

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21





OUR PURPOSE

We are striving to build an inclusive society where people can live the life they choose.

We support people with disability to reach their full potential by providing services and support to promote a genuinely inclusive society.

OUR VISION

We want to grow our services because customers choose us as their provider of choice.

OUR VALUES

We are a values-based organisation that fosters a workplace culture based on our core values of:

- **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.



INNOVATIVE
RESPECTFUL
BRAVE

Our community

157



61

CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITY ACCESSED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THROUGH NORTHCOTT

4,263

ACCESSED
NORTHCOTT
SERVICES

11,498

CHILDREN AND THEIR
FAMILIES ACCESSED
NORTHCOTT NDIS
EARLY CHILDHOOD
(FORMERLY ECEI)

Dalaigur
pre School

OF THE 4,263 CUSTOMERS:

45%

LIVE IN REGIONAL
AREAS

55%

LIVE IN METROPOLITAN
SYDNEY

57%

ACCESSED MORE THAN
ONE NORTHCOTT SERVICE

2.5m+

HOURS OF SERVICE
WERE RECEIVED

6.4%

ARE ABORIGINAL OR
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

1,000

USED NORTHCOTT
FOR THE FIRST TIME

A message from our Chair, and our CEO

2020-21 has been another huge year in the history of Northcott. Off the back of a challenging end to the 2020 Financial Year, Northcott has emerged a stronger and even more focused organisation, driven by our purpose to build a more inclusive society for all.

In the face of a worsening pandemic, we have continued to deliver the high-quality services and supports people with disability expect from Northcott. In doing so, we have supported customers of all ages and with a range of disabilities to achieve their goals, whatever they may be.

In our roles as Chair and CEO of Northcott, we could not be more proud of the achievements of the past year. Our workforce has stepped up to meet the challenges of COVID-19, while also delivering key projects and moving forward on important initiatives that are crucial to Northcott's future.

This new-look Annual Report showcases the impact of that work for the children and adults with disability we support and their families. Here we provide a brief snapshot of some of the year's achievements.

DEALING WITH COVID-19

As an organisation that supports people with disability 24/7, the safety of our customers and the staff who support them has been paramount. Our COVID-19 Coordination Team has driven our activities across all aspects of the pandemic, demonstrating our core values of respectful, innovative and brave along the way. We have been particularly pleased to see that the work put in at the start of the pandemic has paid off. Developing thorough and robust processes, procedures and initiatives from the outset has meant we could quickly respond and adapt as the impact of the virus evolved. We are particularly proud of several initiatives including the Special Response Team, which is on-call 7 days a week to support customers who test positive with the virus, the Behaviour Support Line for staff supporting customers in our accommodation services, and Northcott Innovation's *Boredom Busters* video series which has kept customers entertained while staying home. A very special mention goes to all

of our frontline staff who have adapted the way we operate and continued to provide the highest quality support to customers. We recognise the intense and ongoing pressure COVID-19 has placed on our staff and thank every individual for their unwavering commitment to our customers.

SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION

We were pleased to finalise our second *Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2020-23*. This plan continues Northcott's journey in improving outcomes and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have already made good progress in meeting some of the actions outlined in the RAP, such as making cultural awareness training more accessible for staff and better supporting those staff members who are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. On page 14, you can read about our work supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-schoolers in Kempsey through a program involving our early childhood team and an innovative new Therapy model of care rolling out across Northcott.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

This year we made a major commitment to addressing accessibility and inclusion, with dedicated staff, resources and a mandate for change. This includes improving the way we retain and recruit people with disability to our workforce, as well as better supporting our staff

with disability. We are also finding ways to be more accessible and responsive to the needs of our customers. A newly established Access and Inclusion Working Group oversees all activities in this area and is ensuring we remain on track.

WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENTS

After many months of negotiations, staff voted in favour of a new *Northcott Enterprise Agreement* which came into effect in July 2021. This was a huge piece of work, involving a collaborative team effort. The new Agreement ensures fair, consistent and equitable pay and conditions, with all Northcott staff now covered under one agreement. Achieving this outcome was a necessary step forward for the organisation. It will allow us to deliver even more flexible, high-quality and efficient services to our customers, enabling us to continue to invest in expanding our services throughout NSW and the ACT.

NON-STOP INNOVATION

The past year has seen several new and innovative programs developed and delivered with the support of government or community grant funding. These programs – which include group therapy for children, a creative arts program and work experience initiatives for school leavers – are not funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Participating in these types of activities and programs give children and adults with disability the chance to try new experiences outside their comfort zone. At Northcott, we believe this is crucial for building confidence and independence. We thank our individual donors, fundraising partners and government partners for supporting these important, often life-changing programs.

OUR BOARD

Northcott is fortunate to have a very forward-thinking Board committed to seeing the organisation achieve our purpose of building an inclusive society. This approach has been crucial in the management of COVID-19, but also in ensuring sound decisions are made for the financial health of the organisation and future operations. We would like to thank the Board for all their contributions and support over the past 12 months.

OUR STAFF

Northcott employs more than 2,600 people, with 93% of our staff directly supporting or working with people with disability. The demands on our staff at all levels has never been higher. The pandemic has put enormous pressure on our frontline staff and managers. We are grateful for the commitment from all staff who consistently display our values in their work. Northcott would not be the organisation it is today without its dedicated staff members. Thank you all for your hard work. Together, we can continue to support children and adults with disability to realise their potential and achieve their goals.



Michael Briggs

Chair

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Liz Forsyth

CEO

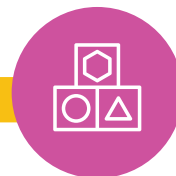
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Our services and supports



COORDINATION OF SUPPORTS

People with disability are supported to navigate the disability service system and understand their NDIS plan with information, advice and support from experts.



NORTHCOTT NDIS EARLY CHILDHOOD

Tailored support meeting the needs of children aged 0-6 with developmental delay or disability, delivered through our role as a NDIS early childhood partner.



RESPITE

Accessible and comfortable short term accommodation for people with disability who want a break from their normal routine, in a supported environment.



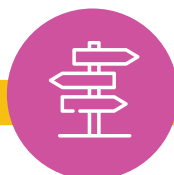
POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

A group of highly skilled NDIS Commission registered practitioners, supporting people with disability regarding behaviours of concern.



SEXUALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Support and programs for young people and adults with disability who want to learn, explore and manage their relationships and sexuality.



SHORT BREAKS AND OUTINGS

Recreation programs offering new experiences and fun activities for children and adults with disability.



