our situation," says Tenneayle.

For Penny, getting support from Northcott and Tenneayle has made all the difference. "We feel like we've got all the support we need."



**CASE
STUDY**



EVERYDAY LIFE SKILLS

Supporting customers to transition from their teens into adulthood.

Northcott has more than 15 years' experience in the delivery of Everyday Life Skills.

Our aim is to support adults with disability to develop essential life skills so they can live more independently and freely. Customers choose the skills they wish to learn – from practical domestic tasks, such as cooking, to building their confidence in decision-making or exploring creative pursuits. Our service includes centre-based training groups, as well as group and one-to-one support for customers who wish to attend activities in their local community.

An off-shoot of our Everyday Life Skills service is Skills 4 Life, a service for teenagers with disability.

HIGHLIGHTS

I-Art

We were excited to receive a grant from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to run an art-based program for young people with disability across Western Sydney who wish to develop their artistic talents. Called *I-Art*, the program, which began in May, includes community-based workshops for participants, as well as a public exhibition to bring their creativity to life. We hope *I-Art* will empower participants to explore their creativity and challenge the social misconceptions around disability, encouraging people to look at ability over disability. Customers from our Everyday Life Skills and Vocational Skills services in the Sydney Metropolitan area have the chance to participate, and art exhibitions will be held in Parramatta and Casula in May 2021.



Skills 4 Life

This skill-development service is a complementary service to Everyday Life Skills, specifically for teenagers with disability aged 14-17 years. Designed to be a light-hearted way to prepare young people to socialise and thrive in a group setting, it has continued to grow. Through a range of fun and educational activities offered twice a week, participants learn how to express their opinions, make decisions and respect others, while building their confidence. Social interaction and connection are core to this service.

Similar to our Everyday Life Skills service, which is for adults with disability, our Skills 4 Life team launched their service online from Term 2 using Zoom. Customers who were unable to attend our centres in person were able to continue to be active participants in our program during the lockdown.



National Reconciliation Week 2020

COVID-19 restrictions meant our annual celebrations for National Reconciliation Week in June 2020 were a little different. This year, participants and staff from each of our Everyday Life Skills services came together in a virtual morning tea hosted on Zoom. Customers and staff from across the state were able to connect with each other through the virtual meeting. Participants attending our centres also took part in activities, such as creating a wall mural from footprints.

IN THE YEAR AHEAD

We have plans to refresh the way we facilitate our Everyday Life Skills services to ensure our coordinators can deliver a consistent service across all sites.

Attracting new customers will be a focus. Drop-in days, which give prospective customers the chance to experience our services first-hand prior to signing up, will be run across our locations. We hope to build our community connections within schools and support new customers in Skills 4 Life through *Innov8* (see page 44).

COVID-19 IMPACT

Our Everyday Life Skills and Skills 4 Life services across NSW were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown period. While some customers continued to attend our services in person, many chose to stay at home. Our staff adapted quickly to meet the needs of these customers by developing and introducing online services. With the help of the Sales and Product team, our coordinators had Everyday Life Skills up and running online for all customers from April 2020, with many participants individually supported to learn how to get online and take part in activities. A COVID-19 Resilience Grant from the City of Parramatta Council assisted us to do this work.

Early in the pandemic, an Everyday Life Skills focus group was established to discuss and develop specific content for customers accessing our service through the online platform. A schedule of morning and afternoon sessions was introduced, with activities spanning topics including mindfulness, fitness, art, music and cooking. Social activities and virtual exploring are also included in the weekly schedules.

We always ensure that we collaborate with our customers to design services that work for them. To ensure we continued to meet customer needs during the pandemic, feedback was sought on a weekly basis.

With continued uncertainty around the COVID-19 crisis, customers now have the choice of accessing our services and products online or in person at our centres. Our online services will be offered beyond COVID-19.

Supporting positive changes

Nineteen-year-old Stephanie finished high school in 2019. She started accessing Northcott Hornsby's Everyday Life Skills service to support her to be more independent, learn new skills and access her community.

The bubbly young adult, who has Down Syndrome, has thrived in the supportive environment, becoming more confident and making positive steps towards achieving her goals.

"I come to Northcott four days a week. It's a place where we can have fun and learn new things," Stephanie explains.

Some of Stephanie's favourite activities with the Life Skills group include sewing, arts and crafts and cooking. She has also enjoyed building her confidence through the learning modules the customers work together to complete.

"We've been doing modules which are pretty fun. I've learnt about social awareness, and knowing myself."

Stephanie's goals include becoming more confident out in the community and gaining the skills she needs to be able to attend TAFE. She says she'd love to complete a TAFE course in hospitality but at the moment she is happy keeping busy with Northcott.

"I like Northcott. I feel more confident coming here. It's fun, you get to meet new friends and you'll be happy."

In addition to supporting Stephanie to learn important life skills, attending the service has also seen her make new friends, develop greater self-awareness and improve the way she conducts herself – all leading to more confidence and positive self-esteem.

Even Stephanie's mother has noticed changes. "Stephanie has been enjoying all of the activities at Northcott. There are many positive changes. She's happier and her attitude has improved. The program and activities are therapeutic for her," she told staff.

The staff who support Stephanie – especially Senior Support Worker Tiah – have become very special to her. Stephanie likes to show her appreciation to Tiah by giving her thoughtful handwritten notes.

"I write these notes just because Tiah's the best. She makes Northcott Northcott!" she laughs.



**CASE
STUDY**

**"I LIKE NORTHCOTT. I
FEEL MORE CONFIDENT
COMING HERE. IT'S
FUN, YOU GET TO MEET
NEW FRIENDS AND
YOU'LL BE HAPPY."**



HOUSING AND SUPPORTED LIVING

Providing homes and support for people with disability.

Northcott is a leading provider of Housing and Independent Supported Living for people with disability. Our services and supports in this area continue to grow.

With a property portfolio of more than 120 houses, units and villas across NSW, we provide a broad range of housing options for people with disability. These range from short-term, temporary accommodation to permanent homes for individuals, shared housing, specialist disability accommodation (SDA), and housing for people with complex needs who need 24-hour specialist care.

We also provide support for customers, ranging from assistance to find a home to a few hours of support a day around the home, and 24-hour specialist disability nursing care.

COVID-19 IMPACT

To protect our customers and staff, we introduced new screening and infection control measures, cleaning regimes and social distancing guidelines across all the homes we manage and support.

With many other providers suspending their day programs, more than 300 customers who would normally attend a day program were forced to stay home at some point. We offered these customers one-to-one in-home supports and activities during the times they would normally attend their day program. This equated to 6,600 hours a week of additional one-to-one support from April to the end of June across our homes.

HIGHLIGHTS

Supporting customers to find homes

This financial year, we supported 29 customers to find new homes with us. We also filled 18 new vacancies across our existing homes and new houses.

Behind the scenes, developing our vacancy management framework was a huge focus. Teams across the organisation worked collaboratively to design a process that is efficient and effective in supporting customers to find and move into their new homes.

New temporary housing model

We introduced new temporary housing for customers who require a short-term housing solution while they wait for a permanent home to become available or be built, more appropriate housing, SDA funding approval or modifications to their existing home. Customers can now stay temporarily in two Northcott respite properties which have been converted into temporary accommodation.

Over the past year, we were able to assist more than 10 customers to access this new temporary housing model for short periods of time. We have found people in need of this type of housing may be in vulnerable situations such as being homeless or at risk of homelessness, living in inappropriate settings without adequate support, residing in aged care, hospital or rehabilitation services.



**“THIS FINANCIAL
YEAR, WE
SUPPORTED 29
CUSTOMERS TO
FIND A NEW PLACE
TO CALL HOME.”**



New homes

This financial year, we opened seven new homes for customers who are not eligible for SDA funding. These homes are located in Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Taree, Ballina and Tamworth. Some of these customers were living in challenging situations or at risk of homelessness until we stepped in to find them more appropriate housing and supported them to make a smooth transition to living away from family for the first time.

In Wagga Wagga, we also opened a new SDA home for four customers who were previously living in the government-run Tomarah and Stockton Centres in Newcastle. Northcott supported the customers to move to Wagga Wagga to be closer to their families. This included planning a smooth transition for customers and recruiting and training a team of support workers.

With our SDA partner, DPN Casa Capace, we opened a state-of-the-art disability home in Oran Park in February for six customers. The purpose-built house is equipped with the latest advances in assistive technology, including automated doors, blinds and adjustable benches.

Partnerships

Following on from opening the new home in Oran Park with DPN Casa Capace, we have expanded this partnership to provide six more purpose-built accessible housing complexes in Ballina, Coffs Harbour, Taree and Wagga Wagga for 28 customers. These properties will have varying configurations, including some detached individual units. They have been designed with assistance from Northcott clinicians. We have been working with DPN Casa Capace to select appropriate blocks of land and are fielding enquiries from customers interested in moving into these homes.

We formed a new partnership with SDA developer, AccessAccom and have been working collaboratively to open our first '10+1 service' in Ryde. Referred to as a 'concierge model,' this development comprises a mix of one and two-bedroom units, where 10 units are for customers and one unit is for Northcott, as the support partner. Customers will move into this complex in the second half of 2020. We hope to pursue more opportunities of this progressive housing model with AccessAccom in Western Sydney in the coming year.



IN THE YEAR AHEAD

With a shortfall in disability housing, we will continue to pursue opportunities to partner with developers and other providers to provide accessible properties for people with a range of disabilities. We will work towards reducing our vacancy rate and providing customers with the support they need to find their ideal property, move in and live the life they choose.

We expect the construction of a number of new homes to be completed in the coming year and will look for more opportunities in areas of high need.

To enhance quality of life for customers, our housing staff will continue to work closely with Northcott therapists, behaviour support specialists, the clinical practice team and others to ensure customers are supported in all aspects of their lives.

“REFERRED TO AS A ‘CONCIERGE MODEL,’ THIS DEVELOPMENT BY ACCESSACCOM (PICTURED BELOW) COMPRISES 11 UNITS, WHERE 10 UNITS ARE FOR CUSTOMERS AND ONE UNIT IS FOR NORTHCOTT, AS THE SUPPORT PARTNER.”



Living the good life!

A sea change from Hobart to Coffs Harbour has given Peter more than just a new home. His mother Wendy says the 43-year-old “has never had such a good life”. Wendy is thankful for the support and care provided by the staff in Peter’s Northcott home.

Wendy moved to Coffs Harbour to be closer to her daughter in early 2019. It was important for her to also find a suitable home for her son Peter, who has cerebral palsy and is non-verbal.

For the past 20 years, Peter has lived in a group home in Hobart. While the care from support workers was always very good, Wendy felt Peter had limited opportunities to get out in the community, engage with other people and make choices. He had also never had a good friend to spend time with.

Since moving into a Northcott home in Coffs Harbour, Wendy says Peter’s life has taken a whole new turn.

“First of all we have the climate. It’s mild - you wake up and see the sunshine. Peter can go out. Everything is so accessible here. He has an electric chair so he can move himself,” she says. “It’s a very different life up here. His horizons have just opened up so much.”

From her first encounter with Northcott, Wendy has been impressed by the level of support provided.

“There’s nothing lacking. The staff are responsive, they listen and are caring. They do everything they can to make any change necessary for Peter. Because I’ve known Peter so long, everyone at Northcott will listen to me.”

Despite some unforeseen challenges when Peter first moved to Coffs Harbour, Wendy says he loved his new home straight away.

“There have been so many people involved. We have a Northcott support coordinator and behaviour support specialist. The area manager has been fantastic, and I regularly touch base with Peter’s service coordinator about what’s happening in the house,” Wendy says.

Peter’s benefits through the NDIS have also stretched gigantically. “He is now able to get one-on-one support for six hours daily which means he has choice and he is able to do the things he enjoys,” Wendy explains.

However, it is seeing Peter build a friendship with his housemate Matt that has been extra special for Wendy.

“Matt is just so caring. He’s always looking after Peter. He’s been such a faithful friend – Peter has never had anybody like that. It’s lovely to see. They enjoy going out for coffee in their electric wheelchairs,” she says. “I do think Peter feels happier here – he has choice and variety in his life now.”



**CASE
STUDY**



SEXUALITY AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

Supporting customers to develop skills and explore relationships.

Northcott supports customers to reach their sexuality and relationships goals and desires. We provide a range of support to assist customers, and their families, with learning about and exploring relationships and ways to express their sexuality. This includes individual and group counselling and advice, educational workshops, advocacy, events and activities.

This year, we continued to provide a safe and supportive environment where taboo topics are openly discussed and customers feel comfortable discussing sexuality without fear of judgement. We also continued to advocate for the rights of people with disability and provide opportunities and ways for our customers to express their sexuality. Through our educational workshops, our customers have been able to gain a better understanding of themselves and others, and we spread our message of the importance of inclusion for all.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Restrictions on face-to-face counselling sessions, travel and the introduction of social distancing saw our Sexuality and Relationship Education service implement new ways of supporting customers. We began offering tele-therapy and online counselling to existing and new customers via Zoom, Skype and phone sessions. Additionally, our 10-week face-to-face education program was modified into an online learning module, which is now also available to regional customers.



HIGHLIGHTS

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

This year we supported 64 customers and staff, including regional customers from Newcastle, Tamworth, Taree and Wollongong, to participate in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade on Saturday 29 February 2020. We collaborated with People with Disability Australia (PWDA) to host a float, which highlighted six sexuality-related rights of people with disability.

In the lead-up to parade night, we held a special day to support customers to decorate the float. Customers from Northcott, our subsidiary Creativity Inc and partner PWDA participated, supported by Northcott staff and managers.

On parade night, it was great to see event broadcaster SBS TV dedicate significant airtime to our float.

Videos

Our team developed a three-part video series titled *'Talking about sexuality'* for use by staff with customers. The series focussed on how staff can promote and support the sexuality-related rights of their customers. Using funding provided by AustBrokers Corporate, we also produced a three-part video series for customers about dating. This was promoted on our social media channels.

Regional customers

As a result of adapting our individual counselling services and educational program for online delivery, we have been able to reach more regional customers with this service. We plan to continue operating in this way for customers who are unable to visit our centres.



Marching for his rights

When Vitor (pictured middle right) was offered the chance to participate in the 2020 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras with Northcott, there were some hurdles that almost stopped him from attending.

Support from Creativity Inc and Northcott enabled Vitor to take part in the parade. More importantly, the support gave him the confidence to make his own choices and start to express the way he feels.

Going to Sydney's iconic Mardi Gras has been something Vitor has wanted to do for many years. Family pressure, however, has meant he has struggled to openly express himself, particularly when it comes to his sexuality. Attending Mardi Gras was big step in Vitor's goal to have the confidence to express who he really is.

"This was my first time. I've wanted to go because it is fun and because I want to find someone like me," Vitor says.

Following Northcott's acquisition of Creativity Inc, the organisation's customers were able to join with Northcott and People with Disability Australia for the chance to participate in the parade in a safe and supportive environment. Vitor was one of the first customers the Creativity Inc team thought to invite to the parade.

"This was a perfect opportunity for us to provide Vitor with an unforgettable experience, that he had been thinking about for a long time. It is something I don't think Vitor would have done himself," says Andrew, Service Coordinator from Creativity Inc.

"To see his reaction, when being a part of the scene he has looked into all this time, was one of the top highlights for me working in disability."

In the lead-up to the parade, Vitor was also able to participate in Northcott's Float Build Day, assisting to decorate Northcott's float with glitter and paint. This year, the float was about disability rights and sexuality. Six mannequins in the colours of the rainbow were installed on the back of a truck, each representing a different sexuality-related human right.

When parade night came, Vitor remembers being excited to go. He had purchased a special costume and glitter for the event and with assistance from his support worker, Jack, was planning on dressing up to join in the fun. Pressure on the day unfortunately saw him change his mind. With Jack's support however, Vitor decided to still attend the parade, despite not dressing up.

"I enjoyed going to Mardi Gras and doing the marching and dancing. It made me feel happy and it made me feel good. I needed some support so Creativity Inc supported me. I didn't meet anyone for me that night but [with Creativity Inc and Northcott] we are working on finding someone."

Since the Mardi Gras parade, Vitor has reached out to Northcott's Sexuality and Relationship Education service for more support for dating and meeting people. His goal is to build his confidence in talking about what he wants, and to find somebody special for him.

