

MAY 2018

# Chair Chat

with Prof. David Gilchrist



Over recent months these articles have focused on the intended growth within the disability sector due to the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The implementation process stimulated the development of a new Strategic Plan for the Association that was presented to the Board at the April meeting.

The Strategic Plan 2018 - 2023 was developed in consultation with a number of stakeholders. It provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of the implementation of the NDIS in Australia and particularly within Western Australia. It is evident that a number of disability service providers across the nation are challenged by various aspects of the implementation. It is also evident that due to the delayed entry into the scheme that service providers in WA have been shielded from the full impact of the NDIS processes and particularly the national pricing regime. Now that the decision has been made by the State Labor Government to transition services into the national scheme these impacts will be felt and the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years will be crucial for the disability sector within this state.

The key directions provided by the Board of Directors to the planning team included:

- Nulsen Disability Services needs to be of sufficient size and scope in order to stand and survive as an independent entity.
- Market share will not be considered the primary measure of Nulsen's position within the broader disability sector.
- Further consideration will be provided to increasing the range of service offerings and consider carefully the geographic location of services.
- Attention to and 'stress testing' the impact on

the Association's culture will remain a key consideration during the implementation of any strategy into the future.

Board members welcomed the growth initiative along with the stepwise changes required over the next few years. They emphasised that the reasons for pursuing growth need to be clearly explained to staff members, participants, family and other key stakeholders.

It is clear that Nulsen Disability Services is relatively well placed to take advantage of the current environment. The past five years has been a time of extensive growth, the organisational culture remains robust and there are a number of mechanisms in place to monitor the current growth environment. There are many benefits to participating in the growth environment although there are also a number of concomitant risks, including the external policy and funding environment. The consistent application of policy by the Commonwealth Government and the national agency will be essential into the future. Nulsen is participating in a change of generational proportions and one that will require the implementation of thoughtful, proactive and assertive strategies.

The strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan aim to protect Nulsen's core services ahead of the full introduction of the Scheme in 2020. Following a number of workshops and internal discussions, the

following key strategies were proposed to proceed with new service options in a series of planned stages.

The first stage is to propose to the State Labor Government some viable scenarios to stimulate the development of the required housing capacity to meet the future accommodation needs of people living with disabilities. This essential strategy underpins the remaining plans.

It was recommended that Nulsen expand services into the mental health area from July 2018 to reinforce the initial attempts to develop services in partnership with another local service provider. The budgetary investment required for the next two years was approved in principle by Board members.

The next stage will be to develop a more specialised service for children with disabilities who are in need. This strategy is most likely to commence in 2019/20 and will be tied to the general expansion of disability related services, that will remain as the key platform of service provision during the entire period under consideration.

The plan also recommends the considered analysis

and careful assessment of any potential service acquisitions that may arise over the next two to three years.

In an environment of high growth combined with the desire to continue to provide a high quality of service to as many people with high and complex support needs as possible, the executive team is committed to following the general directions outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The Board members will regularly monitor ongoing progress and a formal review will occur prior to June 2020.

[Click here](#) for a condensed version of the plan.



**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.](#)