SKILLS 4 LIFE

Fun and educational activities supporting teenagers with disability to learn how to express their opinions, make decisions and respect others, while building their confidence.



EVERYDAY LIFE SKILLS

Individual and group programs supporting people with disability to develop skills such as cooking, managing a budget, travelling independently, making friends and exploring the community.



HOUSING

More than 120 properties, including shared homes and individual villas, so people with disability can find a new place to call home and get the support they need.



ORTHOTICS AND CUSTOM FOOTWEAR

Tailor-made orthotic and footwear solutions supporting the mobility needs of children and adults with disability.



IN-HOME AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

One-on-one support for people with disability who want to increase their independence, get out in their community or who need support around the home.



THERAPY

Fully accredited therapy specialists, including speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and allied health assistants.



VOCATIONAL SKILLS (SCHOOL LEAVER EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT)

Young people with disability take part in activities to become work ready, gain work experience and explore volunteer opportunities to support them in finding a job.

A snapshot of our highlights

COVID-19 SUPPORT

Processes and procedures that were developed to help us manage COVID-19, protect customers and staff, and ensure we can continue to deliver services, are now embedded in our operations. Having these critical operational aspects in place has allowed us to quickly respond to outbreaks this year. It has meant scaling up our workforce when needed and adapting our service delivery as required. This was proven in June 2021, when NSW faced its most serious outbreak. We were able to quickly ramp up our COVID procedures, including initiatives such as the Special Response Team and Behaviour Support Hotline. Managing the pandemic continues to be challenging, but we are confident in our approach.



NEW OFFICES

We opened new offices in Ballina and Hornsby (pictured) to meet growing demand for our services.





“The boys love it. It’s so great to have an opportunity to swim with other support classes and special schools. It’s lovely that they have their own swimming carnival. We love to see the smiles on the children’s faces.”

Sue Burnett, teacher at Toongabbie Public School

JUNIOR SWIMMING CARNIVAL

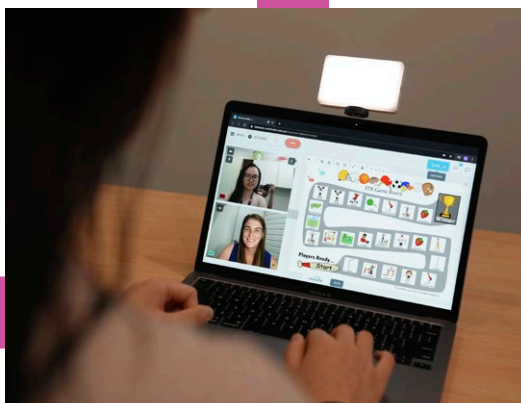
Thanks to generous support from Western Earthmoving, Northcott held its popular and long-running inclusive Junior Swimming Carnival in March. Ninety-five students from five schools participated in 50 races.

MODERN SLAVERY POLICY

Northcott is committed to reducing the risk of modern slavery practices within our supply chains and operations, in line with the *Modern Slavery Act (Cth) 2018*. We introduced a new policy and procedures to support this commitment, including establishing the Northcott Modern Slavery Working Group and developing training for staff to better understand modern slavery and what this looks like in our society today.

TERTIARY SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

With our subsidiary The SpineCare Foundation, Northcott awarded 18 Tertiary Scholarships in the 2020 academic year to support students with a physical disability to further their education. Financial assistance from our scholarships helps to cover tertiary study expenses such as transport costs, internet charges, accommodation fees, scribes/tutors and the purchase of textbooks and stationery. Our scholarship program is made possible thanks to the support of the following benefactors: Thomas Hepburn Lennox, Wendy Hall, Gregory and Dolores Farrell and Thomas K.F. Taylor.



TELEHEALTH FOR THERAPY

During the year we rolled out Telecare, a telehealth platform for our Therapy team. Customers now have the option of accessing all or some of their therapy sessions online. Using Telecare allows customers to save funds on travel. We are also finding it is a great way to provide services to customers who live far away or in regional areas. It has been particularly useful during periods of lockdown, enabling customers to continue to work towards their goals.



WORK EXPERIENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

With support from our corporate partner Terry Shields Toyota we made our in-house 'Café Thanks a Latte' work experience initiative available to Vocational Skills participants in Penrith, Seven Hills and Hornsby. The initiative was first trialled in our Parramatta office. At our Casula office, we introduced the Northcott Experience Tasker (NEXT). Through this program, participants gain experience running a micro business that provides services to Northcott. NEXT is funded by a NSW Youth Opportunity Grant.

SUPPORTED LIVING LAB

Northcott Innovation (a Northcott company) set up the Supported Living Lab in May 2021. This project aims to improve the quality of accommodation supports and services provided to people living in Northcott's homes. The project brings together people with disability living in supported accommodation and those who support them. It is managed by a Steering Committee made up of Northcott staff, customers and external experts. To ensure everyone understands and contributes, the Committee uses an inclusive governance framework. Papers, minutes and agendas are written in Easy English, support workers are present at every meeting (with each customer) and Key Word Sign is used. There is also a dedicated staff member who works with customers between meetings to make sure they have time to prepare their talking points.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS

Through a partnership with Scope Australia, Northcott is the only assessor of communication accessibility in NSW. In early 2021, we were proud to award communication access accreditation to two NSW organisations– Camden Council and Ability Consultations. Camden Council is the first Council in NSW to be accredited.



Read about our year online at
www.northcott.com.au/ourimpact

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT TRAINEE PROGRAM

We launched a new Behaviour Support Trainee Program for support workers interested in becoming behaviour support practitioners. Eight Northcott support workers completed a program of workshops, online learning, observations and supervision sessions to attain the status of provisional core behaviour support practitioners. The program was developed by Northcott, with the trainees coached and supervised by Northcott's proficient and advanced practitioners.

RISK MANAGEMENT

We introduced a new digital risk management system, Noggin. This system allows any employee to report incidents, hazards, grievances, complaints or compliments on a Northcott device or their mobile phone. Our team assessed and reviewed more than 5,800 incidents and 180 complaints logged with the system from January to June 2021.

SUPPORT FOR THE INDUSTRY

Northcott was one of four disability providers to form a contingent workforce panel with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to provide operational guidance and coordination to support other NDIS providers in NSW with their business continuity response to COVID-19. Northcott also partnered with the NDIA to provide a range of COVID-19 virtual presentations to providers in NSW and the ACT.

WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS THINK

To find out more about the people we support and how well we are meeting their needs, we invited customers and their parents and carers to complete a short satisfaction survey. For improved accessibility, the survey was written in Easy English and could be completed online or in paper form. We saw an 85% increase in responses from customers with this approach, with more than 400 people completing the survey.

3 IN 4

Customers are happy with our services and feel empowered to make decisions and live independently.

Most respondents feel supported by Northcott.



Collaborative Therapy service in Kempsey

This year we kicked off an innovative Therapy support model to address a gap in services for Aboriginal children and their families in Kempsey.

The project is an integrated effort that involves Northcott's NDIS early childhood (formerly known as ECEI), the Therapy team, Aboriginal staff members from our Ballina team and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs Advisor. The teams have been working together to build trust and relationships with the staff, children and families from Dalaigur and Scribbly-Gum Dalai Aboriginal Pre-Schools on Dhungutti Country on the NSW Mid North Coast.



CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

When the NDIS rolled out to Kempsey, Dalaigur and Scribbly-Gum Dalai Pre-Schools Director, Debbie Swanson started supporting local families to apply for funding to support their child's development.

As the area's NDIS early childhood partner, Northcott's NDIS early childhood team visited Kempsey to provide additional support. The team identified a high number of children in need of therapy support - and the lack of local services available to families.

Of the 120 children attending both Dalaigur and Scribbly-Gum Dalai Pre-Schools in December 2020, 12 had an NDIS plan. However, Northcott's NDIS early childhood team estimated that close to 90% of the children would benefit from some sort of support.



OUTCOMES

40

THERAPY ASSESSMENTS
CARRIED OUT

20

NDIS PLANS AND FUNDING
APPLICATIONS

19

CHILDREN PROVIDED
WITH THERAPY SERVICES

4

ALLIED HEALTH ASSISTANT
TRAINEES COMPLETING
THEIR STUDIES

2

WEEKS OF VISITS FROM
NORTHCOTT THERAPISTS

1

LOCAL ALLIED HEALTH
ASSISTANT EMPLOYED

Aware of the challenges experienced by Kempsey's Aboriginal community, the early childhood team sought expertise from Northcott's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs Advisor Kathy McKenzie and Aboriginal staff from Northcott Ballina to engage in a culturally appropriate way with families. This approach, which included connecting with the Kempsey community over an extended period of time, was crucial in building trust for Northcott in the local community.

Once trust was established, Northcott was able to work with families and the pre-schools to develop NDIS plans and apply for funding for 20 more children. Northcott wouldn't normally be able to provide support directly to these children, but after approaching the NDIA and discussing the shortage of services in Kempsey, it was agreed that it was in the best interests of the community for Northcott to provide therapy support in this particular case. So Northcott designed a way for therapy services to be available to the community. Northcott has also continued to be involved with the community in other ways.

WHAT IS THE ALLIED HEALTH ASSISTANT THERAPY MODEL?

Using a 'fly-in-fly-out' model, Northcott therapists visit Kempsey to assess children and develop therapy plans. The therapists spend a week at the pre-schools, conducting assessments and developing individualised therapy plans. After they leave, a locally based allied health assistant, employed by Northcott, delivers each

child's therapy program through weekly, face-to-face therapy sessions conducted at the pre-schools.

The assistant checks-in weekly with the therapist for support and to report on progress. Once every three months, therapists return to Kempsey to see how the children are progressing. The model ensures the children are receiving the therapy they need, without having to travel to another town.

Deena McGregor, Northcott's Allied Health Assistant in Kempsey says many of the children she is supporting have speech and communication difficulties, trouble concentrating and behavioural challenges, as a result of the trauma they have faced. With a therapy plan, Deena hopes to support the children to have coping strategies and the skills they need to get ready for school.

With more allied health assistants coming on board, Northcott will continue to support these children as they move into school, as well as others at the pre-school.

"It's early days, but I hope we are helping them to start to build resilience and a positive outlook for their future."

Our allied health assistant model of therapy care is rolling out across our Therapy service in 2021-22.



“Helena can now interact with other kids. She can have her independence and actually go out in the playground with something suitable and comfortable on her feet.”

Craig Scott, Northcott Pedorthist





Custom-made boots for Helena

A pair of boots custom-made by Northcott's Pedorthist has given five-year-old Helena the chance to fit in properly at school.

WHY HELENA NEEDED CUSTOM-MADE SHOES

Every parent wants their child to fit in when they start school. But for some children with disability, looking different can make that difficult. Five-year-old Helena started school this year and loves it.

However, unlike most children her age, Helena has spent a large part of her childhood in and out of hospital. Helena was born with diastrophic dysplasia, a rare genetic disorder that affects the development and growth of her bones and cartilage.

The condition means Helena has short, wide feet that are fixed in a plantar flexed position (where they point downwards). To help with her muscle development, and to protect and support her feet, Helena wears ankle foot orthoses (AFOs).

While crucial for her development, Helena's AFOs aren't practical for everything little girls like to do. She can't play safely outdoors with her friends or explore playgrounds in the wet. Unfortunately Helena's AFOs also don't meet the minimum safety requirements for school, meaning Helena sometimes misses out on vital socialising and interactions with her classmates.

Northcott's Orthotics and Custom Footwear service provides solutions, including 3D printed custom-made orthoses and tailor-made footwear to support the mobility needs of children and adults with disability.

CONNECTING WITH NORTHCOTT

Before Helena started school, her mum Jamie knew she wanted Helena to be able to play with friends outside and feel safe on uneven surfaces. Jamie approached Northcott's Pedorthist (bespoke bootmaker) Craig Scott to see if he could design some shoes that could fit over Helena's AFOs and allow her to do the same activities as her friends.

Craig went one step further. He designed a pair of custom-made boots that look similar to regular school shoes, but also meet all of Helena's needs in terms of support and balance. The boots are the first pair of shoes Helena has owned.

"Unlike the AFOs which Helena had previously, her new boots are waterproof and they meet the school's criteria to have shoes on your feet. They mean Helena can integrate more with the other children and be part of the classroom," Craig says.

THE DIFFERENCE THE BOOTS HAVE MADE

Jamie is thrilled to have found Craig and Northcott's Orthotics and Custom Footwear service. She says with the custom-designed boots, Helena's overall experience at school will improve. The boots mean Helena's physical, social and educational needs will be met.

"The boots are less conspicuous than her AFOs. Shoes come in all shapes and sizes so these boots will be one less difference to be pointed out, talked about or stared at for Helena. They will help her to blend in at school," Jaime says.