"I'm looking for somebody to date, a person like me, a nice person who is very polite and caring. Hopefully we can have coffee or go out together."



“This was my first time. I’ve wanted to go because it is fun and because I want to find someone like me,”



CASE STUDY

SHORT BREAKS AND OUTINGS

Recreational and social opportunities to build confidence.

We provide opportunities for children, young people and adults to spend time with their peers, get out in their communities and develop independence away from their families.

Our range of offerings in this space include weekends at our respite houses, community outings, recreational activities and our popular modified swimming and athletic carnivals for primary and secondary school children with disability. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our recreational services in particular were growing, with more people exploring social experiences with Northcott.

RESPITE HIGHLIGHTS

Renovations and service improvements

We gave our Tamworth respite house a fresh new look to make it more homely. We also revamped how this service is delivered, focussing on meaningful, engaging activities for customers while also providing everyone with a chance to relax and take a break from their normal lives. Feedback about the overhaul has been positive. We have also attracted some former customers back to the service.

Our Cabramatta respite house in Sydney was also renovated to make it more welcoming and comfortable for customers. This service is focussed on supporting young people who are transitioning from children's services to adult services. We upgraded the décor and furnishings to be better suited to this target age group.

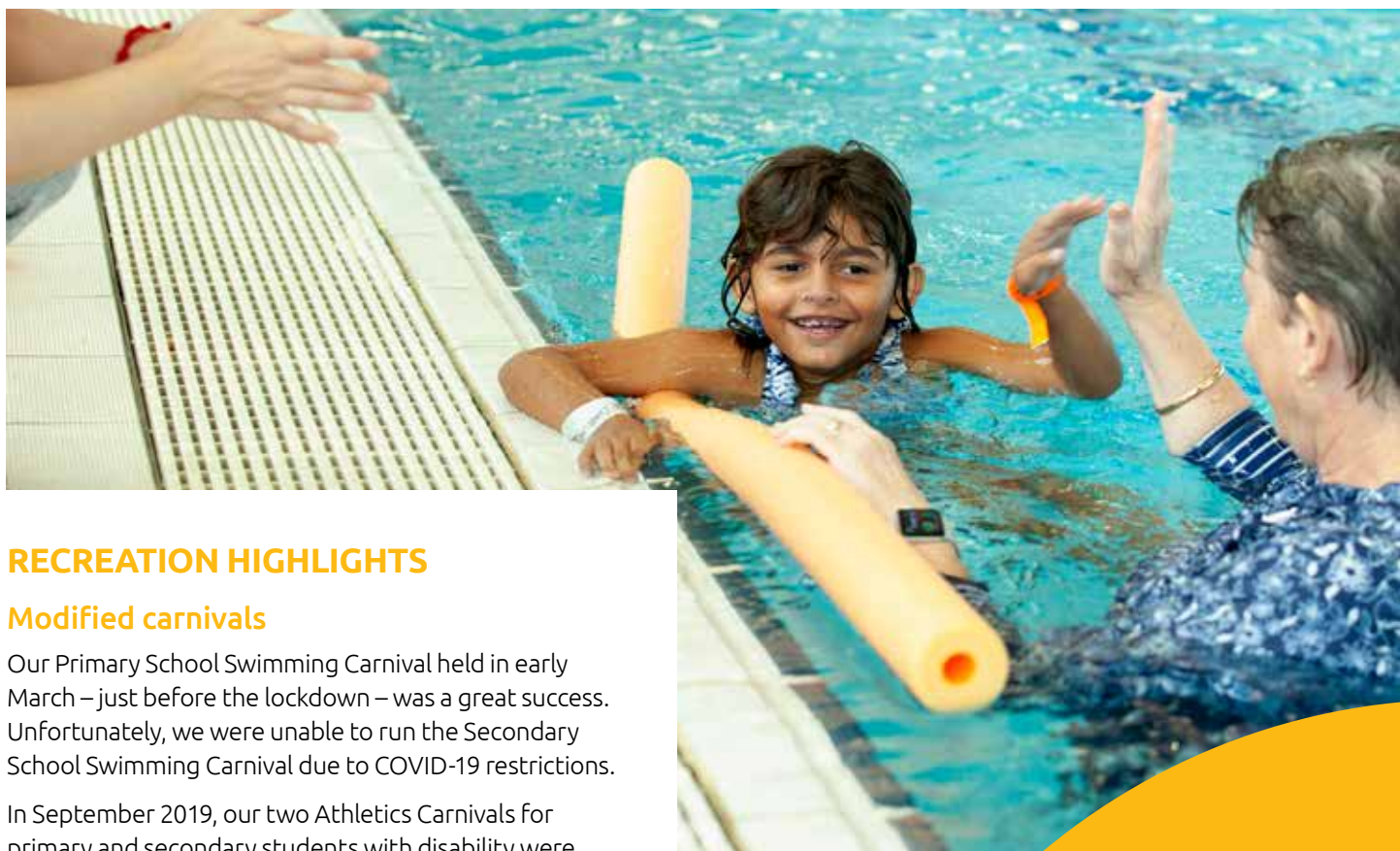
At our Liverpool respite house in Sydney, we introduced a range of new activities to attract customers. These included beauty therapy, cooking days, local walks, musical activities, movie days and sensory room activities.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Although we were able to continue operating both our Respite and Recreation services, we experienced significant declines in customer numbers.

In some regions, we were able to quickly design and introduce centre-based recreation activities for customers who wished to maintain their social connections but were not comfortable engaging online. Stringent infection control measures were introduced and group numbers limited. In other areas, we introduced online social media groups to keep customers connected with each other and Northcott.

In our Respite houses, we implemented increased cleaning procedures and developed a program of inhouse activities to reduce the spread and risk of infection. The decrease in bookings at one property meant we were able to provide one vulnerable customer with a longer-term housing option where he felt safe and comfortable.



RECREATION HIGHLIGHTS

Modified carnivals

Our Primary School Swimming Carnival held in early March – just before the lockdown – was a great success. Unfortunately, we were unable to run the Secondary School Swimming Carnival due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In September 2019, our two Athletics Carnivals for primary and secondary students with disability were enjoyed by many children with disability, their teachers and families.

These modified carnivals are a highlight for many children with disability and their teachers. We are grateful for the support from sponsors to enable these events to take place.

ABLES Nightclub outings

Our Illawarra Social Experiences group have become regular attendees at the ABLES Nightclub, a monthly night out for people of all abilities. Our customers enjoy the chance to socialise with peers in this safe environment, foster new friendships and develop romances.



Gaining confidence through social outings

For young adults with disability like Justin, making friends and socialising can be difficult, often leading to social isolation and a lack of confidence and independence.

This year's COVID-19 pandemic has only heightened this risk, with schools experiencing lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings and activities. For Justin, who was already socially isolated, being able to access our Social Experiences group with his peers has made a big difference to his wellbeing, confidence and independence.

Justin started accessing services from Northcott Campbelltown at the end of 2019. His mother was looking for support for Justin to improve his social skills, connect with peers and build confidence as he prepared for his last year of high school.

When Justin first started participating in our Saturday Social Experiences program, our team noticed he lacked confidence around his peers. With some support and guidance – and as he started to enjoy the Saturday outings and activities organised by the group – Justin quickly started to build strong rapport with both staff and peers.

“He now attends regularly, especially since COVID-19, and is developing his social skillset and increasing his independence on an ongoing basis,” says Shaun, Northcott Campbelltown's Service Coordinator.

“We've seen a massive change in Justin's confidence. He used to be very quiet and reserved, but he now gets involved in all conversations and decision-making.”

Justin says he enjoys the outings with Northcott, especially going to the movies and catching up with friends. He's learnt lots of new skills and made new friends.

“I've learnt cooking skills, social skills and life skills, like ordering food. These are good changes. Northcott has helped me get out of the house and stay connected to people,” he says.

Justin's mother Hang has also noticed a change in her son, telling the team how much Justin enjoys the program.

“Hang has given positive feedback telling us Justin really enjoys attending the Social Experiences group. He has also started attending a lot more frequently than when he first signed up,” Shaun says.

Now one of the more confident participants in the group, Justin is keen for more young people like him to join in the Saturday outings.

“Other people should join because we have heaps of fun, make new friends and get to experience new things.”

**CASE
STUDY**

**"I'VE LEARNT
COOKING SKILLS,
SOCIAL SKILLS AND
LIFE SKILLS, LIKE
ORDERING FOOD.
THESE ARE GOOD
CHANGES".**

THERAPY

Multidisciplinary therapy to support goals and building skills.

In homes, schools, our offices, community settings and via tele-therapy, we provide Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology, Nursing, Social Work, and Dietician services throughout NSW.

Our Therapy service reaches children and adults with disability of all ages. Our therapists work closely with our other services and external partners to ensure customers have access to a range of support to achieve their goals.

HIGHLIGHTS

Tele-health speech pathology programs

We began trialling several new evidence-based tele-health programs during the COVID-19 lockdown period: PEERS for Young Adults; and three communication programs delivered by Hanen Programs.

PEERS® for Young Adults is a social skills intervention for adults who are interested in making and keeping friends and/or developing romantic relationships. Young adults and social coaches (including parents or other carers) attend 16 weekly tele-health sessions over Zoom for 90 minutes each week. Young adults are taught social skills through lessons and role plays, and practise these skills during their online social activities. Parents and carers attend separate tele-health sessions. They are taught how to assist young adults in making and keeping friends and/or dating.

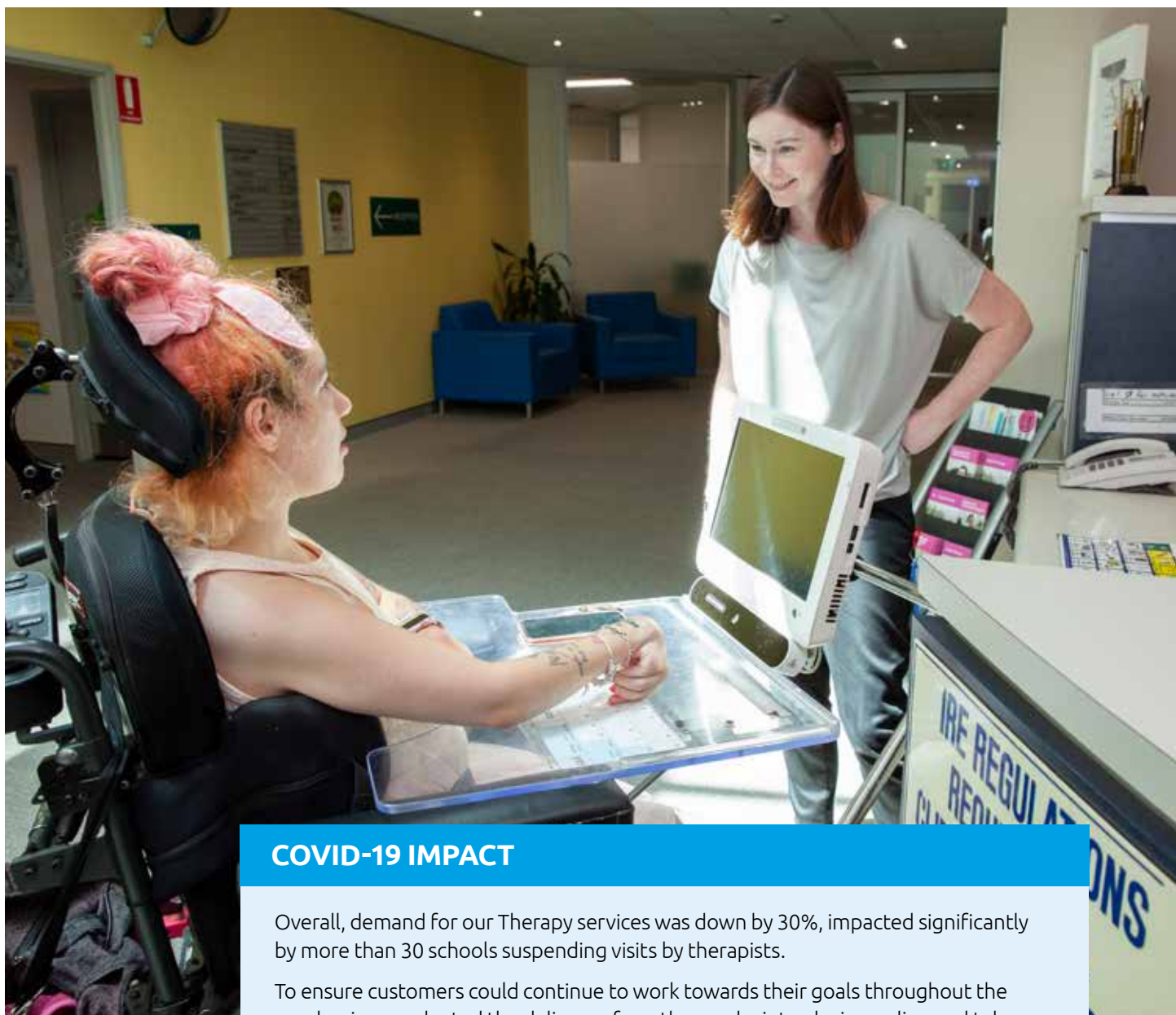
“TO ENSURE CUSTOMERS COULD CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS THEIR GOALS THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC, WE ADAPTED THE DELIVERY OF OUR THERAPY BY INTRODUCING ONLINE AND TELE-THERAPY SESSIONS.”

The three Hanen Programs we began offering are:

- **It Takes Two to Talk** – This is for parents of children under five who have been identified as having a language delay.
- **More than Words** – This is for parents of children aged five and under with Autism and other social communication difficulties. The program provides parents with the tools, strategies and support they need to help their children reach their full communication potential.
- **TalkAbility** – This is for parents of verbal children aged 3-7 with social communication difficulties. It teaches parents practical ways to help their child learn people skills.

We hope to continue offering these services even as COVID-19 restrictions lift.





COVID-19 IMPACT

Overall, demand for our Therapy services was down by 30%, impacted significantly by more than 30 schools suspending visits by therapists.

To ensure customers could continue to work towards their goals throughout the pandemic, we adapted the delivery of our therapy by introducing online and tele-therapy sessions. Some customers were happy to move to this new way of service delivery, while others preferred to put their service on-hold or continue with face-to-face sessions where possible. For customers receiving sessions via online platforms, our therapists developed and mailed out activity packs and resources to enhance the sessions they were participating in from home.

Our team worked with other areas of Northcott to upskill staff and educate them in basic therapy knowledge and skills to assist them in providing the best possible care and support to customers during the lockdown period. This included providing therapy support to our ECEI coordinators and support staff in our homes, developing information packs for ECEI families, and participating in Northcott Innovation's *Boredom Busters* video series. We anticipate some of these activities will become permanent fixtures of our Therapy service even as restrictions lift.

To support our staff and customers when returning to face-to-face sessions in schools and day programs, we have developed information packs to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Therapy Assistant Project

After identifying a gap in therapy services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families living in regional and remote communities, we received a grant to develop a program to train and employ Indigenous therapy assistants.

Focussed on providing culturally appropriate and capacity building services to Indigenous people, the program supports the employment and training of up to six part-time therapy assistants in the remote communities of Tabulam, Bonalbo and Muli Muli in Northern NSW. As part of the project, Northcott therapists will train and supervise local community members in therapy skills. The aim is to increase access to therapy services for children and adults in these remote communities through supporting local community members to gain appropriate skills and feel empowered to undertake further qualifications in this field.

Communication Access

Through our partnership with Scope as the only approved communication access assessor in NSW, we launched a new business-to-business service to assist organisations to be inclusive for people with communication difficulties.

Led by a speech pathologist, our Communication Access team assesses the communication accessibility of NSW organisations and provides training and resources to assist organisations to improve the way they interact and communicate with customers who may have a communication difficulty or disability.

Our team includes four “mystery assessors” who have communication disabilities themselves and are trained to assess the communication accessibility of organisations. Organisations assessed by Northcott to meet certain criteria are awarded the Communication Access Symbol (below) by Scope.

Northcott has worked with Camden Council and NSW TrainLink South Coast line to assess and train their staff in communication accessibility. Discussions are underway with more organisations, however COVID-19 restrictions have impacted the full rollout of this new service.





