

JULY 2018

# Chair Chat

with Prof. David Gilchrist



Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (2008, 2018 and 2028).

At a Forum held on Thursday 14 June entitled 'The NDIS Rollout in WA: How will it work?', Martin Laverty a Board Member of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIS), relayed the following anecdote.

## 2008

During 2008, when Mr Laverty was Chairperson of a large non-government disability service provider in New South Wales, he asked his senior executives to find the place in the world with the best disability services. He committed to send a number of these executives to that place on a study tour.

After a fortnight, they returned and informed him that their research revealed the place with the best services was Western Australia. With its local area coordination services, its state-wide specialist services, combined with a relationship based contracting approach in a vibrant non-government sector, WA was determined to be the place they should travel to. Subsequently a number of executives came here for a two-week study tour.

## 2018

Fast forward ten years to 2018, if they conducted the same research would these executives find the same quality of services in WA as in 2008? What do you think based on your experience?

## 2028

Projecting forward ten years' time to 2028, after the services in WA have been fully transferred and exposed to the lowest common denominator of the NDIS, what will be the quality of disability services at that time? Will they be recognisable and spoken of in the same sentence as those that existed in 2008?

Whether they are or not will depend on how hard we

are willing to advocate for the maintenance of high quality services with great outcomes for people living with disabilities. The final choice is ours as we are all in this together.

It is clear from recent discussions with our Board Members that despite the many challenges of the NDIS, Nulsen Disability Services will continue to remain faithful to our governing principles, namely:

### A good life for those we support:

- We believe people with disabilities have the right to dignity and respect, to grow, develop, and pursue their aspirations, the same as other citizens of Australia - even though they may need extra support and education to do so.
- We consider a quality life as one where people participate in their community, gain the respect of others, enjoy meaningful relationships, use skills, exercise choices, and have opportunities to express themselves.

### We are accountable to those we support:

- We are primarily accountable to the people to whom we provide services;
- Then to other important stakeholders including families, employees, friends, advocates, funding organisations, other people with disabilities and the wider community.
- We safeguard and advocate for the well-being of people with disabilities.

### Quality Services:

- We believe a quality service comes out of knowing the person and by responding to his/her changing needs over their lifetime.
- We nurture our staff through training and development, reward and recognition so that they, in turn, can nurture the people we support in the Nulsen way.
- We seek to strengthen Nulsen through the contribution and influence of valued stakeholders.

Despite the challenges of the future, we will remain steadfast and fixed to these governing principles.

I will finish by paraphrasing the words of W E Henley, a nineteenth century poet who lived with a severe disability: *We are still masters of our fate. We still are captains of our souls (Invictus, 1900).*



**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.](#)