"Helena's father, Jacob, and myself, want her to grow up the best way we can enable her to. We're going to empower her with everything we can. We hope she takes everything we've given her and goes on to do great things."



**“I’m just so happy we
found the right device
and communication
software for Noah.”**

Poh Bwee Heng, Noah’s Northcott Speech Pathologist





Giving Noah a voice

Nine-year-old Noah has been non-verbal since birth. For most of his life, he has communicated using gestures and pointing at picture cards his mother stuck to the back of a door in their house. However, since learning to use a communication device with a speech output, Noah has been surprising his mother, teachers and even his Northcott Speech Pathologist with his capabilities and determination.

NORTHCOTT'S SUPPORT

When Northcott Speech Pathologist, Poh Bwee Heng started working with Noah, she saw the benefit of introducing him to a communication system that would increase his vocabulary and empower him to make his own choices.

"We trialled the communication software LAMP – Language Acquisition through Motor Planning – and Noah responded well to that. We also trialled different devices to find one suited to Noah's eyesight and dexterity. Then we put in an application with the National Disability Insurance Scheme to purchase the device," Poh Bwee explains.

When the device arrived, Poh Bwee provided support to Noah, his mum and his other support networks on how to use it in daily routines, such as asking for food or asking to do activities.

"We started with Noah using the device to ask for things he likes, then we added more vocabulary as he progressed. Noah needs to remember a pattern to find the words he wants, then he taps on the sentence and the device will repeat the sentence," Poh Bwee says.

NOAH'S ACHIEVEMENTS

"Noah has definitely found his voice. Before he was pointing at the picture cards, but there was a lot of frustration because he couldn't express what he really wanted to say, because the pictures were limited," Poh Bwee says.

"Now I can see his character because he insists on things. He is a lot more persistent and strong-willed. He is now able to assert himself."

Poh Bwee says Noah uses his device in a range of scenarios, including at home to ask for food, at school with his teachers and at the playground with his support worker. He is forming short sentences and building his vocabulary.

HOW NOAH'S MOTHER FEELS

Noah's mother Jackie was surprised by how quickly Noah learnt to use the device, what he knows and is now capable of.

"Noah is evaluated as being very severely developmentally delayed so I've always had low expectations of what he may be capable of.

"He is always very energetic, upbeat and happy, but he gets frustrated when he can't communicate things properly. I tend to underestimate what he knows and what he can do, so he constantly surprises me.

"Having the device has opened my eyes to him being able to learn a lot more. It has helped him to be able to progress a lot faster. I see he definitely has more potential," she says.

1,000+

CHILDREN AND
ADULTS SUPPORTED

Northcott's Therapy team of physiotherapists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists support children and adults with disability to build their strength, skills, confidence and independence.



A volunteering role made for Liam

A volunteering role at Sydney Tramway Museum is giving Liam real life work experience while laying the tracks for future job prospects and greater independence.

GAINING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES

When Liam started attending Northcott's School Leaver Employment Service (SLES), he was shy and insecure. Although he was gaining skills and was open to opportunities, supporting Liam to find a work experience placement suited to his personality and abilities was challenging.

"Liam has many sensory issues. He has struggled a lot to find work experience that he liked. He wasn't interested in anything customer facing because he doesn't have those skills, and anything that was hands-on he didn't really like," explains Stephen Reynolds, Northcott's Program Advisor for SLES Wollongong.

"We placed Liam in a few gardens, but he didn't like that. We also sent him to a warehouse, but he felt a little ostracised there."

When Northcott learnt that what Liam really wanted to do was work at the train station, staff started exploring options that could support him to reach that goal in the future.



“Liam comes back from the Tramway Museum much more talkative and motivated, which means he is happy. He has grown in confidence and independence.”

Nicole, Liam's mother

A VOLUNTEERING ROLE THAT FIT

After a staff member reached out to Sydney Tramway Museum, Liam was accepted for a volunteering role.

With his Northcott support worker, Liam travels by train every Wednesday from Wollongong to Loftus to complete his three-hour shift. He enjoys being around the trams and interacting with the other people. Liam's mother, Nicole, couldn't be happier with how it has worked out.

“Liam has always had an interest in trains and trams, anything transport. He is also a bit of a history buff so this volunteering experience combines all these interests,” she says.

“Liam cleans the trams and displays, and in the downtime he enjoys the conversations with the other men, listening to their stories of the olden days. He is also being exposed to different age groups who visit the museum, from school groups to grandparents with their grandchildren.



“It engages Liam to be productive and motivated and may open other opportunities in the future. The Tramway Museum has also welcomed and accepted Liam for who he is so I'm forever thankful for that,” Nicole says.

HOW LIAM HAS BENEFITTED

Nicole and Stephen have both noticed a change in Liam over the six months he has been volunteering.

Stephen says Liam is happier and the weekly routine has given him more responsibility and motivation.

“His personality has really changed. He is a lot happier and he is sleeping better. He is working with different support workers who he doesn't know – which is great for him,” Stephen says.

Liam's mum Nicole is grateful for the support and persistence from Northcott to find a match for Liam.

“Northcott's support has helped Liam build his confidence and become more independent, especially with travelling on public transport. He is having a real life opportunity to develop his social, self-regulation and work skills.

“When his support worker couldn't attend one day at the last minute, Liam didn't want to miss his day at the museum so he independently caught a bus and a train (which includes changing lines) from Wollongong to Loftus and back,” Nicole explains.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR LIAM

COVID-19 restrictions permitting, Liam plans to keep volunteering at Sydney Tramway Museum, while building his social skills and independence. His Northcott support workers are continuing to support him to travel independently by public transport to and from the museum. He is also learning cooking and other lifestyle skills to support him to move out of home whenever he's ready.

Thank you to Sydney Tramway Museum for giving Liam a go!

I-Art: creating more than art

Over a period of almost three months, 25 young adults from Northcott's Everyday Life Skills programs in Western Sydney took part in I-Art. This tailored art program offered them the chance to create artworks while participating in workshops, guided learning and social outings. The artists' favourite creations were publicly exhibited. The artists chose to put almost half of their works on sale.

WHAT I-ART WAS ALL ABOUT

I-Art enabled the participants to connect with their creative potential and feel a sense of belonging, essential for a healthy productive life. The project supported confidence building, and contributed to greater physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of participants.

Through a series of community based workshops, the participants developed their artistic skills and talent by exploring techniques and mediums.



“Social skills, teamwork and new friendships blossomed. Anxieties faded, and confidence grew in the safe environment created.”