Collaborations

Our team has continued successful collaborations with other services and programs within Northcott. This includes ongoing support for the Transition to School program run by our Supported Playgroups team in South West Sydney, and support for staff running the Social Skills Group at our Illawarra Vocational Skills Training & Employment service.

We have continued to work with the Department of Education as an Approved Provider, through a Memorandum of Understanding. Additionally, the Northcott CATS (Computer Assistive Technology Service) team and the Cerebral Palsy Alliance TASC team (Technology Solutions for Computer Access, Seating and Communication) received special funding from the Department of Education and Training for the assessment of students to determine the need for assistive technology options and/or providing training to school staff in the use of assistive technology.

In-house training

Our therapists play an important role upskilling other staff, particularly those who support customers in our homes. This year the Therapy team provided the following in-house training and workshops:

- Safe swallowing workshop to staff in the Murrumbidgee
- Manual handling training
- Safe swallowing training.

Therapy to build independence

When Charlie finished high school, his parents connected with Northcott for more support with building their son's skills and confidence as he grows into an adult. Northcott Occupational Therapist, Courtney, is supporting Charlie on his journey towards greater independence. Modest in nature, Charlie downplays his accomplishments, but is proud of what he's achieved.

Charlie has severe expressive language disorder and generalised anxiety disorder. He needs some assistance with daily living skills to build his confidence, but is always enthusiastic and willing to learn.

"I've worked with Charlie for about two and a half years. He's a happy young man who is willing to give everything a go," says Courtney.

"Charlie has built up a lot of confidence. With his parents' help, we've been able to set some great goals and work towards them."

Courtney is supporting Charlie to gain the skills and confidence he needs to live independently and get a job. This includes supporting Charlie to be confident with completing household chores such as washing, ironing, dusting and sweeping. Courtney has also supported Charlie to learn to get around his neighbourhood safely on public transport, something he is particularly proud of.

"Courtney has helped me with buses. I can travel to the shops, five stops away. I look around the shopping centre. It makes me feel good [to do this]. I'm proud about that," he says.

At the shopping centre, Charlie has learnt how to make purchases and how to get his prescriptions filled at the chemist. He also knows his way around the supermarket and shops for the groceries he needs when cooking meals for his family.

"I pick a meal once a week to cook for my family. I go shopping on the bus, then, when I get home, I cook it. I could do this before. But now I can do it better and I can do it by myself," Charlie says.

Courtney is pleased with the skills and confidence Charlie is gaining through the occupational therapy sessions she runs with him fortnightly.

"A lot has changed in Charlie. He has become very confident in travel training and now he cooks two to three meals a week," she says.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately meant Charlie's plans for 2020 were put on-hold, the determined 19-year-old hasn't lost sight of his long-term goals.

"In the future, I would like to get a job. And I'm going to live in the garden flat at my parents' house," he says proudly.



**CASE
STUDY**

**“IN THE FUTURE, I WOULD
LIKE TO GET A JOB. AND
I’M GOING TO LIVE IN
THE GARDEN FLAT AT MY
PARENTS’ HOUSE”.**



VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Preparing customers to be future fit.

This service is popular with young people with disability who need extra support to explore training and employment options, become job-ready and feel confident in the community after finishing school.

A hands-on, practical service, it gives young school leavers the chance to undertake training, volunteering and work experience opportunities, while also developing their social skills, confidence and independence. We also support customers to pursue job opportunities.

This year, significant work was done behind the scenes to enhance our service to meet the needs of customers. An in-depth product review was conducted in 2019, resulting in the development and implementation of several new initiatives and process improvements.

One significant project was the creation of a resource to assist our staff to deliver a consistent service to all customers. This internal tool outlines a customer's journey with Northcott's Vocational Skills service, beginning with receiving a welcome pack on their first day to celebrating their graduation at the end of the service. The playbook, which was developed with customer and staff input, also outlines the four key focus areas of our service and each one's benefits to customers and staff. These are:

1. **Community** – Connecting with My Community
2. **Work Readiness** – Finding My Direction in Life
3. **Positive Mindset** – Building Resilience to be my best self
4. **Future Fit** – Preparing for the Future of Work.

HIGHLIGHTS

INNOV8

We introduced *Innov8*, a free 8-week service for students in Years 9 to 12. Leaving school and transitioning directly to a disability service can be daunting. *Innov8* aims to smooth that transition by giving students an early experience of participating in an offering by a disability services organisation. The service, which is delivered by a Northcott support worker, focusses on encouraging social connections and building life skills to support students to become 'future fit'. Our team works collaboratively with teachers to adapt content to suit individual needs.

We delivered this service at Wyndham College in Quakers Hill in 2019 and at Endeavour Sports High School in Caringbah in 2020. We aim to run the service at least four times per term, across each region where we work.

Café – Thanks a latte

In Northcott's Central Office in Parramatta, Vocational Skills customers had the chance to gain hospitality experience by participating in *Café – Thanks a latte*, an onsite café operating for staff twice a week. Working in threes, customers were assisted by support workers to make and deliver hot drinks and snacks to staff for a small fee of \$1.00 per delivery. To participate, customers first completed a Certificate in Food Handling. To add a personal touch to the deliveries and help them build positive connections with staff, customers presented staff with a sweet treat and creative meme for each order. Through the experience, the customers learnt a broad range of skills from food handling and customer service to how to use a cashless point of sale system. All participants received a certificate of participation on completion.



Community Engagement Officers

To support our Sydney-based services to grow their network of partners, this year we employed two Community Engagement Officers – a new role for the service.

Strong relationships with businesses, schools, TAFE institutions and other training providers are crucial for our success. These partners provide our customers with opportunities for volunteering, work experience, open and supported employment placements and external training so they can build their skills and confidence. While the COVID-19 crisis has impacted face-to-face meetings with potential partners, our Community Engagement Officers have started to build strong networks across Sydney and raise Northcott's profile in this space.

Future Fit forums

In the first half of 2020, we hosted two 'Future Fit' forums to bring together Support Transition Teachers and disability industry experts to share insights on how to better support young people with disability to find meaningful employment. We have found that this sector of the industry is feeling disempowered since the roll out of the NDIS.

The forums are hosted online, enabling staff from our Vocational Skills services in regional areas – and their partners – to join.

Both forums were well received by attendees and the group plans to continue to meet quarterly. We have also collaborated with Western Sydney University to support their work collecting qualitative and quantitative research in this space.

COVID-19 IMPACT

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, our staff quickly developed an online Vocational Skills service for customers unable to attend our centres in person. From March 30, all customers across the state were able to access online dynamic sessions delivered using the Edmodo and Google Hangout platforms. We acknowledged the importance of our customers and staff remaining connected so ensured there was a consistent schedule for people to connect online. We are grateful to the City of Parramatta Council for providing a COVID-19 Resilience Grant to assist with this work.

We formed a Vocational Skills focus group to develop content specifically for customers accessing the online platforms. The focus group discusses and creates content to keep participants engaged with Northcott and their fellow participants. There is an emphasis on supporting mental health and wellbeing, as well as continuing to develop practical skills to assist with finding a job, completing training and building confidence. Topic areas covered in the online program include Employability Skills, Independent Living and Social Skills, and Mindfulness.

For customers who didn't feel comfortable or confident participating online, we developed 'Take Home Packs'. Vocational Skills staff visited customers in their homes to support them to complete tasks in the packs at their own pace.

To ensure our online service and Take Home Packs were meeting the needs of customers, we asked for feedback on a weekly basis. Improvements have been made along the way to ensure customers remained engaged with our service.

IN THE YEAR AHEAD

Over the next year, our Community Engagement Officers will play a key role in growing our service – both through new community connections and by building relationships with more schools.

We are also adapting our internal resource for service coordinators into a marketing tool for teachers, parents and potential customers.

Doing a great job

When twin sisters, Penni and Kakra joined Northcott's Vocational Skills Training & Employment service in Hornsby, the 21-year-olds were looking for support to build their confidence, learn skills for work and find a job.

Early in 2020, with support from Northcott, the two young women secured their first paid employment. It's a huge step towards greater independence and achieving their long-term job goals.

Twice a week, Penni and Kakra work as office cleaners for Facilities First Australia, a cleaning, maintenance and facilities services management company located in Macquarie Park. The young women also attend Northcott Hornsby's Everyday Life Skills and Vocational Skills services for support with building their social skills, getting out in the community and gaining skills for work.

As part of the Vocational Skills service, Penni and Kakra, who have mild intellectual disability, were supported to complete work experience at Coles, while also learning cleaning skills with Northcott. When the opportunity to secure a job at Facilities First Australia came up, both young women were happy to give it go.

At work, initially the pair was supported by Northcott staff members and a supervisor from Facilities First Australia to learn and complete their cleaning tasks. While they still require some supervision including quality checks, training in new tasks and reminders, both Penni and Kakra are much more confident and can perform their tasks more independently within the two-hour shift. Sam, their supervisor, regularly checks in on their work and provides feedback and training as needed.

Kakra says she is very happy working for Facilities First Australia, where the people are nice.

"My favourite things to do are cleaning the tables, vacuuming, emptying the dishwasher and mopping," she explains.

For Penni, the responsibility of going to work is a big step forward in her independence.

"It's awesome. I feel happy, grown-up and really proud of myself. I'm more adult and my responsibilities have changed," she says.

"I feel really happy when people tell me I've done a good job. I feel satisfied and proud," she explains, adding "it feels great to have a paid job."

Despite a busy weekly schedule of work and accessing services with Northcott, Penni and Kakra haven't lost sight of their long-term job goals. After doing floristry at TAFE, Penni's dream is to be a florist, while Kakra would one day like to work with animals. At the moment, however, they are content with what they've achieved so far.

"Thank you Northcott. It feels good to get a job and get paid. We would also like to say thank you to Sam from Facilities First for the job he does with us."

Facilities First Australia is committed to supporting people with disability and is a corporate partner of Ability First Australia, a strategic alliance of leading disability service providers including Northcott.



**CASE
STUDY**



OUR BOARD

1 MICHAEL BRIGGS – CHAIRMAN B Comm, ACA, AGIA, MBA

Director since 2003

Michael is a Business Advisor and Investor. He is the Chairman of Antec Group Pty Ltd, Northcott Innovation Ltd and Northcott Supported Living and a Director of RLT International Ltd (UK) and Guided Knowledge Ltd (UK). Michael has been Chairman of Northcott since 2009.

- Finance and Properties Committee
- Nomination Committee
- Remuneration Committee

2 KIRSTEN ARMSTRONG M.Ec, M.PH, FIAA, MAICD

Director since 2013

Kirsten is Founder and Director of Three Rivers Consulting. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries of Australia, a Member of the Health Practice Committee of the Actuaries Institute and a Member of the Australian Institute for Company Directors (MAICD).

- Finance and Properties Committee

3 RICHARD BLAIKLOCK B Comm, MBA

Director since 2003

Richard is Chairman of the Baresque Australia Pty Ltd group and affiliated companies.

- Chair, Nomination Committee
- Chair, Remuneration Committee

4 NICK CARDNO MA (Hons), CA, MAICD

Director since 2013

Nick is a Partner of the accounting firm EY as well as a Director of EY Transaction Advisory Services Ltd. He is also a Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD).

- Finance and Properties Committee

5 JAMES A CHRISTIAN PSM, MPA

Director since 2020

James is a proud Wiradjuri man from the Riverina area who was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) in May 2017.

He has also served as National Group Manager, Disability, Employment and Carers at the Federal Department of Social Services; led Aboriginal Affairs NSW; was Deputy Director-General of the Department of Ageing, Disability

and Home Care and Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Housing Office.

James received a Public Service Medal in 2011 for outstanding service in improving opportunities for economic participation and employment of First Nations peoples.

- Risk Committee

6 LIZ FORSYTH BA (Hons), BSW (Hons), Dip Mgmt, MAICD

Director since September 2020

Liz was appointed CEO of Northcott in September 2020. She joined Northcott in 2008 as a family support worker in our Coffs Harbour branch. She has held a range of roles over the years including Area Manager, Business Development Manager, Executive Director of Northcott Innovation (NI), General Manager – Customer Experience, and General Manager – Supported Living. Liz then took on a role as CEO of Care South, gaining valuable leadership experience, before returning to Northcott to lead our COVID-19 response and Creativity Inc integration.

- Finance and Properties Committee
- Nomination Committee
- Risk Committee

7 CHRISTOPHER JANSSEN MB, BS, MBA (IMD), FAICD

Director since 1986

Christopher is the Founder and Managing Director of GPC Electronics and affiliated companies. He is also a Director for The Warren Centre for Advanced Engineering Ltd at The University of Sydney, a member of the Abbotsleigh School Council, and a Warden at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Wahroonga. He is a registered (non-practising) Medical Practitioner and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (FAICD).

8 JEYAN JEEVARATNAM B Eng (Hons 1), MBA, M Eng Sc, MAICD

Director since 2020

Prior to re-joining our Board in 2020, Jeyan was a Director from 2012–2016. He is the General Manager of the Microsoft Enterprise business in Asia. Previously he was Chief Operating Officer for Avanade North America, Managing Director for Avanade Australia, and Managing Director for AT&T Australia. Jeyan has also held senior executive roles at IBM.

Jeyan is a member of the Young Presidents Organisation (YPO) and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD).

9 ANDREW MANSOUR BEC, LLB

Director since 2010

Andrew is a Partner at commercial law firm, Allens, and is head of the firm's Defence Group.

- Chair, Risk Committee

10 DONNA PURCELL Dip. HR Mgt, Dip B, Dip BM, Dip PR, Dip Ed, GAICD

Director since 2016

Resigned 14 February 2020

Donna is currently on secondment to the Human Rights Commission. Previously, Donna was Senior Manager of Accessibility and Capability Advice in the Group Customer and Community Team at Commonwealth Bank. Donna is a certified Access Consultant and as a person who is blind and a guide dog user, has lived experience of disability. Donna is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD).

- Risk Committee

11 DEBRA RICHARDS BA (Lib Studies), Grad Diploma (Arts), MA, MAICD

Director since 2012

Debra is Director of Production Policy, APAC for Netflix (from 2 September 2019), Vice President of the Communications and Media Law Association (CAML) and Director and Treasurer of the International Institute of Communications (Australia). She is also Deputy Chief Adjudicator of the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code Adjudication Panel and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD).

- Nomination Committee
- Remuneration Committee

12 KERRY STUBBS BA (Hons), MA (Hon), GC (Writing), MAICD

Director since 2008

Resigned 31 August 2020

Kerry was the Managing Director and CEO of Northcott until 31 August 2020. She is a Director of The SpineCare Foundation Ltd, Northcott Innovation Ltd, AsOne Therapy Ltd, Northcott Supported Living and CRC for Water Sensitive Cities, and Chair of their Audit and Risk Committee. Kerry is a Member of the Board of Trustees for Western Sydney University and Chair of their

Finance and Investment Committee. She is also Deputy Chancellor of Western Sydney University and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD).

- Finance and Properties Committee
- Nomination Committee
- Remuneration Committee

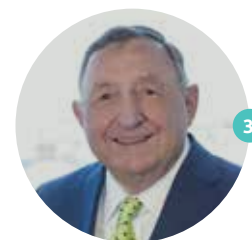
13 JOHN SURIAN

BA (Econ), G.DipAppFin (Sec Inst), LREA

Director since 2000

Resigned 12 May 2020

John is the Director and Licensee of John F Surian Pty Ltd, and the founder of Raine & Horne Parramatta and Raine & Horne Commercial Parramatta firms. These firms have been respectively engaged in the sale, leasing and property management in the broader metropolitan area of Sydney and Parramatta since 1976. John is also a Licensed Business Broker, Real Estate Agent and Auctioneer and provides property advice including site consolidation, acquisitions and project management. He is a Trustee of The Kings School Foundation and a Member of the Salvation Army Western Sydney Advisory Board.



14 JODI SWINBURNE

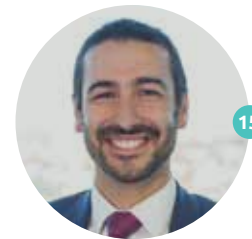
B Comm, CPA

Director since 2018

Jodi has over 20 years' experience in senior finance roles in listed companies across a variety of sectors ranging from print media, property, retail banking and pharmaceutical. In May 2016, Jodi became the Chief Financial Officer of APAC of Cushman & Wakefield and in July 2018 she took on the additional responsibility of Chief Operating Officer.

