

MARCH 2019

Chair Chat

with Prof. David Gilchrist



Nulsen Group: Planning and Progress

In the [May 2018 Chair Chat](#) I outlined Nulsen's Strategic Plan (2018-2023) had been approved by our Board of Directors. Prior to this in February 2018, the Board reviewed the proposed outcomes within the first six months of implementing the strategic plan and provided the following key directions:

- The organisation needs to be of a sufficient size and scope in order to stand and survive independently;
- Market share will not be the primary consideration of Nulsen's position within the broader disability sector;
- Consideration needs to be provided to the issues of increasing the range of service offerings and the geographic location of services; and
- We need to 'stress test' the impact on our culture as this will remain a key concern in any future growth strategy.

The strategic plan contains strategies to protect Nulsen's core services ahead of the full introduction and implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), while at the same time developing services to enable the organisation to develop and grow. It is emphasised that the service strategies outlined are closely linked to the crucial housing strategy. The strategic plan presented five potential areas for growth, namely the future provision of:

- Housing services;
- Services to children and young people;
- Mental health services;
- Justice services; and
- Mergers and/or acquisitions.

Key Points

- **Good progress is being made in the key target areas of the current Strategic Plan.**
- **Government stimulus is required to foster the development of more social housing options.**
- **Planning and constant renewal will assist to cope with the challenges of the future.**

Fast forward to March 2019 and Nulsen Group is currently participating in significant change that requires the implementation of a range of thoughtful, proactive and assertive strategies which can be broken down into two stages:

Stage 1:

1. Propose options to the state government in order to stimulate development of the required housing capacity to meet accommodation needs of people living with disabilities.
2. Expand Nulsen's services into the mental health area to reinforce its attempts to develop services in partnership with another local service provider.

Stage 2:

1. Develop a more specialised service for children with disabilities who are in great need.
2. Commencing during 2019/20, tie this strategy to the general expansion of disability related services that will continue as the key platform of service provision in future.

The following results of the recent review by the Nulsen Board of Directors in February 2019 indicate that progress is being made in all areas, particularly in mergers and acquisitions. Highlights include:

1. The acquisition of two Adventist Care sites (Milford and Millstead) which have a total of five properties combined and currently service up to 16 residents. This project is timed for imminent completion with a project review and outcomes summary to feature in next month's Chair Chat.
2. Outcare's transition to Nulsen Group which is currently in progress with an estimated completion time of June 2019. A summary of this process and outcomes to feature in the August 2019 Chair Chat.
3. Ongoing progress with the development of mental health services, through the current relationship with Richmond Wellbeing relating to housing options in Queens Park and Kelmscott. Nulsen staff are working with the Mental Health Commission, Department of Communities and the National Disability Insurance Agency on behalf of an additional six persons with a range of complex support needs relating to psychosocial disability. The proposed tender process of the Mental Health Commission originally timed for January 2019 is yet to be announced. Nulsen Group is ready to proceed with a considered response to the tender once it is advertised.
4. The area of greatest disappointment is the lack of progress with the development of a

comprehensive social housing strategy. Despite a substantial number of follow-up actions, there has been little direction and no budget allocation from both the Federal and State Governments. We trust that the situation will change with some positive announcements in the budget statements and the forward estimates for the 2019/20 financial year. I will report on this issue further in May.

It was recommended that progress on the strategic plan is monitored by Board members on a six monthly basis. In the near future we will review the plan to account for the renewed structure of Nulsen Group.

"If you have a plan ... a structured approach, then it's a far better base to work from." John Langoulant, State Special Inquirer, February 2018



Professor David Gilchrist BA BBus PhD FCA FAIC is a chartered accountant and a historian. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Notre Dame Australia and is currently a Professor at the University of Western Australia as well as the Public Sector Accounting and Disclosure Research Cluster. Over his 25-year career, David has held many senior roles in the not-for-profit, commercial and public sectors. He has taught at several universities across the globe, sits as Chairman on multiple boards and has published several key national reports. Achievements include: working as the Assistant Auditor General WA, the Associate Dean of the School of Business, University of Notre Dame Australia, Chairman to Nulsen Disability Services, and the Kimberley Individual and Family Support Association. David produced the "Australian Charities 2013" and the "Australian National Costing and Pricing Framework" issued jointly with National Disability Services. He is widely published as an academic and a journalist. [See David's full profile here.](#)