**Jewely Ivсан,
Northcott Product Designer**



THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT

Northcott Product Designer and organiser of the program, Jewely Ivsan says: "The most rewarding outcomes for me were the less tangible, very human elements of personal growth. Motivated by a curiosity to participate in something fun, the participants organically built upon their character strengths through the distraction of the creative process.

"A stand-out highlight was the pure awe, appreciation of beauty and perspective the excursions to the art galleries generated.

"I am immensely proud to have been an observer as these individuals flourished and developed in ways that have spilled positively back into everyday life. The excitement and enthusiasm remains well after the exhibition has ended."

WHAT WAS INVOLVED

I-Art supported participants to attend group workshops led by art teachers from TAFE NSW, visit two art galleries and choose to take part in organising their very own art exhibition. The aim was to overcome barriers to participation for people with disability.

During the workshops, participants explored a wide range of art mediums from watercolours, acrylics, digital art, sewing, ceramics and photography. Each person was able to explore their own art direction and creativity, while working on up to three artworks throughout the program. To provide inspiration through new experiences, the participants visited exhibitions at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and Art Gallery of NSW – an experience some participants had never had the opportunity to do before.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARNT

- New art skills
- Team work
- Working to deadlines
- Planning and organisation
- Leadership skills
- Communication
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Joy of art

OUTCOMES

25 I-ART PARTICIPANTS

75 ARTWORKS CREATED

11 CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

4 INSPIRATIONAL ART-RELATED EXCURSIONS

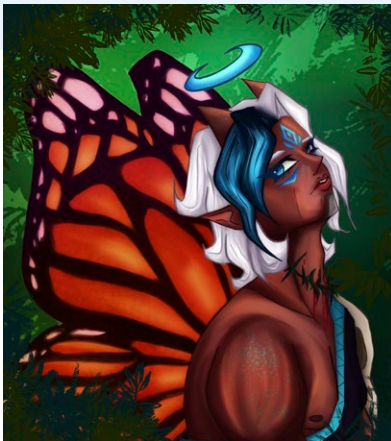
2 WEEK EXHIBITION

I-Art was created by Northcott and funded by the NSW Government's Youth Opportunities program.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS THOUGHT

"[The program] helped me make friends and think about my art in more creative ways. Being able to make new friends was the best part. I think they are going to be lifelong friends."

Madison



"I discovered just how fun, enjoyable, relaxing and non-stressful creating art can be. I discovered a new interest in creating sculpture with wire, recycled objects and working with clay."

Melissa





"I joined I-Art because I really love art and I love painting. I want to get better. I thought the group sessions with TAFE worked really well. I especially loved learning about watercolours because I didn't know how to do it."

Imogen



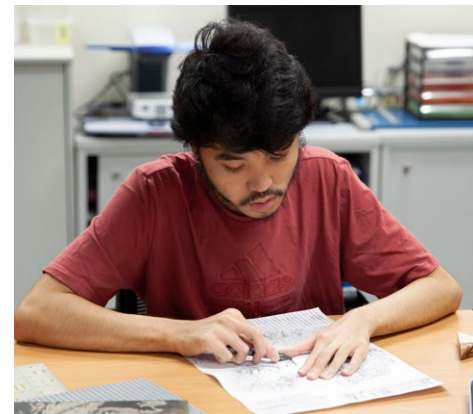
"I joined I-Art because I want to learn and I want to make money for myself. I want to build my skills. I learnt dot painting, drawing, sewing and different things."

Jamie



"I-Art was a very good opportunity. I feel pretty privileged, honoured and good about it."

Josh



Check out the artists' journey with I-Art. Scan the QR code to watch the video.



“Supporting and truly working with our customers to assist them to explore what gives them purpose and meaning is what gets me out of bed each day.”

Vicki Smyth, Northcott Taree Service Coordinator



Going above and beyond

A PASSIONATE STAFF MEMBER

Northcott Taree Service Coordinator Vicki Smyth has worked in the disability sector for many years. She first met Emma as a teenager. Years later, Vicki connected Emma and her family with Northcott. Vicki is committed to supporting Emma “to be the best version of Emma she chooses to be.” However, she never anticipated this would mean supporting Emma to navigate the sudden loss of her father.

When Vicki learned that Emma’s father had passed away in an accident, she knew she had to do whatever she could to support the family.

“Naturally, my heart sank when I heard about Emma’s father. My immediate thought was to ensure Emma would be supported with the most relevant and suitable supports she needed,” Vicki says.

“It was a delicate situation with complexities. I knew it would be important for Emma to maintain consistency and regularity, knowing her world was about to take a sudden, dramatic and life-changing turn.

“I also knew Northcott could and would be responsive in a flexible and sensitive way.”

WHAT VICKI DID

Vicki worked with Emma’s mother, Michelle to make a plan for how Northcott could support both Emma and her extended family as they dealt with their grief.

“Initially we provided 24/7, one-on-one support for Emma, while her mother needed to do what she needed to do. We did whatever we could to get Emma through that time and help her process the information,” Vicki says.

“We knew this would be a slow journey for all. We tried to identify the challenges as well as the opportunities. From a formal perspective, we wanted to ensure our supports were going to meet Emma’s needs.”

Vicki connected Emma to Northcott Therapist, Luka Larder, with whom Emma already had a close relationship. The team found a counsellor who was able to support Emma through her grief. Vicki also worked with Emma’s Northcott Support Coordinator to get extra funding and connect Emma with other services.

“Monitoring the welfare and wellbeing of our staff was also a key concern. I wanted to provide the opportunity for them to debrief and reflect on what was going on.”

At the same time as supporting Emma through her grief, Vicki and her team were also supporting Emma to move into supported accommodation with Northcott. Emma moved in March 2020 and couldn’t be happier. Since then, with Northcott’s support, Emma has set-up her own cupcake baking business and is working towards finding paid employment.

A REWARDING OUTCOME

While Northcott continues to support Emma to manage her ongoing grief and work towards her goals, Vicki says seeing the change in Emma has been extremely rewarding.

“With Northcott’s support, Emma has become more independent and confident. She has learnt a range of new skills and is making better choices for herself,” Vicki says.

“Seeing Emma so happy and content gives me a fulfilling feeling. We – the Northcott team – are a fair slice of Emma’s life. To observe and recognise the value we add to her life and how it makes a difference is why we go to work. It has a beautiful domino effect for her family and friends.

“Being from a small town where people still remember and miss Emma’s father and wonder how the family are coping, it’s special to hear conversations about how much Emma is shining, looking great and appears to be so happy.”