Previously, Jodi was a director of the Diversity Council Australia, an independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

- Finance and Properties Committee



15 HUGH WEBBY

BEc (Hons), DiplInvRel

Director since 2018

Hugh is the Chief Operating Officer of Sydney Airport with responsibility for its aviation business, operations, legal, human resources, corporate affairs as well as safety, sustainability and environment. Prior to this role, Hugh was Chief Financial Officer. Before joining Sydney Airport he was with Macquarie Group in both Sydney and London.

- Chair, Finance and Properties Committee

GOVERNANCE

ROLE OF THE BOARD

Northcott is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by our Members (see page 88). The role of the Board is outlined in the Constitution of The Northcott Society (trading as Northcott). The Board has ultimate responsibility for our direction and performance; approval of the annual budget and financial plan; financial performance including monitoring/approval of the financial reports and liaison with auditors; assessment of the performance of the CEO; and monitoring of managerial performance. The Board is also responsible for ensuring significant risks are identified and appropriate controls implemented; and for reporting to Members, stakeholders and regulatory authorities.

The Board consists of between five and 12 non-Executive Directors. The CEO may be appointed as Managing Director, creating an additional director role. Our Board is a skills-based board. Directors are chosen on the basis of their ability to assist in furthering the objectives of Northcott. Non-Executive Directors are not remunerated. Each Director may serve for a maximum three-year term, and then must retire. They may apply for re-election.

BOARD PROCESSES

The Board meets a minimum of seven times per year. It also meets with Members, stakeholders and staff at the Annual General Meeting, where the Chairman delivers a report. The Board holds an annual planning day, usually in October, in a different region each year. This offers the opportunity for our Board Directors to engage with regional staff and customers.

BOARD COMPOSITION

Most Directors have had a long-standing relationship with Northcott before becoming a Director. All Directors, with the exception of the Managing Director, are independent Directors, and are free from any interest and any business or other relationship that could, or could reasonably be perceived to materially interfere with the Director's ability to act in the best interests of Northcott.

The Managing Director is employed under a performance-based contract. The Chairman conducts a performance review at least annually, and the Nomination Committee reviews the performance of the Senior Executive team. The Board has a formal set of delegations under which the Managing Director must operate.

HOW NEW DIRECTORS ARE RECRUITED

The Nomination Committee, a sub-committee of the Board, is responsible for selecting suitable candidates for the Board and for recruiting new Directors. Candidates are interviewed by the Nomination Committee, which then makes recommendations to the Board. New Directors receive an induction and are offered board training delivered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. The Nomination Committee also forms a Remuneration Committee to review the performance of the CEO and senior staff.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

Directors have a duty to act honestly at all times, with reasonable skill, in good faith and in the best interests of Northcott. This means taking proper action where necessary, declaring any conflicts of interest, and avoiding mismanagement or inaction. Directors must also adopt and follow sound business policies and practices. The Board's performance is reviewed regularly.

We have long-standing relationships with corporate partners to ensure we remain aware of our legislative and regulatory responsibilities. The Executive team has portfolio responsibility for appropriate areas of legislation, and regular reports of changes are contained in the Board papers.

We also maintain membership of appropriate peak and industry organisations to ensure we remain aware of policy and procedure in the disability and not-for-profit sectors.

BOARD COMMITTEES

There are three formal Board Committees: the Finance and Properties Committee; Risk Committee; and Nomination Committee. The role of the Finance and Properties Committee is to assist the Board with effective oversight of Northcott's financial performance, internal controls, audit, financial risk, insurance, asset management and investment matters. This includes but is not limited to reviewing financial performance, recommending Northcott's annual budget and managing and reviewing internal and external audit matters including appointing the external audit provider, liaising between the auditor and management team and reviewing and confirming the auditor's independence.

The Risk Committee is responsible for reviewing the processes and systems that manage non-financial risk in the organisation, and advising the Board on improvements that should be made. Clinical risk, human resources risk, disaster recovery and all other risks identified in the risk register are overseen by this committee.

The role of the Nomination Committee is to oversee the selection and appointment of Directors, and acting as the Remuneration Committee, to review the performance of the CEO and senior staff.

Each committee has a Terms of Reference which has been endorsed by the Board. Formal reports are made at Board meetings by the committee chair, with minutes tabled for the entire Board. Directors are also involved individually in a number of other committees assisting Northcott with its work.

NORTHCOTT COMMITTEES

We have a range of other internal committees to assist with evaluating, assessing and managing our practices. We also use these committees to consult with staff, our customers and their families and carers.

The Reconciliation Action Committee is responsible for working with Northcott's Aboriginal staff network and ensuring the Reconciliation Action Plan is developed, refreshed and implemented.

The Inclusive Workplace Committee coordinates the delivery of Northcott's Inclusive Workplace Strategy, which aims to increase the participation rates in our workforce of people with disability, grow and promote

our accessible and inclusive employment practices and ensure our systems and technologies provide appropriate support for staff with disability.

The Customer Quality and Safeguarding Committee aims to provide a holistic approach to customers' quality of life, safeguarding and risk management across all Northcott services. It promotes a collaborative and open approach to quality, risk management, compliance, customer satisfaction and great practice, and provides oversight in areas such as operational practice, health, abuse and neglect, positive behaviour support and restrictive practice approaches.

The Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Steering Committee is responsible for setting the organisation's ICT roadmap. It governs the use of software and technology across the organisation, monitors security policies and ensures ICT resources align with the strategic direction of the organisation.

OUR SUBSIDIARIES

Creativity Inc, Northcott Innovation, Northcott Supported Living and the SpineCare Foundation are subsidiaries of Northcott. Each has a separate board of management.

OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM

We participate in the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Observership Program, which places talented young professionals aged 25-40 years on not-for-profit (NFP) boards for a period of 12 months as observers.

Matt Gavshon is our Board Observer for the 2020 calendar year. Matt is an Associate at Escala Partners.



OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

1 KERRY STUBBS

Chief Executive Officer
Resigned 31 August 2020

Kerry was CEO of Northcott from 2008 to August 2020. She was previously the Executive Director of St Vincent's Hospital and Sacred Heart Hospice. Kerry is a Director of The SpineCare Foundation Ltd, Northcott Innovation Ltd, AsOne Therapy Ltd, Northcott Supported Living and CRC for Water Sensitive Cities, and Chair of their Audit and Risk Committee.

Kerry is also Deputy Chancellor of Western Sydney University, a Member of the Board of Trustees for Western Sydney University and Chair of their Finance and Investment Committee. In 2007, Kerry was named NSW IBM Community and Government Award winner in the Telstra Business Women's Awards.

2 LIZ FORSYTH

Chief Executive Officer
From 1 September 2020

Liz was appointed CEO of Northcott in September 2020. Liz joined Northcott in 2008 as a family support worker in our Coffs Harbour branch. She has held a range of roles over the years including Area Manager, Business Development Manager, Executive Director of NI, General Manager of Customer Experience, and General Manager of Supported Living. Liz then took on a role as CEO of Care South, gaining valuable leadership experience, before returning to Northcott to lead our COVID-19 response and Creativity Inc integration. Liz's extensive experience base with Northcott will mean a seamless leadership transition.

In addition to her deep experience, Liz also has a love for Northcott and its staff and customers. She is very passionate about the organisation and is excited and keen to lead it into the next stage of its development.

3 LEE CARPENTER

Deputy CEO

Lee started at Northcott in 2008. He is responsible for the delivery of services to Northcott's customers. In addition, Lee is responsible for the following support functions that ensure that these operations are run effectively – customer experience, continuous improvement and technology. Lee has a background in finance and previous experience in the health sector, including roles in leading hospitals in Australia and the UK.

4 DAVID LONG

General Manager, People and Culture

David has responsibility for Northcott's strategies that ensure we attract and retain the right people, and that they are equipped to meet our future challenges. David joined Northcott in 2012 and has more than 25 years' experience in human resources management. He has worked across various industries in the public and private sectors for organisations including the Roads & Traffic Authority, the TAB and St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney.

5 ALETA CARPENTER

General Manager, Northcott Supported Living

Aleta joined Northcott in 2013 as a Manager in Business Development. Since then she has also managed Business Improvement projects in customer experience and product development. In 2018 she commenced as a Senior Operations Manager for Northcott Supported Living, and then in 2019, moved to Acting General Manager of this division. Aleta has 25 years experience in disability and mental health service provision. She holds a Masters of Arts in Psychology.

6 PAT BUICK

Head of Therapy

Pat commenced her career in the medical imaging sector prior to moving into management after completing a Masters of Business Administration. Her early career focussed on managing change in the private radiology sector before working at St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney. She joined Northcott in February 2018.

7 AMANDA DAWSON

Manager, Early Childhood and Early Intervention

Amanda joined Northcott in 2001 as a support worker while completing a Bachelor of Education. She has held a variety of roles, including leadership positions. These have included management of state-wide services such as Individual and Family Support, Early Links and the Preschool Disability Support Program.

8 PAUL HERBERT

Chief Information Officer

Paul has a background in research, completing a PhD in physiology. His early career focussed on risk and facilities management, before shifting to finance. Joining Northcott in 2016, he established the Individual Plan Advisor team in preparation for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), before moving onto other roles including managing fleet and infrastructure.

9 ABY HUTCHINSON-WEST

Manager, Quality & Safeguarding

With 25 years in disability services, Aby has a Psychology Masters and is a qualified special education teacher. Prior to joining Northcott in 2006, Aby worked as an Autism advisor for the Highlands of Scotland. In her time at Northcott she has established many Northcott services including Intensive Family Support, Early Childhood Autism Service and the Person Centred Behaviour Support service.

10 AMANDA THOMAS**Chief Financial Officer**

Amanda joined Northcott in May 2018. Amanda brings over a decade of experience in the Healthcare industry having worked in hospitals in the UK and in medical devices in both the UK and Australia. Amanda is very familiar with handling requirements from government agencies and has managed complex, multidisciplinary finance teams and contracts functions. Amanda has over 25 years of finance experience.

**11 JOHN PRESTON****State Operations Manager**

John joined Northcott in 2003 and has spent much of his time at Northcott in a variety of management roles, primarily related to Employment and Life Skills services. In recent years John has been heavily involved in the transition to the NDIS and is now responsible for operations across the state.

**12 ALEX VARLEY****General Manager, Customer Experience**

Alex joined Northcott in February 2017 working with Northcott Innovation before moving to head up our Customer Experience Group. In this role he has responsibility for marketing, communications, fundraising, customer insights and experience. Alex has been a CEO of two disability organisations, as well as undertaking senior marketing roles in the not-for-profit and arts sectors.



OUR TEAM

We are committed to ensuring our staff have the skills, knowledge and resources to support customers reach their potential and achieve their goals.

This year, our workforce continued to grow. By the end of 2019–20, we employed 2,736 staff (or 1,403 full-time equivalent staff), compared to 2,366 (or 1,315 full-time equivalent staff) in 2018–19. This reflects a period of growth of 15% and does not include the staff of Creativity Inc, acquired by Northcott in January 2020. The Creativity Inc staff will be transitioned to Northcott in November 2020.

Our staff attrition rate for the 12 months ending June 2020 was 14.34%, which is a decrease on the previous year. Minimal attrition from staff who transferred from the then Department of Family and Community Services to Northcott in 2017 has kept this number steady.

More so than ever, we continue to offer flexible work practices and other employee benefits to attract and retain staff. We also provide access to learning and development programs so our team members can develop and nurture their professional skills.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have remained flexible and adaptable to ensure the safety and positive health and wellbeing of our staff and customers. As a disability service provider and essential service where the majority of our staff (93%) provide direct support to customers, we have continued to provide services and supports, while adhering to government regulations and guidance. Additionally, to support our staff across all roles, we have introduced new policies and procedures that ensure staff can continue to be productive, feel engaged with their team and provide the best possible service to customers.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We provide our staff with access to quality learning interventions so they can upskill and continue their professional development journey. Our offerings range from onboarding training and leadership development programs, to online learning and new software implementation, plus other internal projects. Our goal is to support our workforce to not only be compliant with mandatory training requirements but to excel at their jobs, ultimately resulting in great customer care.

Some key learning and development achievements this past year include:

- implementation of a new training assignment and reporting tool which gives leaders access and visibility to the training performance of their team;
- initiation of the Evolving Leaders program for new, existing and upcoming leaders;
- continuation of the Emerging Leaders program; and
- revamping of the onboarding process.

Northcott will continue to respond to the changing learning needs of the organisation while carefully managing the capabilities of its workforce.

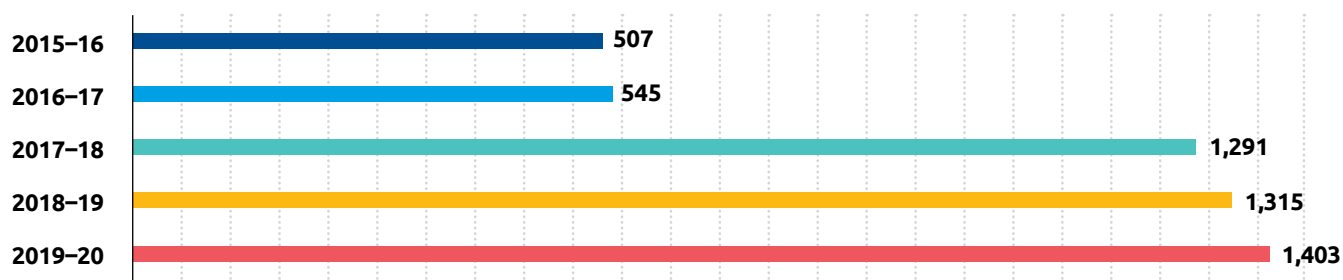
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

This year we continued to refine our recruitment processes and have implemented several new initiatives to improve the candidate journey. This has involved redefining the onboarding and induction process, updating and improving the online recruitment platform and having dedicated recruitment consultants work with specific areas of the business. The changes have resulted in more than 790 new hire placements with over 75% of these placements being support workers.

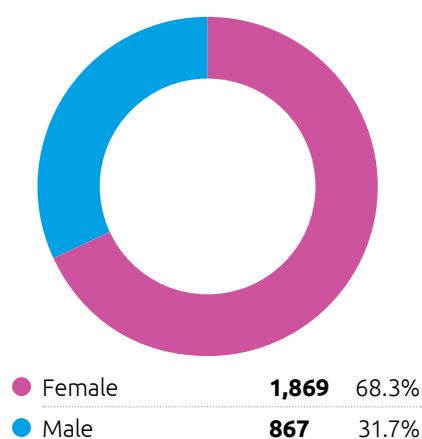
WORKPLACE PROFILE

2,736 STAFF MEMBERS

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS



GENDER COMPOSITION



BOARD MEMBERS*

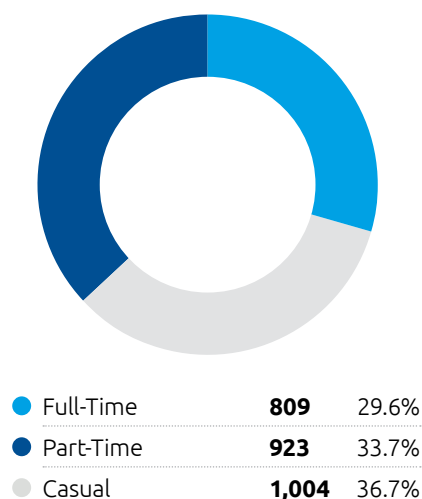


LEADERSHIP TEAM*

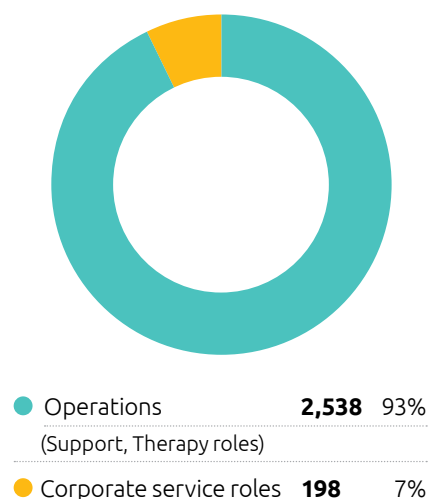


*Based on Board/Leadership Team in October 2020

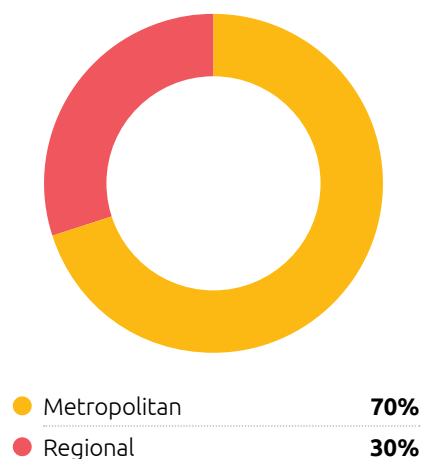
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



JOB ROLES



LOCATION



INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE STRATEGY

Our Inclusive Workplace Strategy was introduced in March 2016 to inform our accessible and inclusive employment practices.

As part of this strategy, we support employees with reasonable workplace adjustments. Potential and existing employees can use this service to assist with determining and implementing workplace modifications so that they can effectively perform their role. In the last 12 months, we have successfully implemented six workplace adjustments for our staff.

To support our work in this area, Northcott is a member of the Australian Network on Disability (AND), a national, membership based for-purpose organisation that supports organisations to advance the inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of business. This year, for the first time, we participated in AND's Access and Inclusion Index. This is an online self-assessment benchmarking tool that measures how accessible and inclusive an organisation's practices are for people with disability. The results highlighted areas where we are doing well, and more importantly, where improvements can be made. Work has begun on addressing priority areas.



STAFF RECOGNITION

Our monthly Employee Recognition and Service Awards recognise and acknowledge team members who display our values in their work, and those who have provided many years of service to Northcott. This financial year, we had more than 55 staff celebrate either 10, 15 or 20-plus years of service. It was particularly wonderful to see two staff members from our Supported Living team recognised for their 40 years of service.

At the Annual General Meeting in November 2019, Lauren Whitby was named 2019 Employee of the Year. In her role as an Occupational Therapist, Lauren always ensures that the wants and needs of her customers are front of mind when providing services. Lauren's colleagues reported she demonstrates an optimistic, honest, respectful and compassionate approach to her customers and fellow employees.



STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Employee satisfaction is a key priority area of our Strategic Plan. Every two years staff are invited to participate in the survey to express their views about how Northcott is performing.

The 2019 Employee Engagement Survey was conducted in August and September. For the first time, the survey asked staff three questions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness:

1. I am aware of Northcott's Reconciliation Action Plan
2. My team conducts an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of a meeting
3. I believe it is important to attend Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training as part of my role and in particular if I am working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The results to these questions were very positive with 83% of survey participants answering 'yes' to all three. This response is a great testament to the work Northcott is doing, in conjunction with the Yarrabee Network Group and Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and customers.

Other areas that scored highly included: Mission & Values; Customer Focus; Role Clarity; Teamwork; Service provided to customers; and Caring, Committed and Passionate staff.

Areas identified in need of improvement included: Technology, Training, Learning and Development, Leadership, and Resources. An action plan to address these critical areas has been developed and several projects are currently underway.

NEW VALUES

In October 2019, we launched an initiative to review Northcott's values and culture, in light of the significant growth the organisation has experienced in recent years.

As part of the project, we introduced our first ever Culture Champions, a dedicated community of staff who will participate and lead organisation-wide cultural activities. Our 30 Champions were identified and nominated by the Executive Team, with David Long, General Manager, People & Culture, as the group's Executive Sponsor. Ben Keyte, Northcott's Inclusive Workplace Project Officer, is the Champion of Champions.

The first task of the Culture Champions was to reduce and refine Northcott's values to a shortlist that had real meaning to our organisation. This list was then put forward for voting by all staff, and we were able to identify a new set of values that reflect Northcott's heart beat.

Our new values are:



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROGRAM

Today 10% of Northcott's customers are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and we currently employ 80 people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (July 2020).

Since the introduction of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2013, Northcott has seen a deepening commitment to reconciliation with First Nations peoples. Over the last year, this has accelerated tangibly, guided by actions outlined in our 2016–2019 Stretch RAP.

We now support greater numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and have seen the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff more than double. This growth has been attributed to our recruitment process and engagement within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as the creation of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified positions. To support this increasing number of staff, the Yarrabee Staff Network group has continued as a way for our First Nations staff to connect and share ideas with each other.

We honour First Nations peoples at every significant occasion and meeting, with appropriate and heartfelt words, Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country presentations.

We provide opportunities for all staff to participate in significant days for Aboriginal communities and provide our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with a day of leave to use during NAIDOC Week.

We have also developed an online cultural awareness training module to educate all staff about the histories and cultures of First Nations peoples. This training forms part of our induction process and was launched in November 2019. At the time of writing, 1,335 new and existing staff members had completed the training.

In the past year, we made significant efforts to tap into the unique skills, competencies and opportunities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees bring with them. This has helped us to complete a high number of actions in our 2016–2019 Stretch RAP. We are now working to ensure that the systems and processes that have been developed are embedded throughout the organisation and become day-to-day practice. The real and genuine commitment by our Executive leaders, the Northcott RAP Working Group and the Yarrabee Staff Network demonstrates that Northcott has a vision to make lasting changes that will see positive outcomes and a better understanding for all.

SPECIALIST NURSING TEAM RECOGNISED

Our Specialist Supported Living (SSL) nursing team were a finalist in the 2020 HESTA Nursing & Midwifery Awards for their work, with Northcott Innovation (NI), to improve the quality of life for customers with complex needs. Our SSL team are disability nurses who provide highly specialised nursing support to customers with complex physical and intellectual disability and significant healthcare support needs who live in our SSL homes.

Nominated in the Outstanding Organisation category, the award recognised the *Small Things* project at Northcott's Condell Park SSL house that explored how to introduce more opportunities for choice into the lives of high-needs customers. Condell Park's nursing staff were paired with speech and occupational therapy students who visited the house intensively over a five-week period. The role of the students was to observe the day-to-day comings and goings of the home and identify small moments where an interaction between the nursing team and a customer could be enhanced or fostered to bring about greater choice, control or skill for the customer.





IN THE YEAR AHEAD

Our focus for 2020–21 will be to ensure Northcott remains a welcoming and high performing organisation that values its staff and cares for its customers.

Key priorities will include the negotiation of a new Enterprise Agreement, progressing the actions identified from the Staff Engagement Survey, and continuing to improve our learning and development programs for staff.

In addition, Northcott's new Stretch RAP 2020–23 has been finalised and submitted to Reconciliation Australia for endorsement.

VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Our workforce includes a small number of dedicated volunteers and tertiary students who support our staff and customers.

This year we were pleased to support 24 students to complete work placements as part of their tertiary studies in support work, allied health and medicine. The majority of these students assisted staff and customers from our Therapy, Everyday Life Skills and Vocational Skills services in Sydney and various regional locations.

Each year we acknowledge and recognise our volunteers at the Annual General Meeting. The 2019 Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Lee Price, who has been volunteering with Northcott for many years, most recently providing support to our Mentoring Managers program.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all the volunteers across our sites who share our passion for supporting people with disability. We value every individual's involvement and donation of time, energy and resources. Our staff and customers are grateful for the support and time you give.

“IN THE PAST YEAR, WE MADE SIGNIFICANT EFFORTS TO TAP INTO THE UNIQUE SKILLS, COMPETENCIES AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYEES BRING WITH THEM.”

Putting in heart and soul

When Matt's medical team told him his dream career wasn't advisable, he looked for a career in the disability sector – where personal experience quickly turned to passion. Having chalked up three years as a support worker with Northcott's Coffs Harbour team, Matt says he's proud he can share his experiences of living with disability to improve the quality of life for others in his community.

"I've got the most severe type of Spina Bifida so I'm lucky to be walking, myelomeningocele. Growing up I always wanted to be a chef. My passion is cooking, but my medical team told me I needed to think of other avenues because I can't be on my feet that much. When I finished the HSC, I was at a loss as to what I wanted to do," Matt explains.

Speech therapy appealed initially, but before starting university Matt decided becoming a disability support worker was something he would like to experience first.

"I used to access Northcott as a child through the Outreach Clinic and Spina Bifida Adult Resource Team (SBART). Working in disability was always at the front of my mind."

After completing a Certificate III and Certificate IV in Disability, Matt applied for a casual position supporting Northcott's customers in the Everyday Life Skills service in Coffs Harbour where he was living. That was three years ago. He's now a permanent staff member, leading popular activities including the service's cooking group and men's group.

"Early on there were some challenges in terms of what I could and couldn't do in regards to my disability – such as heavy lifting and personal care. I had to fight to be able to do certain things. Northcott supported me and it's only been upwards from there. I really enjoy it. Being a role model is a big part of the job for me," he says.

"I love seeing the more independent customers achieve what they've been working towards. It's amazing how much has changed since I've been here. So many customers have got new skills and become more confident."

It's not just the customers who have grown in confidence and skills. Matt says his communication and public speaking skills have improved, and he's gained the confidence to speak up for himself and others.

"I'm proud of the amount of confidence I've got from this job and the way the customers and the job in general, seem to bring that out in me," he says.

When it comes to his future, Matt is open to any opportunities that come his way.

"I don't really know where my career is taking me. My medical team would like me sitting at a desk. Ideally, I want a balance. The Everyday Life Skills service suits me quite well and I'm pretty happy where I am right now.

"I'll continue to work towards whatever goals open up in the future. We've got an awesome team here. The customers make your day and I am very lucky to be part of such a wonderful workplace!"



**CASE
STUDY**



WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Promoting and supporting a positive workplace environment for our staff.

In 2019–20, Northcott developed and implemented a series of Work Health and Safety (WHS) plans in accordance the Northcott WHS Management Framework.

Part of Northcott WHS planning was the development of compensable incident reviews with the Executive team to strengthen their commitment and understanding of the operational WHS risk and control actions. Supporting this operational WHS incident review was the Northcott-wide WHS Evolving Leaders Program which was developed identifying all specific WHS training requirements.

Workplace safety audits

This was the second year that the WHS team completed workplace safety audits across the business. This year the safety audits concentrated on specific risk assessments within the working environment, as well as ensuring staff onsite had completed all relevant training. By focussing the audits on these two areas, the need for continual improvement in safe work practices across Northcott was highlighted, including the importance of greater focus on risk assessments and hazard reporting.

Managing injuries and incidents

This year there was a concentrated effort to increase understanding across the organisation about the importance of incident reporting. Prompt incident reporting can be one of the most effective tools to manage a claim, as well as prevent future claims. Previously employees did not want to report incidents not requiring medical treatment, however, throughout the year the WHS team encouraged managers and staff to complete reports for all incidents, citing that the process and information can be beneficial for everyone. As a result, the number of incidents reported increased from 147 to 1,048. Additionally, the number of notification incidents also increased from 30 to 683. This is a great result and shows signs of a positive safety culture beginning to form across Northcott.

The WHS team also focussed on improving our early intervention and injury management systems and processes, with the goal to minimise the severity of injuries and shorten the length of absenteeism from the

workplace. As a result of this work, there was a reduction in the number of days lost once a worker had been injured from 5,661 to 2,736.

Health and wellbeing

This year we placed a huge emphasis on staff receiving the flu vaccine given the outbreak of COVID-19. Flu vaccine days were held at all offices and staff were encouraged to attend one of these locations to have the vaccine administered by a nurse. Over 560 staff elected to have the vaccine this way.

Fitness Passport continues to be a successful program for Northcott team members. This is a corporate health and fitness initiative providing access to over 600 fitness and aquatic centres throughout NSW and the ACT. Northcott offers this program to inspire staff to exercise regularly and be healthy. Over 550 staff and their families are currently taking advantage of the program.

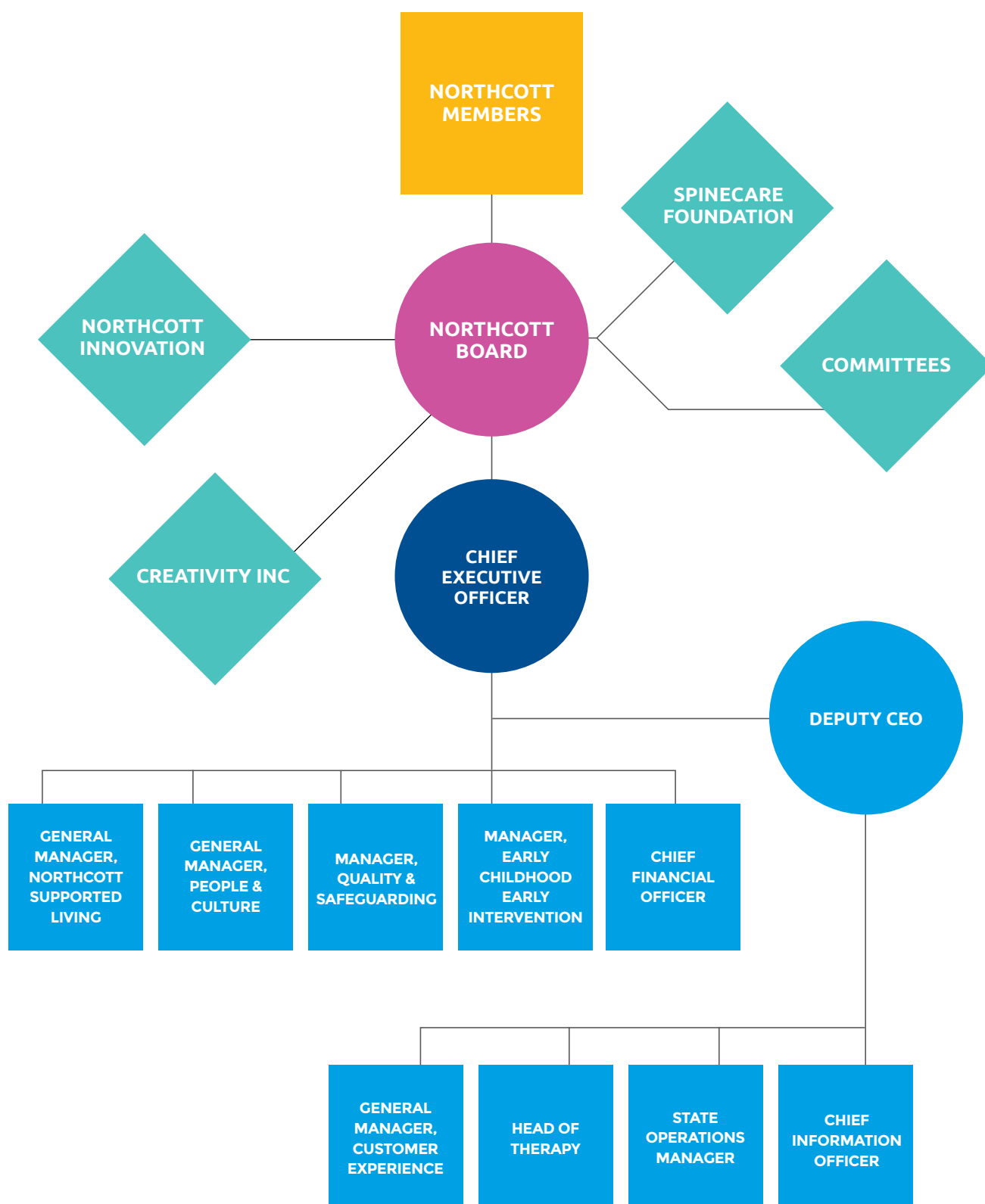
IN THE YEAR AHEAD

We aim to foster even closer relationships with all levels of Northcott staff from frontline workers to supervisors, managers and senior management.

The goal continues to be to promote positive workplace health and safety. In doing so, we hope to continue to improve our performance in the areas of workers compensation and return to work, whilst also focussing on the importance of mental health in the workplace.

In this area, all our efforts aim to promote a positive safety culture across Northcott where we meet the needs of our diverse staff and customers.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



QUALITY AND SAFEGUARDING

We are committed to ensuring and maximising quality of life for our customers.