Northcott has 2,617 staff members. 93% work directly with customers. For more about our workforce and how we support staff, visit www.northcott.com.au/ourimpact



A new home for Ali



ABOUT ALI

About six years ago, Ali started spending weekends at Northcott's Respite house in Ashmont, Wagga Wagga. Growing up as the youngest in a large family, she enjoyed the company at the house. Northcott staff got to know Ali and her family well.

While the respite weekends were a success, Ali's parents had decided that there could never be a suitable and safe long-term housing option for their daughter outside the family network. Ali has cerebral palsy, physical disabilities, profound intellectual disability and bilateral moderate hearing loss.

"Years ago we had abandoned all ideas of Ali being cared for by anyone but family because she's non-verbal, her needs are so high and she is so innocent and vulnerable. The levels of trust required were way too high to entrust her to other people's care," her mother, Marg says.

Then, out of the blue, Northcott rang Marg to offer Ali a place in a disability home where she would be "completely happy and completely safe".

"This wasn't just randomly putting Ali's name down and waiting for the first group home that comes up. This was an offer from a person who knows Ali really well and who I know and trust," Marg says.

120+

PROPERTIES ACROSS NSW

Northcott supports hundreds of people like Ali to live in supported accommodation across NSW.

THE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

For several years Northcott had been managing a disability home in Wagga Wagga and supporting three women to live together. When the family of one of the residents decided to purpose-build a house for their daughter and her housemates, they asked Northcott to provide the support – and entrusted them to find a fourth woman to join the home.

Ali's name came to the top of the list.

HOW IT HAPPENED

Having never spoken to Northcott about disability housing for Ali, Marg says the opportunity only happened because of Northcott's care and knowledge of Ali, and the family who was building the new home.

"I'm pretty confident that the Northcott staff had a sense that we weren't looking to place Ali in a group home because we couldn't let her go. But I'm also really confident that when they understood what kind of person was needed to occupy that last room in that house, there were so many reasons why Ali came to the top of the list. It really was the Northcott staff in Wagga Wagga following their instincts and having that understanding.

"Without those connections, without Northcott staff knowing all that, it would never have happened," Marg says.



SUPPORT FROM NORTHCOTT

Once it was decided that Ali would move into the home, Northcott Support Coordinator, Adriana supported Marg to get the NDIS funding Ali needed. There were lots of challenges to overcome, assessments to conduct and reports to submit before the funding was finally approved.

Northcott also supported Ali with her transition, coordinating visits and short overnight stays to ensure she was comfortable with the home and her housemates.

After 10 months of preparation, Ali moved into her new home in June.

For Marg and the rest of her family, seeing Ali happy and safe is more than they ever imagined.

"It's an enormous weight lifted off our shoulders. I was always quite concerned that when Ali's dad and I could no longer care for her, then that responsibility would have to shift to her brothers and sisters. My relief is for all of them, her dad and myself.

"This has changed not only Ali's life, but everyone she knows. We don't have to worry anymore because she is in a home for life where she is going to be safe."

"I really do believe she is happy and completely safe. This would never have happened without Northcott and their knowledge and care for Ali."

Marg, Ali's mother



HOUSING



THERAPY



The little moments that matter



A group of Northcott customers living in our supported accommodation service in Bowral have more choice and independence throughout their day.

WHAT IS SMALL THINGS?

Small Things was developed by Northcott Innovation with the goal of improving interactions between frontline staff and customers. Through the little connections that happen every day, customers have more opportunities to be independent and communicate their choices.

Northcott Innovation developed a model where final year allied health students become part of a Northcott household over a six to eight-week period — observing, interacting and supporting customers and staff.

“Rather than a therapist coming in, doing an assessment or some sessions and then leaving, we decided to embed the students in the home every day over a longer period,” explains Samantha Frain from Northcott Innovation.

Northcott partnered with the University of Sydney to invite speech pathology students to participate in the project as part of their clinical placement.

“Small Things came up with ideas where we could give our customers more choice and more independence. It highlighted what our customers are capable of through showing us a different view.”

Samantha Truong, Northcott Service Coordinator

"The frontline staff who are experts in disability support, and the allied health students who have a different skillset and knowledge base, work together to come up with different ways to do the little things that matter with customers. The students are then clinically supervised by a Northcott Therapist who also visits the home," she explains.

"In Bowral, we recognised the customers could be a little bit more independent in the community and participate more around the house. We saw an opportunity to take the house from good to great."

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR BOWRAL

Northcott's Bowral house is home to five customers, all with complex support needs. The allied health students got to know each customer's abilities and habits and, working with the support staff, suggested small changes or tools that could improve each customer's day.

Jon – more choice and control with his own request cards

Jon loves to have lunch at the local RSL, but he won't always make decisions for himself. Having his own customised photo request cards now means Jon can tell his support workers what he wants and order it for himself.



7 NORTHCOTT HOMES HAVE PARTICIPATED IN SMALL THINGS SO FAR.

Annette – better communication now everyone knows her signs

Annette has a severe hearing impairment and is non-verbal. When she was a young child, she developed her own sign language with her sister. Although she learnt Auslan later in life, the signs she now uses are a mixture of both Auslan and her own individual signs. Having access to picture cards that accurately represent each of Annette's signs now means her support workers can consistently communicate with her in a way she understands.

Pete – Ageing his way

Pete's team have always supported his love of music, but Pete's skills and abilities are shifting as he gets older. Small Things created a video-based communication profile, so everyone supporting him can easily understand how he shows what he likes and dislikes, and what to do to make sure he maintains his independence.

Arthur – sharing his passion using his new communication board

Arthur is passionate about LEGO. He also has a hearing impairment which can impact his ability to interact with others. A specially designed LEGO communication board has now made it easier for Arthur to chat to other people and share his love of LEGO.

Michael – greater independence when shopping through picture based request cards

Michael loves going out in his local community, but sometimes others have trouble understanding what he wants. Having picture request cards of his favourite items to buy (chocolate, hot chips and a coke) now means Michael can order and purchase exactly what he wants without assistance.

**NI is Northcott's innovation company.
More info at www.northcottinnovation.com.au**



Pedalling to greater independence



Donations from individuals and partners, plus funding from community and government grants help us to provide services and programs that are not covered by NDIS funding. These programs, like **Wheels4Life**, give people with disability the chance to take part in activities they may not normally have access to. These opportunities allow them to grow in confidence, gain more independence and learn new skills.