Working collaboratively across Northcott's programs and services, our Quality and Safeguarding team aims to ensure we deliver high quality, best practice services above industry standards for our customers and their families.

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

Our behaviour support practitioners provide individualised, person centred behaviour support to customers, as well as support, guidance and strategies to assist our frontline staff to meet the needs of customers and mitigate any identified risks.

This year, they also worked on a project specifically aimed at eliminating any outstanding unauthorised restrictive practices, and reducing the additional workload that this creates with regards to reporting their use.

Our behaviour support specialists also play a significant role in supporting new customers to move into Northcott homes. To ensure customers experience a smooth transition to their home, we develop individualised person centred behaviour supports for customers and work with frontline staff to build their capacity to support their residents.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we introduced a Behaviour Support Telephone Line for staff working in our houses. Practitioners provided advice and support over the phone to assist staff to support customers whose behaviours increased during the health crisis due to changes to their normal routines and activities.

RESTRICTIVE PRACTICE AUTHORISATION

Restrictive practices are restraints used during service delivery to support customers with managing their behaviours of concern. Restraints can be environmental, chemical, mechanical, physical or seclusion, and must be formally reviewed and authorised in compliance with

NSW legislation. Restrictive practices are only to be used as part of a current Behaviour Support Plan that details structured protocols for implementation.

Northcott maintains a high standard for its review and approval process. This year, we refined our internal processes to streamline operational input, increasing access and visibility of mandatory authorisation and reporting requirements. We remain rigorous and vigilant with assessing the submitted rationales for the use of restrictive practices, ensuring current supporting evidence, the least restrictive options are proposed and viable fade-out protocols are in place for authorised restrictions.

We work collaboratively with frontline teams to actively promote a culture of reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive practices, in favour of consistent positive behaviour support strategies. We also work with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to ensure compliance against national standards, implementation of best practice and reporting.

SAFEGUARDING

To ensure we meet our legislative responsibilities set by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, this team has expanded and now includes four Safeguarding Practitioners and a Manager of Investigations.

With the introduction of the Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC), the team is now able to report directly to the Commission with any concerns for individuals with disability who may be subject to neglect and exploitation from members of the community.

HEALTHCARE

Our Healthcare team provides clinical support and advice to customers in relation to their healthcare needs, including supporting discharge planning when customers are admitted to hospital and input when a customer with complex healthcare needs moves into a Northcott home. Education to customers and support workers, training in healthcare procedures, health assessments, and recommendations to foster improved health outcomes for customers are also provided by the team.

This year staff have again focussed on identifying customers who have high intensity daily personal activities, including enteral feeding, urinary catheter care and complex bowel care, among others. Support letters were sent to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to advocate for these customers to receive additional NDIS funding to ensure their healthcare needs could be assessed by a nurse practitioner and high quality supports introduced.

QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE

Following completion of the NDIS Certification Audit in June 2019, our Quality and Safeguarding team led a range of improvement activities focussed on areas including communication, behaviour support, restrictive practice authorisation and internal auditing. Many of these activities were in response to the changing NDIS landscape and establishment of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and legislative changes.

BEST-IN-CLASS PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

In early 2019, we received grant funding from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to develop a 'Best-in-Class' practice framework for high intensity daily personal activities. This project aims to achieve a nationally consistent approach for the provision of support for NDIS participants with complex health needs.

The practice framework will provide resource material covering enteral nutrition, complex bowel care, urinary catheter care, mechanical ventilation, tracheostomy, subcutaneous injections and PRN medication post epilepsy. The framework will also include Northcott's No Assumptions Campaign, hospital support resources and three e-learning modules.

We commenced work on the project in June 2019 and by July 2020, the team had reached out to 103 stakeholders nationwide, including disability service providers, health professionals, peak disability bodies and subject matter experts for insights and recommendations.

The next steps include consulting people with disability and their support workers, building the website and e-learning packages, and establishing a document review panel before the resources are published.

Northcott maintains compliance with a range of legislative and regulatory frameworks, including the following disability-related legislation, standards and guidelines:

- National Standards for Disability Services
- NDIS Act 2013
- NDIS Rules
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Rules
- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- ACT Disability Services Act 1991
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising has been a vital part of Northcott right from our beginning.

In 1929, our organisation was founded by members of The Rotary Club of Sydney who wanted to provide support for children and adults affected by the polio epidemic. Since then, we have had a rich history and enduring legacy of receiving support from the community, individual donors and partners.

FUNDRAISING IN 2019–2020

Fundraising and community support have continued to be important in filling some of the funding shortfall between NDIS plans and the additional services and supports needed by our customers to fulfil their goals. This year, contributions have been even more vital as our staff and customers have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are extremely grateful for every donation, grant and contribution we receive.

Donor support achieves outcomes

We are grateful to have a group of dedicated donors – individuals, groups and organisations – who are inspired by the resilient stories of our customers and their families.

At the end of 2019, donors responded generously to our Christmas appeal which shared the story of Muzammil, Sana and their sons Ashaz and Aydin, who are supported by our Therapy team.

Funds raised through this appeal went towards providing vital speech therapy services to children with disability like Ashaz and Aydin, as well as more training and professional development for our therapists.

For our Tax Appeal in June 2020, Christell, a customer from Wagga Wagga (pictured below), shared how Northcott has supported every step of her journey to independence.

Generous donations received for this appeal went towards the implementation of a new online learning program, developed to enable customers like Christell to continue learning new skills throughout the COVID-19 crisis without the need to access to face-to-face programs.





Drive4Life fundraising tour

Dedicated supporters Chris Bates and Mick Whitehead have organised and hosted four-wheel drive (4WD) tours to raise funds for Northcott for 14 years. In an unforgettable experience, the tours take 4WD enthusiasts to different parts of Australia, with the registration fee for participants donated to Northcott. The tours have raised more than \$800,000 for Northcott. The 2020 instalment went ahead in early October.

Jan and Leon Treweek have been part of Drive4Life since 2008, taking part in seven trips. "Since the first time we participated, we have been passionate about Northcott, so we are happy we have been able to go on a number of trips. We were able to be on one of the drives when a group of Northcott customers travelled with us. It was a great experience to get to know them. This year, we are looking forward to getting out of the house after the restrictions. We enjoy the trips so much; we have met amazing groups of people and that has been fabulous."

For more information, visit www.drive4life.com.au.

Dating advice videos

Dating can be hard and confusing for everyone. Our Sexuality and Relationship Education service created a three-part video series on dating tips for people with disability. Austbrokers Corporate kindly supported this initiative so people with disability can build and practice their social skills in preparation for their next social outing.

"We are so proud to support this wonderful initiative so people living with disability can easily access the resources they need. It is one example of Northcott's important work in the community." - John Walsh, Austbrokers Corporate

Support during the pandemic

Northcott is very grateful for the unprecedented support we received in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

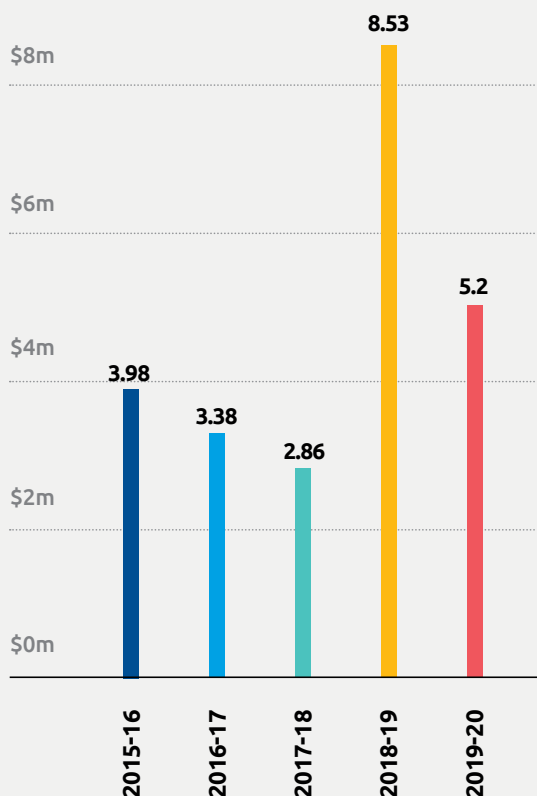
In our homes, Apple TV technology was identified as a way to engage customers in online learning experiences or entertainment during the lockdown. Our long-time partner Terry Shields Toyota, and an anonymous donor, contributed to special packs containing Apple TV devices and essential items to help customers adapt to the COVID-19 situation. These were distributed to our homes in Western Sydney.

"We are so excited to be able to enhance the support to Northcott customers, their carers and their families especially in this super challenging time," - Elissa Glenn, Terry Shields Toyota Marketing Manager.

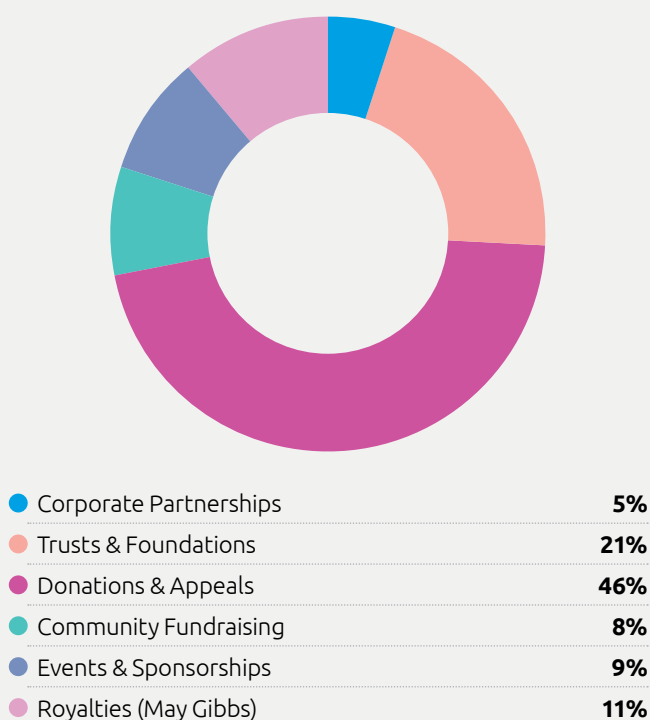
"I am so happy to be able to help with this project. The online world allowed us all to get to know each other in a different way. We see the homes, views, sunsets, pets and lots about recipes. I wanted the same experience for people with disability at Northcott," - Generous donor who contributed to the purchase of Apple TV devices.

FUNDRAISING REVENUE

TOTAL FUNDRAISING REVENUE (INCLUDING BEQUESTS) (\$)



BREAKDOWN OF FUNDRAISING REVENUE EXCLUDING BEQUESTS (%)



IN 2019-20, THE COST OF FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL FUNDRAISING REVENUE INCLUDING BEQUESTS WAS 21%.



CRICKET GALA DINNER

After holding annual Cricket Legends Lunches and Dinners since 1996, the umpire has called stumps.

This legacy over 24 years has allowed Northcott supporters to rub shoulders with some of Australia's cricketing heroes, while also raising vital funds for people with disability.

Our final Cricket Legends event was held in November 2019 at the Sydney Cricket Ground. It was a joint celebration also marking Northcott's 90th Anniversary.

Kerry Stubbs, Northcott CEO (until August 2020), attended her first Northcott Cricket Legends event in 2008 and has been a regular attendee since. "I wish to thank Cricket NSW for the wonderful support. They have helped us enhance many services, especially sporting events which are a great avenue for people with disability to feel included in their community. Our customers have thoroughly enjoyed their interactions with the cricketers they have met over the years!"

Northcott would like to thank all the wonderful sponsors, partners and supporters who have contributed in many different ways to these events.



"AS THE SAYING GOES, 'ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END' AND AFTER HOLDING ANNUAL CRICKET LEGENDS LUNCHES AND DINNERS SINCE 1996, THE UMPIRE HAS CALLED STUMPS."

Oh, the places we'll go!

Sydney is a great city to explore, but if you have limited mobility like our customer Lam, getting to accessible locations isn't always straightforward.

Our new accessible van – purchased thanks to generous funding from The Woodend Foundation – has given Lam and his friends from our Parramatta Everyday Life Skills service, the means to explore Sydney and its surrounds in a whole new way.

"We're using the van a lot to go out exploring and to the places we like to go for other activities, like bowling," Lam says.

"I like going out to new places, places I've never been before. I like being able to go out in a group with friends who are in wheelchairs."

Using the van, Lam and his friends have visited Bondi Beach, Rhodes Shopping Centre, Auburn Botanic Gardens and Casula Powerhouse Museum. They've also ventured out to explore Lavender Bay, on Sydney's North Shore.

"We walked around the water, passed by Luna Park, towards the Sydney Harbour Bridge, to see a view of the Sydney Opera House and the city," Lam recalls.

"It was a nice ride [in the van] and the view and weather were also good."

Melia, Northcott's Parramatta Everyday Life Skills Coordinator, says her service supports around 30 customers who use a wheelchair. Having an additional van has enhanced the service's offerings for customers, ensuring everyone can be included.

Northcott thanks The Woodend Foundation through Perpetual's 2019 IMPACT Philanthropy Application Program for funding the purchase of the van and its modification for use by our customers.



**CASE
STUDY**



**“I LIKE GOING
OUT TO NEW
PLACES, PLACES
I’VE NEVER
BEEN BEFORE.
I LIKE BEING
ABLE TO GO
OUT IN A GROUP
WITH FRIENDS
WHO ARE IN
WHEELCHAIRS.”**

INTEGRATING CREATIVITY INC

In January 2020, Northcott welcomed small Eastern Suburbs disability services provider, Creativity Inc, to its family.

Creativity Inc was formed in 1985 by a group of dedicated parents looking for respite and recreation services and supports for their children with disability. It is a registered NDIS provider, delivering disability services and supports to 250 child and adult customers through a team of 130 staff members. Creativity Inc's services include:

- In-home and Community Support
- Everyday Life Skills day programs
- Short Breaks and Outings
- Plan Management
- Coordination of Supports.

Northcott's acquisition of Creativity Inc ensures its customers will receive services and supports well into the future. Additionally, integrating with Northcott provides the opportunity for Creativity Inc customers to access to a wider range of supports not previously available through the organisation, such as Therapy and Housing. The acquisition has also enabled Northcott to expand into a new geographic region of Sydney, where Creativity Inc is well respected and has forged strong community partnerships.

During 2020, Creativity Inc's services and supports were delivered as usual, while integration work to bring the two organisations together and ensure a smooth transition of systems, processes and service operations was completed. During this time, customers and staff were encouraged to take part in opportunities offered by Northcott, such as attending the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras on Northcott's float, and completing staff training opportunities.

The final stage of integration is due to be completed in late November. From this time, the business name 'Creativity Inc' will no longer exist and the organisation's offices and service centres will be known as Northcott Hillsdale and Northcott Rosebery. While there will be some operational changes once the integration is complete, there will be no interruptions to services and programs for customers. Creativity Inc's services will continue to be offered to current and new customers in the Eastern Suburbs area.

Since January, the integration phase has been managed by Creativity Inc Interim CEO, Liz Forsyth, who was appointed CEO of Northcott from 1 September 2020.

A MESSAGE FOR CUSTOMERS:

"Our focus remains on you, your goals and supporting you to live your best life. Our shared values and approach were key drivers in Northcott's decision to work with Creativity Inc. By bringing you into the Northcott family, we can ensure you will continue to receive the services and supports you need in the future." – Liz Forsyth, Northcott CEO

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: PLAN MANAGEMENT

Creativity Inc is a well respected NDIS provider of Plan Management services, working with around 100 customers to assist them with managing and paying for supports – and getting the most from their NDIS Plan. For Shane, who has been a Plan Manager with Creativity Inc for two and a half years, the service is much more than the name may suggest.

One of the most important aspects of Plan Management is the ability for participants to choose any provider to deliver their supports. This means they are not restricted to only accessing services from registered NDIS providers, which can be helpful when local services are limited or wait lists are long.

“Plan Management is really about giving customers choice and control. On the surface it might look like paying invoices, but there’s a lot more to it and it can give participants many more options for using their funding,” Shane explains.