For more about the impact supporters make to our work, visit www.northcott.com.au/ourimpact

Thirty-five-year-old Ben hadn't ridden a bicycle for about 30 years before participating in Northcott's **Wheels4Life** program in Tamworth. He's now riding a two-wheeled bike by himself and feeling more independent!

"Ben has not only learnt to ride a bike again, he's also learnt road and cycle safety and how to setup and pack-up our bikes properly. All of this has given him more confidence and independence."

Michael Ticehurst, Northcott Program Coordinator

Northcott is grateful to the NSW Government for funding Wheels4Life through the Transport for NSW Transport Access Regional Partnerships Grants Program. This funding helped to cover the costs of new trikes, tandem bikes and two-wheeled bikes, as well as a custom-made trailer used to store and transport the bikes.

WHAT IS WHEELS4LIFE?

Wheels4Life is a skills program developed by Northcott to provide people with disability with opportunities to learn and practice cycling skills so they can ride safely on local cycleways and roads. The program also aims to build the confidence of participants and increase their independence.

The first pilot of Wheels4Life ran from October to December 2020. Participants from Northcott's Tamworth Everyday Life Skills program attended one or two sessions a week. A second pilot ran in early 2021.

The 10-week program begins indoors, with participants learning cycle safety rules and riding

on stand-still exercise bikes and pedestal bikes. The program then moves outdoors with participants using tandem bikes, trikes and solo bikes – depending on confidence and skill level. Activities to build skills and confidence include navigating traffic cones and racing each other. The group also spends time at a traffic safety bike path, learning about stop signs and other traffic rules so they can prepare for cycling on bike paths and in the wider community. Participants are supported by a team of support workers and everyone chips in with the setup and pack-up of bikes. Participants unable to ride a bike are encouraged to do the cycling drills in their own wheelchairs, use hand cycles, and to take on other roles such as time-keeper, so that everyone feels included.

WHAT BEN ACHIEVED

When he was five years old, Ben fell off his bike and lost all his confidence with cycling. By the end of Wheels4Life, Ben was able to safely and independently ride a two-wheeled bike on a supervised track.

He started on a stand-still exercise bike, before upgrading to a pedestal tandem and then a pedestal two-wheeled solo bike ridden indoors. When the program was moved outdoors, Ben rode a trike before progressing to a tandem bike with a support worker, and eventually a solo two-wheeled bicycle.

"The trike was good. It was very fun. Riding [the tandem] with [support worker] Georgia was fun. Now I can ride by myself. It was exciting. It made me feel good [to ride by myself]," Ben says.

Now that he has new cycling skills, Ben says he feels "more independent" and wants to ride "anywhere". He wants to ride with his friends, Paul and Jock, who also participated in Wheels4Life.

"I want to go places on my bike with my friends," Ben says. "It is fun, you can exercise and go on outings on your bike."



FUNDRAISING



OUTCOMES

\$150,410

RAISED

35

VOLUNTEERS

328

DONORS

10k+

PEOPLE REACHED ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Check out our video
for all the action on
the day!

Giving Tuesday

Northcott held its first Giving Tuesday on 1 December 2020. We set a target of raising \$100,000 in 24 hours to support children with communication challenges, like Sabah, to get the therapy support they need to build their skills and confidence. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the whole Northcott community of supporters, partners, volunteers and staff, we smashed our target, raising more than \$150,000!

HOW IT WORKED

Northcott Giving Tuesday was a digitally-driven fundraising and engagement campaign where every dollar raised in the 24 hour period was matched and doubled by generous corporate supporters. Our heartfelt thanks to The Baresque Group, WEM, Terry Shields Toyota, KPMG and The Kraftsmen Property Maintenance. We couldn't have done it without you!

The Fundraising team reached out to our staff and donor community to encourage them to donate and share our campaign widely.

On the day, we had an energetic team of volunteers including staff, people we support and partners processing donations and writing thank you cards.



SABAH'S STORY

Sabah was the face of our Giving Tuesday campaign. Sabah has Oral-Facial-Digital Syndrome and Global Development Delay. She has a severe tongue-tie, which stops her from forming words and makes it difficult to chew solid food.

To communicate, Sabah uses gestures, visuals and vocalisations. She often feels frustrated and distressed because others may not understand her. Like many other children with disability, before starting school Sabah needed therapy to boost her confidence and skills with using a communication device.

Sabah's NDIS support covers speech and occupational therapy but not group therapy which Sabah needs to make her more confident using her device with kids her age.

Sabah's Northcott Speech Pathologist, Candice is very passionate about supporting children with disability to get all the support they need. "The more time we get to spend with Sabah, the more confident she gets with her device. Our aim is for her not just to use it with her teachers, but also use it to communicate at home, in the playground and wherever she goes."

WHERE THE FUNDS WENT

Funds raised on Giving Tuesday have allowed more children to access our group therapy sessions and supported day trips. These are additional supports that are not covered by NDIS funding. Opportunities like these make children feel empowered and included rather than singled out and different.

Thank you to everyone who made our first Giving Day such a success!

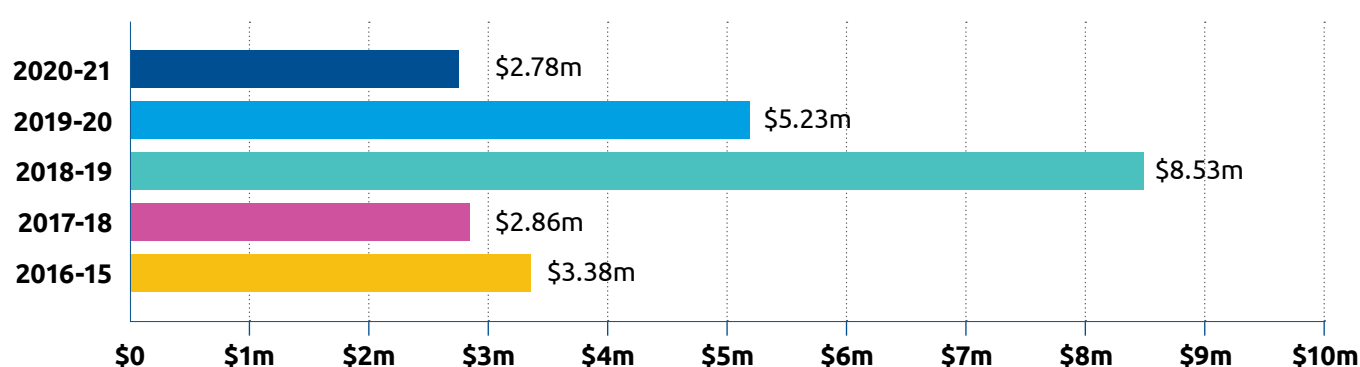
Financial summary

FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	2020-21 (\$ '000)	2019-20 (\$ '000)	2018-19 (\$ '000)	2017-18 (\$ '000)	2016-17 (\$ '000)
Income & Expenditure					
Operating Revenue**	216,864	206,335	192,436	145,920	72,911
Operating Expenditure	(212,370)	(201,193)	(188,465)	(145,862)	(75,053)
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	4,494	5,142	3,971	58	(2,142)
Financial Income/(Loss)	9,130	389	4,322	1,186	1,884
Capital Grants Income	—	—	—	—	5
Estates & Bequests	322	2,847	6,765	1,024	1,314
Other Non operating Income/(Loss)	627	184	243	214	103
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	14,573	8,562	15,301	2,482	1,164
Assets & Liabilities					
Total Assets	133,930	150,021	129,098	106,967	57,944
Total Liabilities	51,436	82,101	69,739	62,911	17,048
Total Equity	82,494	67,920	59,359	44,056	40,896
Cash Flows					
Net Cash (used in)/ from Operating Activities	(15,012)	27,002	11,043	30,683	(4,271)
Net Cash (used in)/ from Investing Activities	14,610	(27,430)	(34,892)	(1,560)	3,171
Cash and Cash equivalents at 30 June	9,470	9,872	10,300	34,149	5,026
Ratios					
Current Assets/Current Liabilities	2.25:1	1.56:1	1.51:1	1.27:1	2.04:1
Total Cost of Services/Total Expenditure	88%	91%	88%	89%	77%

**Operating revenue excludes Revenue from Capital Grant income

TOTAL FUNDRAISING REVENUE (INCLUDING BEQUESTS) (\$)



Total fundraising income shows all funds (cash) received within the year.

94% of our total income comes from Government funding (includes capital grants)

82% of our total income is spent on delivering services

See www.northcott.com.au for the full Financial Report 2020-21.

Our members

NOVEMBER 2021

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Acknowledgements

We receive donations, financial support, sponsorships, in-kind and pro bono gifts, support and advocacy from our members, other organisations, individuals and communities. This support is crucial in enabling Northcott to provide the additional services and supports people with disability need to achieve their goals. While we cannot acknowledge all contributions here, we are extremely grateful for all the support we receive.

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Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales

Northcott acknowledges the Traditional Custodians for 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.

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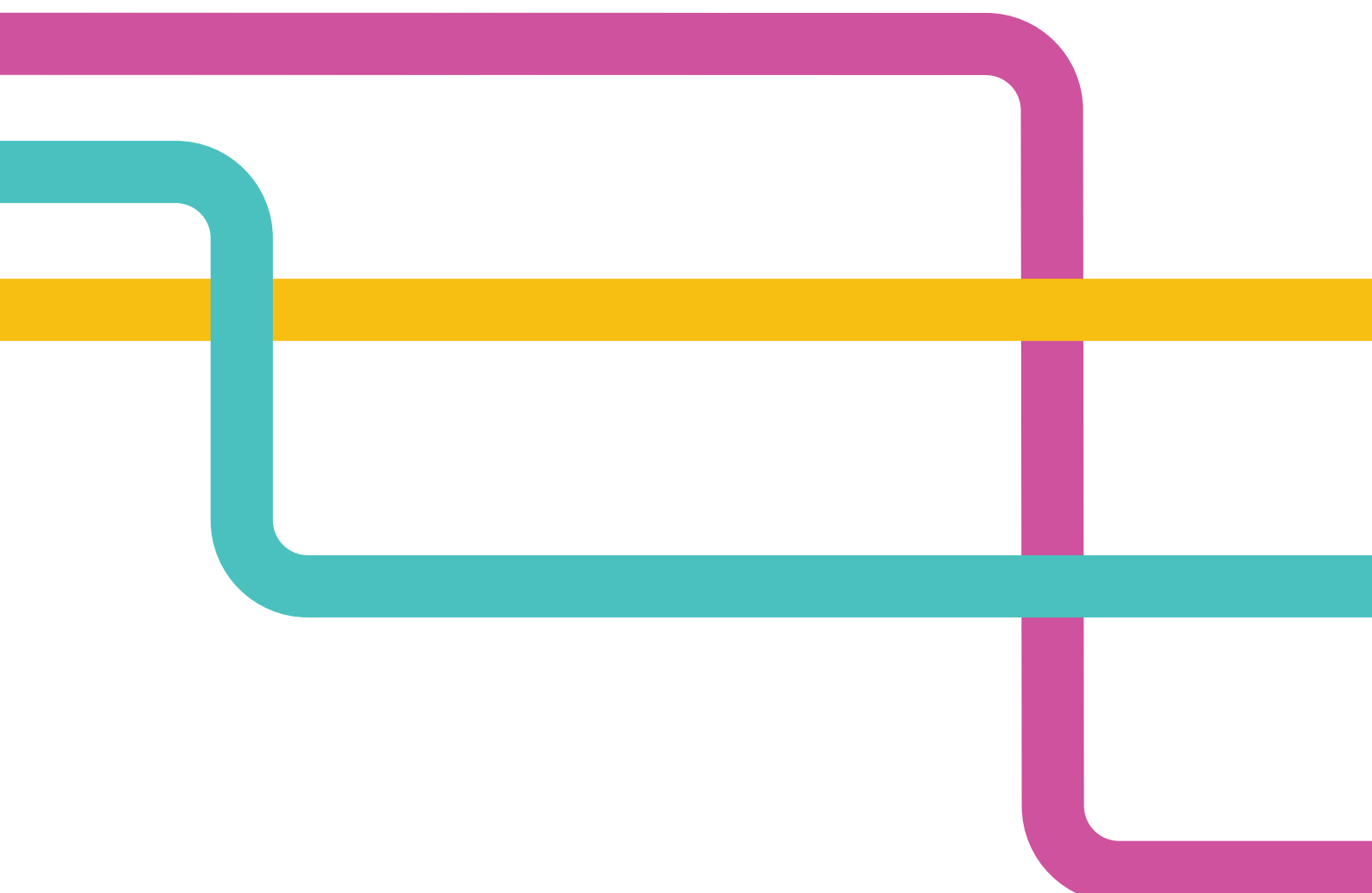


Morgan Stanley




the social
STORYTELLERS





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