Plan Managers assist customers by handling payments to providers, explaining what their plan means and their funding options, assisting with budgeting, keeping track of funding, supporting decision-making about providers and negotiating pricing.

“What I really enjoy about my role is getting the opportunity to support participants to understand their plan. I am a support network to try to make their life easier. I try to ease any burden of the NDIS where I can so customers can receive the services they want,” Shane says.

“I love speaking to my customers and getting to know them. It’s important I keep them up to date so they are well informed and are using their plan actively. My role ensures families can focus on the person receiving the support rather than the pressure of chasing claims and paying invoices.”

Plan Management is a new service for Northcott. We are excited to be able to offer this service to all our customers through our integration with Creativity Inc, who brings longstanding experience and expertise in this area.



Janine (pictured above) has accessed Plan Management services through Creativity Inc for two years. Shane connects with her once a month, unless there’s something specific she needs.

“PLAN MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN A BLESSING FOR ME. I AM A WORRIER AND CREATIVITY INC HAS TAKEN AWAY THE MONEY WORRIES. I COULDN’T DO IT ON MY OWN. SHANE HAS ALWAYS LOOKED AFTER ME. IT HAS BEEN GOOD, ESPECIALLY THIS YEAR WITH THE PANDEMIC.”

– JANINE

A social butterfly

Marie has been a customer with Creativity Inc since she was a little girl. At age 5, she was one of three customers in the organisation's very first Saturday Social program for children with disability. Many years later, Marie still enjoys attending social activities with Creativity Inc.

It's a wintery Saturday night, but Marie won't be deterred from one of her favourite weekend activities – heading out to Matraville RSL (aka Club Matto) with friends and support staff from Creativity Inc.

"Going to the RSL Club is the best activity I do with Creativity Inc," Marie says.

"I love it. I love seeing my friends. We eat, talk and dance."

Marie has an intellectual disability and doesn't have the chance to get out much for social activities with friends. She lives by herself - with some support - so enjoys socialising with her friends Alex, Kimberley, Carla, Emma and Maddie, who she met through Creativity Inc's Social Experiences program.

"At the moment, I go to the Saturday Evening Social at the club and the Saturday Evening Movie and Dinner night at the centre. I am also booked to attend Woodstock, the Sunday outings group, and the Rosebery Centre, which I have attended since it started," she says.

Marie has a long association with Creativity Inc and is one of the organisation's first customers. Over the years, Creativity Inc has played an important part in supporting Marie to build her skills and independence. Through

various programs, Creativity Inc has supported her to learn to catch public transport and important skills so she can live in her own home. Marie has many fond memories of her time spent with Creativity Inc.

"When I was younger, we went to Melbourne on a bus. We stayed there for four days. We went to Luna Park and shopping at the markets. I also remember going on picnics at Bronte Park and Centennial Park, going to museums, galleries and shopping centres.

"I also learnt to cook at the Rosebery Centre and with my keyworker Martin, I learnt to catch public transport. Creativity Inc has supported me to build my skills to live independently."

Self described as "chatty, bubbly and extroverted," Marie says she always likes recommending Creativity Inc's social activities to other people and reminding her friends to come along.

"I love it because they help me be with my friends. I love going out to the club, dancing and talking to friends and other people. I also love their Christmas parties – they have Karaoke and I love to sing and dance."



**CASE
STUDY**

**“I LOVE CREATIVITY
INC’S OUTINGS
BECAUSE THEY
HELP ME BE WITH
MY FRIENDS.”**



NORTHCOTT INNOVATION



A wholly owned subsidiary of Northcott, supporting people with disability to live as equals in their community.

Northcott Innovation (NI) partners with people with disability to explore and co-create new and unexpected solutions for the disability sector. Sharing the same vision as Northcott, NI sparks and fosters ideas that drive all of us towards a more inclusive society.

For full details about NI's activities, please see the NI Annual Report 2019–20. To request a copy, please email info@northcottinnovation.com.au.

PROJECT IN FOCUS

Under the Covers

In October 2019, NI launched Under the Covers, an online campaign raising awareness and educating the wider community about the right for people with disability to express their sexuality, have fulfilling and loving relationships, and enjoy a satisfying sexual life.

In a series of heart-felt videos, six people with disability shared their experiences of navigating intimate relationships and exploring their sexuality. These open and frank interviews reveal some of the barriers to relationships and intimacy faced by people with disability, as well as the participants' dreams and desires for a loving partner and fulfilling relationship.



OTHER PROJECTS

Nest

This financial year has been busy and successful for Nest, NI's online home matching service. In September 2019, NI appointed a National Business Development Manager, who is responsible for growing Nest into a self-sustaining platform showcasing disability housing providers and properties from across Australia.

In the last 12 months, the number of people with disability and/or carers who registered on the site more than doubled. The number of disability housing providers promoting their vacancies on the site increased by 124%, and the number of properties listed on Nest grew by 230%.



Fabricating the Future of Ankle Foot Orthoses

Funded by the NSW Government, this two-year project was completed in partnership with Northcott's Orthotics and Footwear team and AbilityMade. Bringing the new technologies of photogrammetry, 3D modelling and 3D printing to the field of prosthetics and orthotics, the project explored other ways of manufacturing Ankle Foot Orthoses without the need for traditional plaster casting and manufacturing processes.

Over the duration of the project, six prosthetics and orthotics practices across NSW received the new technology and were supported to transform their practices, decreasing their environmental footprint, increasing their efficiency and improving their sustainability as small businesses.

Outcomes of the highly successful project saw more than 300 children (NDIS participants) provided with more than 550 digitally fabricated Ankle Foot Orthoses. Additionally, the project included the provision of training and support to participating practices around culturally sensitive services for individuals from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, and the trial of a regional remote service model.

International Assistive Technology Summit

In August 2019, Samantha Frain, NI's Executive Director attended the World Health Organisation Global Research, Innovation and Education in Assistive Technology (GreAT) Summit in Geneva, Switzerland. Samantha gave a presentation on NI's service model for providing sustainable orthotics services to people with disability who live in rural



and remote Australia. This service model combines existing tele-health technologies with the newly developed photogrammetry, 3D modelling and 3D printing technologies used in the Fabricating the Future of Ankle Foot Orthoses project (see above).

SUPPORTING NORTHCOTT

Boredom Busters

In anticipation of the challenges facing Northcott's housing customers and frontline staff as a result of COVID-19, NI developed *Boredom Busters*.

NI worked alongside Northcott's therapists to create more than 50 fun, engaging and entertaining videos demonstrating activities that customers could participate in from the comfort and safety of their own home. All activities were designed to match the skills and capabilities of customers, as well as align to COVID-19 health guidelines. Topics included cooking, movement, arts and crafts, wellbeing, news and games activities.

Small Things

In this project, NI worked with Northcott's Housing team to explore ways of giving customers more choice and control in their daily lives. See more details about the project on page 78. NI is now rolling out *Small Things* to more Northcott properties.

It's the small things

Sometimes the smallest of gestures or actions can make the biggest difference. With this philosophy in mind, NI developed a project to explore small ways to introduce more opportunities for choice into the lives of high-needs customers living in Northcott houses.

The project – called *Small Things* – made a bigger impact than expected...and also saw Northcott's disability nurses nominated for an industry award.

Maree, Northcott's Nursing Unit Manager (pictured right with a customer) at our Condell Park Specialist Support Living (SSL) home, has spent many years working with customers with complex needs. Participating in *Small Things* gave her and her SSL nursing team a new perspective on how to interact and support their customers.

As part of *Small Things*, two speech therapy students visited the Condell Park house to work intensively with customers and staff over a 4-6 week period. The role of the students was to observe the day-to-day comings and goings of the home and identify small moments where an interaction between the nursing team and a customer could be enhanced or fostered to bring about greater choice, control or skill for the customer.

Maree says *Small Things* saw a new way of thinking 'seep' into her team's culture, enabling the team to embrace and value even the tiniest moments of interaction with their customers.

"The project created an almost unconscious, but lasting change in the team's attitude towards individual communication and choice. I asked a nurse 'how do you know if Anthony likes that spot on the verandah?' and the response was 'because I can tell by the way he moves his head towards the sunlight and smiles.' This is his way of making a choice," says Maree.

Maree noticed that the interactions between staff and the customers was more respectful, with staff asking the customers more questions and taking the time to wait for answers.

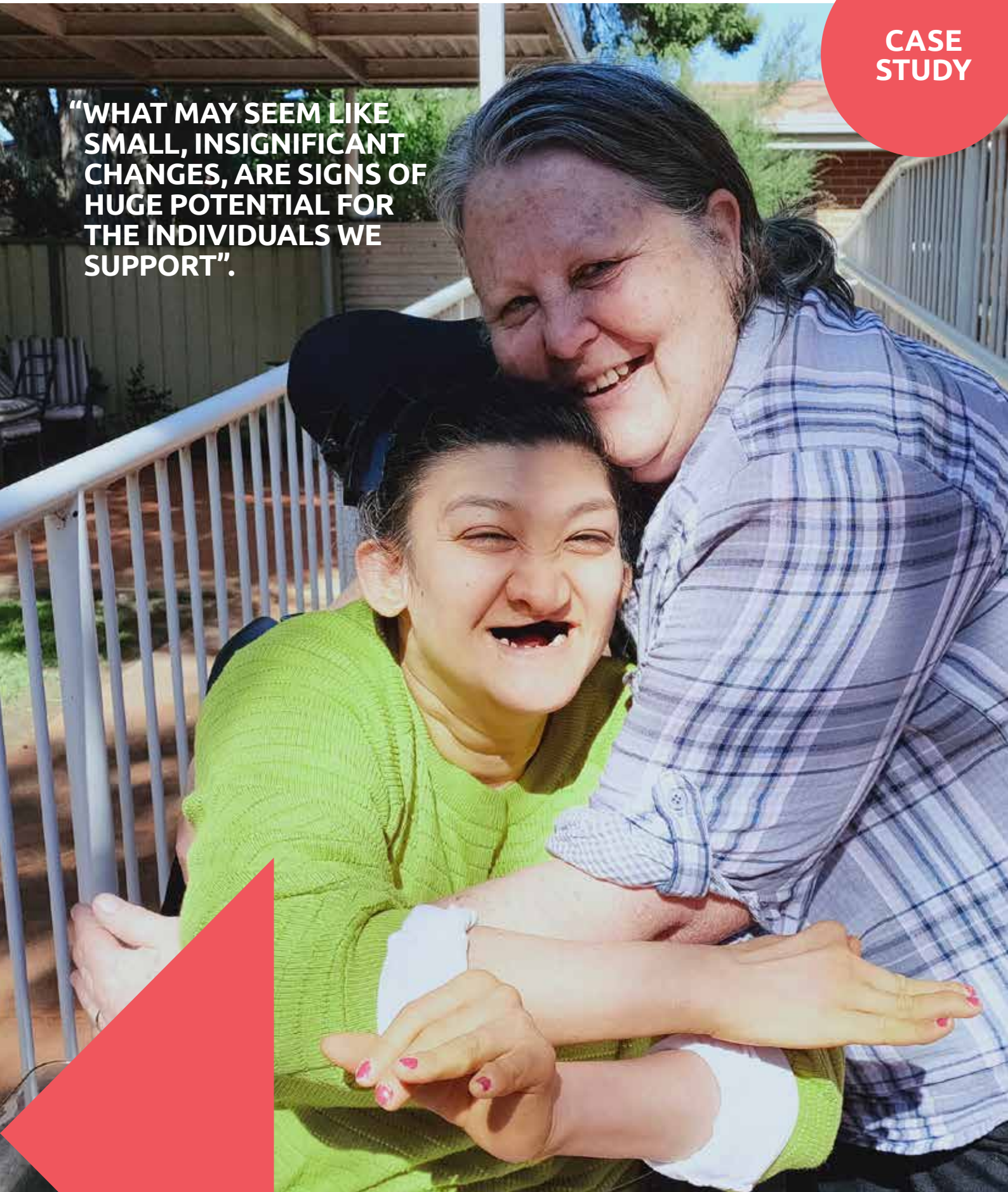
"What may seem like small, insignificant changes, are signs of huge potential for the individuals we support. *Small Things* has helped the team recognise that, and empowered them to support customers to embrace their right to have a real choice in what they want."

The nursing team at Condell Park was recognised for their outstanding work on *Small Things* as a finalist in the HESTA 2020 Australian Nursing and Midwifery Awards.

NI has committed to introducing *Small Things* to more Northcott houses in 2020, including some in regional areas. The project will also expand to include occupational therapy students working alongside their colleagues in speech therapy.

**CASE
STUDY**

**"WHAT MAY SEEM LIKE
SMALL, INSIGNIFICANT
CHANGES, ARE SIGNS OF
HUGE POTENTIAL FOR
THE INDIVIDUALS WE
SUPPORT".**



THE SPINECARE FOUNDATION

The SpineCare Foundation (SpineCare), a division of Northcott, is committed to funding research and educational initiatives that enhance the care and support of children and young people with spinal cord injury or dysfunction.

SpineCare's primary objectives are:

- To coordinate educational activities to disseminate knowledge and experience about childhood spinal injury or dysfunction
- To provide scholarships for students who use wheelchairs enrolled in tertiary education
- To fund research to increase the body of knowledge about childhood spinal injury or dysfunction.

HIGHLIGHTS

Gathering insights

Our most important stakeholders are consumers impacted by spinal cord injury or dysfunction, be that through personal experience or the experience of caring for a child with spinal cord injury. In the first half of 2020, SpineCare, in partnership with Ability Forum and Edentify, embarked on a market research project to gather first hand experiences about childhood spinal cord injury or dysfunction. The aim was to better inform current projects and future planning. Experiences were sought from parents and children impacted by childhood spinal cord injury or dysfunction, as well as a broader group of stakeholders including carers of children or adults who experienced their disability in childhood. Findings from the research will be used to shape SpineCare's future activities and, more broadly, to lobby Government and major funders.

Scholarships for Tertiary Education

This year, SpineCare, in partnership with The Farrell Foundation, awarded scholarships to 11 worthy students to support their access and engagement in tertiary education. As per the scholarship criteria, the students use a wheelchair as a primary form of mobility. All students are applauded for their achievements and tenacity throughout a challenging first semester impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been uplifting to understand the positive impact of the scholarship support during this time.

To attract applications for the 2020 round of scholarships, SpineCare and Northcott shared the achievements and educational journey of scholarship recipient Fathema Anwar (pictured right). Fathema started receiving scholarship support from Northcott in her second year of university, when her occupational therapist encouraged her to apply. Since 2016, she has been a recipient of the Thomas Hepburn Scholarship, and in 2018 and 2019, she also received support through the Gregory and Dolores Farrell Scholarship.

"When I started uni, the first year was hard with the cost of textbooks and travel. I didn't know about the scholarships. It was make or break. The scholarships helped support me to continue. Without the scholarships, I don't think I would have been at uni because I would have dropped out.

"For a girl who sat behind a window, dreaming of going to school was hard enough, let alone dreaming to go to university. So when I was able to go to university [despite] all those hardships - and then knowing that there was a scholarship to help me get through it - was everything that I could ever ask for. That's why I'm grateful for the scholarships that are offered by Northcott."



Investment in Research

SpineCare has continued its valued partnership with Western Sydney University through providing grants for two major research projects pertaining to childhood spinal cord injury and dysfunction.

The pilot phase for the first project, *'Cognitive Strategies to Improve Outcomes for Children with Spinal Cord Injury and Disease'* has progressed significantly over the course of the year. Participants and clinicians have been recruited and testing of elements of the project and a literature review have also been completed.

PhD student Emily James has commenced early work on the second project: *'Transitioning Children with Spinal Cord Injury and Disease to Adult Services Using a Peer Support Model'*.

Preparing for a milestone

In 2021, SpineCare will celebrate 40 years since its inception as the Children's Spinal Research Foundation. The year will also mark 10 years since its inaugural conference *'Innovation and Practice in Childhood Spinal Conditions: Laying the Foundations'*. Plans are afoot to mark this important milestone in a special way, while also continuing to fulfill SpineCare's missions and objectives.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Over the last five years, the Group (being The Northcott Society and its controlled entities) has experienced continued growth in revenue and expansion of services, most recently with new housing opening across NSW.

With this continued growth, there have been a number of pressures on Northcott's resources, from frontline staff to systems and processes. Within the sector, finding enough of the right resources continues to be an issue, particularly in specialist areas such as Therapy and Behaviour Support. Northcott is working hard to retain its key people and ensure that customers are well supported. In fact, Northcott's continued dedication to delivering the right support means

that it frequently continues to deliver supports even when they are unfunded, to ensure service standards and customer outcomes are met. The organisation continues to work with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to achieve the correct balance of funding and quality of service.

Northcott has been fortunate in FY2020 to continue to receive some very generous bequests. However, the organisation has seen only a marginal overall return on investments, as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

Top Line Financial Comparison	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16
Income & Expenditure					
Operating Revenue**	206,335	192,436	145,920	72,911	64,061
Operating Expenditure	(201,193)	(188,465)	(145,862)	(75,053)	(63,451)
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	5,142	3,971	58	(2,142)	610
Financial Income/(Loss)	389	4,322	1,186	1,884	596
Capital Grants Income		–	–	5	316
Estates and Bequests	2,847	6,765	1,024	1,314	561
Other Non operating Income/(Loss)	184	243	214	103	(193)
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	8,562	15,301	2,482	1,164	1,890
Assets & Liabilities					
Total Assets	150,021	129,098	106,967	57,944	61,732
Total Liabilities	82,101	69,739	62,911	17,048	21,985
Total Equity	67,920	59,359	44,056	40,896	39,747
Cash Flows					
Net Cash from Operating Activities	27,002	11,043	30,683	(4,271)	6,068
Net Cash from Investing Activities	(27,430)	(34,892)	(1,560)	3,171	(8,882)
Cash and Cash equivalents at 30 June	9,872	10,300	34,149	5,026	6,126
Ratios					
Current Assets/Current Liabilities	1.56:1	1.51:1	1.27:1	2.04:1	1.66:1
Total Cost of Services/Total Expenditure	91%	88%	89%	77%	74%

**Operating revenue excludes Revenue from Capital Grant income

The Group's net assets have increased from \$39.8m in FY2016 to \$67.9m in FY2020 due to strong investment throughout this period and growth from operations generating surplus cash. It's important to note that, while this growth is healthy and sustained, in terms of total equity as a percentage of annual operating revenue, the amount of cover has reduced from 62% in FY2016 to 33% in FY2020. The organisation continues to monitor this ratio as an indicator of balance sheet health.

OVERALL RESULTS FOR FY2020

The result for the Group for FY2020 was a consolidated net surplus of \$8.6m (FY2019: \$15.3m). This result includes bequest revenue of \$2.8m (FY2019: \$6.8m).

The underlying operating surplus for the year was \$5.1m (FY2019: \$4.0m). This represents a 2.5% return on income, which shows prudent management of our National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services in order to yield a small surplus, but does not cover the investments required to sustain and improve our services in the long-term. Hence Northcott is so appreciative of the financial support it receives through Fundraising and Bequests streams.

Operating revenue

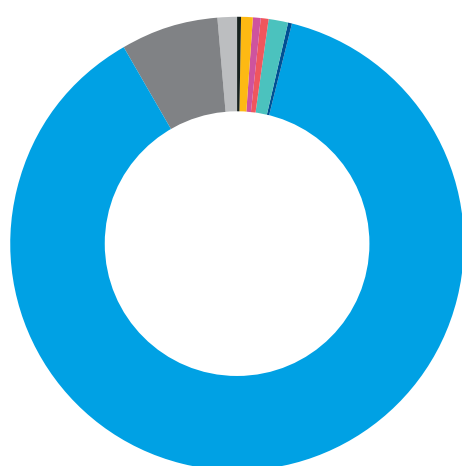
The Group experienced continued revenue growth over the last year. Operating revenue increased by \$13.9m (7%) to \$206.3m in FY2020. This was mainly due to the opening of additional accommodation services and expansion in Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) and Therapy services.

NDIS funding is now the main source of income for the Group making up 99% of the overall Government funding (FY2019: 96%).

Revenue from estates and bequests for the year was lower than FY2019 at \$2.8m, but still much higher than in previous years due to the generosity of a large estate that commenced distributions in FY2019. Bequests are always gratefully received and assist the Group to invest in the future of its services.

Revenue from fundraising and donations (excluding bequests) was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which placed financial pressure on some donors and led to the cancellation of fundraising events. This resulted in a slight reduction over the previous year at \$1.5m for FY2020 (FY2019: \$1.7m).

SOURCES OF INCOME



● Financial income	\$389,395
● Other Income	\$2,231,113
● Rental & accommodation	\$655,411
● Donations & fundraising	\$1,494,871
● Estates & bequests	\$2,847,025
● Sale of goods	\$350,324
● Revenue from NDIA participant funding	\$185,195,880
● Revenue from NDIA grants funding	\$14,181,253
● Revenue from other government funding**	\$2,470,983
Total	\$209,816,255

**Includes capital grants

Operating expenditure

With the increase in funded activity, expenditure increased by \$12.7m (7%) to \$201.2m in FY2020. It is comforting to note that expenses are growing in line with revenue, in percentage terms.

Service delivery expenses increased by \$17.0m (10%) to \$183.7m in FY2020. It is important to note that this increase is greater than the growth reflected in the business overall and is indicative of the increased costs of delivering quality of service.

The administrative burden on the organisation of delivering extra services via the NDIS continues to be a concern. While the overall cost has fallen when compared to FY2019, Northcott employs a narrow, accounting definition of corporate cost, whereas the NDIS definition includes all non-customer facing costs.

Assets and liabilities

Total net assets increased by \$8.6m to \$67.9m. The Group's assets included:

- Property, plant and equipment: \$28.9m
- Intangible assets: \$4.1m
- Cash and financial investments: \$106.1m
- Trade and other receivables: \$9.5m

Notably, the cash and financial investments increased in the year by \$22.5m, of which a large part is a cash advance from the NDIA for COVID-19 that needs to be repaid during FY2021.

The Group's land and buildings are accounted at cost.

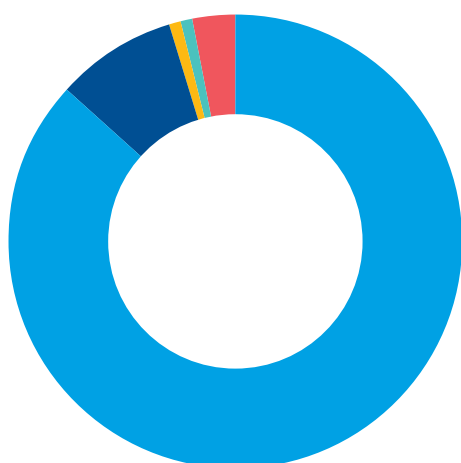
The Group's current liabilities include:

- Trade and other payables: \$9.2m
- Employee benefits: \$30.9m
- Provisions and other liabilities: \$34.8m

Cash flows

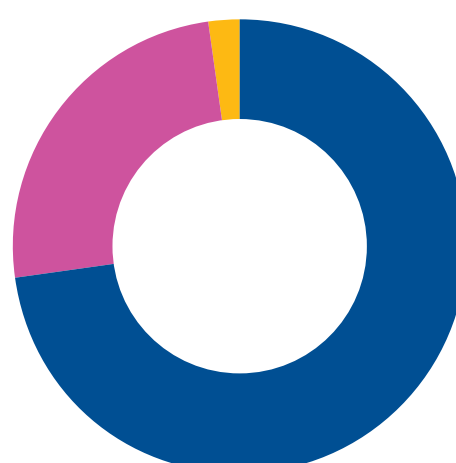
Net cash and cash equivalents movement from operating activities was \$27.0m for FY2020. The cash balances include amounts held in advance for services to be performed in future periods and the advance of funds for COVID 19 from the NDIA.

WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT – PORTFOLIO



Service delivery	91.26%
Corporate support	8.13%
Cost of sales	0.03%
Estates	0.03%
Donations & fundraising	0.55%

WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT – GEOGRAPHY



Sydney Metropolitan	73%
Regional NSW	25%
Statewide	2%

INVESTMENT SUMMARY

GOVERNANCE

Northcott's investments are governed by the Finance and Properties Committee ("the Committee") in accordance with the Investment Management Policy and the Committee's Charter as agreed by the Board. The Committee is responsible for reviewing Northcott's Investment performance, including:

- reviewing and managing Fund Manager performance;
- receiving detailed investment performance presentations from Fund Managers;
- reviewing, at least annually, Northcott's overall investment position and performance having regard for the current investment environment and outlook and, if necessary, recommending changes to the allocation mix, manager allocations and/or investment policy;
- recommending potential changes to Fund Managers;
- monitoring the Chief Financial Officer's implementation of investment policy and Board directives.

FUND MANAGERS

As at 30 June 2020, Northcott's financial investments were managed by Russell Investments and Morgan Stanley Wealth Management. Operating cash and some short-term deposits were invested with the Commonwealth Bank.

2019–20 PERFORMANCE

In the 2020 financial year (FY2020), Northcott benefited from growth in investments until the pandemic caused valuations to fall significantly in February and March 2020. As a result of this, Northcott accounted for \$0.4m of financial income (FY2019: \$4.3m), including unrealised market gains, interest, dividends and franking credits.

CURRENT STRATEGY

Our current investment strategy is as follows:

- Long-term investments in Australian Equities and Australian bonds. This strategy is targeted to achieve above-inflation growth.
- Medium-term investments in fixed income funds to ensure a secure return in the medium-term.
- Short-term investments short-dated bonds and term deposits to maximise yields for cash that is expected to be required to meet near term operational needs.

HOW WE SPENT THESE FUNDS AND FUTURE PLANS

During FY2020, funds were managed in order to build further stability for the organisation. For the medium-term, there will be a number of changes in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding that may increase pressure on Northcott's operating cash position and, in the short-term, cash advanced from the NDIS for COVID-19 must be repaid. Even after this, Northcott is looking to invest in its services and long-term future, beginning with projects in FY2021.

As always, Northcott will continue to manage its investments with caution. Northcott aims to use disbursements from investments to support further expansion and to ensure it can respond to changes in the operating environment. Exercising this level of caution will provide Northcott with the flexibility to respond to future opportunities and challenges while ensuring its long-term success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Northcott receives donations, financial support, sponsorships, in-kind and pro bono gifts and advocacy from members, other organisations, individuals and communities. We are grateful for all this support. While we cannot acknowledge all contributions here, we greatly appreciate every contribution received.

Trusts, Foundations and Grants

Collier Charitable Fund
 NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
 NSW Government Community Building Partnership Program
 NSW Government Youth Opportunities Program
 Oak Flats and Shellharbour Community Bank Branches of Bendigo Bank
 Redfern Jarjum College
 Skipper-Jacobs Charitable Trust
 The Bluesand Foundation
 The Broinowski Foundation
 The Bruce & Joy Reid Trust
 The Hawker Foundation
 The Hildanna Foundation
 The Jibb Family Foundation
 The JL Manches Memorial Trust
 The Liangrove Foundation
 The Maple-Brown Family Foundation Ltd
 The Philandron Foundation
 The Profield Foundation
 The R A Gale Foundation
 The Rellim Foundation
 The Todd Family Foundation
 The Walter & Eliza Hall Trust
 The Woodend Foundation
 Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
 The William Rubensohn Foundation

Clubs

Baulkham Hills Sports Club
 Brighton-Le-Sands RSL Club
 Castle Hill RSL Group
 Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club
 Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL Club Ltd
 Hornsby RSL Club Ltd
 Magpies Waitara
 Mounties Group
 Parramatta Leagues Club
 Rules Club Wagga
 St Johns Park Bowling Club
 West Pennant Hills Sports Club Ltd

Community

Western Sydney University
 Drive 4 Life
 Bunnings Building Supplies
 Galston District Garden Club Inc

Major Donors

Mr William & Mrs Alison Hayward
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 Mrs Antoinette Albert
 Mrs Barbara Cohen
 Mr William Chia
 Mr Denis Cleary AM
 Mr Ken Coles AM &
 Mrs Rowena Danziger AM
 Mr Allan Moss & Mrs Irene Moss AO
 Mrs Meryl M Macarthur
 Mrs Florence Adamson
 Mr William Mudford
 Mr Martin Smyrk
 Mr Michael & Mrs Kathryn Richardson
 Mr Elson Pow
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 Mr Rocco & Mrs Geraldine Mangano
 Mr Paul Okkerse
 The Hon Justice Steven Rares SC
 Mr Forbes Pratt

Mr Duncan McKay
 Mr Bruce Downie
 Mr Pierre St. Just Malherbe
 Mr Joseph & Mrs Cecilia Yarad
 Mr Phillip Keady
 Mr Ross Grainger
 Mrs Prudence Hunt
 Mr John & Mrs Margaret Sachs
 Mrs Patricia Wright

In grateful memory of special friends

Una Margaret Andrews
 Ray Leslie Wright Blencowe
 Joyce Gilcreest Blomley
 Cynthia Brew
 Cater Charitable Trust
 Lionel Ernest Frederick Dege
 K & G Gluck Trust
 Margaret Isabel Hewlett
 Harry L Howden Charitable Trust
 Pieter Hubertus Huvenerers John
 William Lloyd
 Colleen Ethel Morris
 Ethel May Murray
 Mona Isobel Paul
 Marcus L Quinlivan
 Edith Roche
 Allan Archibald Rowling
 Joyce Mary Sivertsen
 Patricia Joan Williams
 Giuseppina Zacchio

CORPORATE & STRATEGIC PARTNERS



MEMBERS

Current in October 2020

Honourary Life Governor

President Emeritus
Richard M Griffin AM

Honourary Life Member

Trevor Chappell
Edward Condran
J Doug Donoghue
Ron J Finneran
Beverly Fletcher
Frank and Carole Misson
Alfred E F Rofo AM
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Life Governor

Robert O Albert AO
Phillip J Cave AM
Ann Coventry
RK and MR Critchley
John B Fairfax AO
Bill and Alison W Hayward
W M Loewenthal
Rocco P Mangano
Stan May
Charles F Moore
Graham O'Donnell
Paul Okkerse
Les and Judy Rae
John B Reid AO
David Ross
Basil Sellers AM
Tim Sims
Dick Smith AO

Life Member

B About
Tony Abrahams
Neil and Diane Balnaves
C J and Y Barry
Stewart A Bates
Anthony R Berg
W D Blackshaw
Richard Blaiklock
Robert and Robin Bradfield
Susan Campbell
David C Clarke
Bruce Downie
W Flynn AO
Glenn Gardner AM
John Gerahty
Ross E C Grainger
Colin Gray
Trevor Gruzin
M A Jacob
Dr Christopher H Janssen
Caroline Jones
Megan Jones
John Laws OBE
Kevin Laybutt
Patricia Lee
James and Adele Maloney
Julie Manfredi-Hughes
Robert and Sandra McCuaig
Tony and Jill McGrath
Primrose Moss
Elson Pow
Hon Justice Steven Rares
Sophie Rothery
Jim Searant
Dr Rob Silberstein
Gail Singh
Anny Slater
Christopher P Sparks
Andrew W Stevenson
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Helen Wellings

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Michael Briggs
Nick Cardno
James A Christian
Liz Forsyth
Jeyan Jeevaratnam
Andrew Mansour
Debra Richards
Jodi Swinburne
Hugh Wehby

Ordinary Member

Lisa Chung
Michelle Laforest
Anne Sullivan
Dr Mary Westbrook

The Northcott Board and Leadership team were saddened to hear of the passing in August 2020 of D W (Rob) King OAM, former Director, Treasurer, Vice President and President of Northcott. Mr King served on the Northcott Board from 1980 to 1999 and was an Honorary Life Governor.

Authority

The Northcott Society, trading as Northcott, is a registered charity and is endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a tax deductible gift recipient for charity tax concessions. The Northcott Society holds a charitable fundraising authority under Section 16 of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991.

The Northcott Society is a public company limited by guarantee and is taken to be registered as a company under the Corporations Law of New South Wales.

ABN 87 302 064 152

ACN 000 022 971

Annual General Meeting

Northcott's 2019 Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 12 November 2020.

We are proud to be a member of:





CENTRAL OFFICE



1 Fennell Street
North Parramatta NSW 2151



northcott.com.au



1800 818 286

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