

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

40 YEARS OF STRONG FOUNDATIONS



INTERACTION
Empowering People



VISION

To be an organisation of excellence; a growing, flexible and proactive person-centred service.



MISSION

To provide exceptional services for people with disability, primarily those with an intellectual disability, and their support networks. Through person-centred support, we empower people to reach their individual goals and aspirations.



VALUES

- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Openness
- ✓ Person-centred
- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Life-long Learning



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John Lucas

How does an organisation measure its success? The fortieth anniversary celebration demanded Interaction reflect on this, along with its vision, mission, values and culture. These have basically remained unchanged and unchallenged.

The foyer of the new Bella Vista complex displays what Interaction is about. Belief statements to remind and challenge staff daily, guide board members in governance matters and raise the awareness of the people we serve, their families and the general public. Displayed in the adjacent corridor is our history. Strong Foundations, our theme for 2018-2019, were laid down all those years ago by the foundation members whom we acknowledge.

Mediocrity, the lowest common denominator or what is easiest is not part of Interaction's DNA. Striving for quality over the last year has seen an expansion of quality accommodation and associated services, the ongoing growth of Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) services and planned accommodation, staff professional development opportunities such as the e-learning system which are so critical in the zero tolerance of harassment and bullying and recognising human rights (noting that funds are not provided for staff training by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)). Restructuring the Behaviour and Allied Health Services (BAHS) was not an easy decision but necessary to ensure the financial viability of Interaction, a change that will roll out in the 2019-2020 financial year.

Within the Annual Report are many examples of maintaining a focus on the people we serve, also highlighted in the Strategic Plan. Empowering people is reflected in the inspirational personal stories, the Sensory Room, the training room, the Activity Room with its special bathroom facilities, our new building specifically designed for ease of access on the ground floor and the Goal Kicker of the Month Award recognising the achievements of the people we serve.

Through the Governance Committee your board has revised and expanded upon the Risk Register to strengthen measures to endure quality care.

Media reports in recent times have uncovered unscrupulous operators in disability care. The Voice Project undertaken annually by an independent agency, the recent re-accreditation to provide Voluntary Out of Home Care by the Office of the Children's Guardian, and the operation of the Stakeholder Engagement and Well-Being Committees highlight the trust the people we serve and their families as well as the staff have in Interaction. As a values based organisation, Interaction is well prepared for any external or government based scrutiny.



The opening of the new premises at Bella Vista by the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General David Hurley, was and will remain an unforgettable part of Interaction's history. Coinciding with the fortieth anniversary, a memorable and relaxed afternoon was spent with the Governor and his wife and other dignitaries who were all impressed by Interaction's achievements, both past and present.

Strong foundations can only be maintained by the people who support them. Interaction is most fortunate to have such a talented Board of Directors with the knowledge, skills and expertise to ensure exemplary standards in governance and provide sound and measured advice in operational matters.

The past year has not been an easy one for the staff, moving premises and dealing with the challenging and ever-changing demands of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), NDIA, and a significant restructure. Throughout this time, staff remained focused and determined to deliver the quality services required. This is real dedication and commitment.

Interaction is indeed fortunate to have a CEO of the calibre of Craig Moore. His leadership and that of his senior executive has been inspirational.

To the people we serve and their families thank you for your support, encouragement and understanding over this past year.

John Lucas
Chairman

Craig Moore

In last year's Annual Report I spoke about the characteristics of servant leadership. I compared those characteristics with Interaction's values and ethos, and there was great synergy. Interaction is focused on serving people for their own good, forming long-term relationships and encouraging growth. We know that the work we do has an important impact on our staff, on communities and society as a whole, on families, but most importantly on those people we serve. This is the foundation of our organisation and informs all we do in the provision of services.

It has been wonderful working out of our new building. The combination of our fortieth anniversary and the official opening of our building by the Governor of NSW, and future Governor General, David Hurley was brilliant. It was a rite of passage for Interaction to celebrate and build on the strong foundation that our board and staff have worked so hard to achieve over many years. Many thanks to Wendy Hyland for cutting the cake.

We look forward to the coming year as we see plans coming to fruition. Our PWS accommodation plans have progressed slower than anticipated, but, as we had little experience in such matters, we did not know what to expect. We have learned a lot about development applications, councils and property developers!

We have been fortunate to seize other opportunities and have recently begun providing different models of accommodation services. We are also investigating the provision of aged care to people with intellectual disability. This appears to be a gap in service delivery as aged care services do not have the expertise to care for older people with intellectual disability. As we have a small number of people we serve who have this need, we feel we are best placed to continue with their care in a higher supported accommodation model rather than referring them to a nursing home.

Every year I say how Interaction is truly blessed with our board, and we are. Over the last fifteen years we have had great stability with generous and wise people. They have the vision and ability to govern Interaction so our growth is built on our solid foundation as a values based organisation. They are able to effectively and efficiently meet our challenges and goals and they continue to grow the professionalism of our Board and the organisation. We thank them for their dedication and service.

Our Chair, John Lucas has continued his wonderful service to our organisation and to me personally. Our profound thanks to John.

Our staff continue their great service as we have settled



into our new home. However, there have been significant challenges in how we provide services, particularly in our BAHS team. We have introduced a new model in how we deliver services and we look forward to expanding what we provide in the future. The Voice Project will once again be completed and we look forward to the results. The Executive Team have managed their responsibilities with efficiency and calmness. We are most fortunate that we have such committed people.

Finally, to the people we serve. You are the reason we are here. You bring great joy and purpose to our lives.

Craig Moore
Chief Executive Officer

Reflections On The Past Year



John Lucas
Chairperson

The official opening of our new premises at Bella Vista conveniently coincided with the celebration of Interaction's fortieth anniversary to provide a most memorable occasion.

The reception area of this new complex displays a rich source of information about Interaction's mission, vision, values, culture and most importantly our beliefs for all who enter. It serves as a reminder to all staff and board members what is needed to honour the governance and day to day operations of Interaction. At the same time it conveys to the people we serve, their families and those who may wish to join Interaction that we are committed to providing excellent services with quality outcomes.

The corridor beyond displays the proud history of the quality care provided so willingly for people with specific needs. The strong foundations upon which Interaction was established are very much embedded in the culture and exceptional services offered.



Laurie Boxwell

What a fortieth birthday present – a new home!

These milestones give us a chance to reflect and to dream. Reflect on the four decades of caring for and empowering those we serve. Dream of how we continue to do so for the next chapter.

I feel honoured to be part of an organisation with such a heritage and privileged to be part of shaping the future.



Allan Dodd

When I was asked to join the Interaction Board several years ago, I did not imagine that one day one of my grandchildren would need the help of an organisation like Interaction. My grandson Noah was born in 2018 with Down Syndrome, so now the importance of organisations like Interaction has become even closer to my heart. Noah had significant heart issues in the first six months of life but since December 2018, he has begun to overcome those initial setbacks and is now blossoming. He will always have Down Syndrome, but with support from organisations like Interaction, I look forward to watching him lead a fulfilling life.



Michael Fairley

An anxious patient of mine proved to be a hero in an emergency. When I asked how he knew what to do, he replied that he had rehearsed that crisis a hundred times.

The Board has undertaken a risk analysis, looking at as many changes and things that could go wrong as we can anticipate. Then, thinking about whether they can be prevented, their impact mitigated, and what rectification is needed afterwards. As real incidents arise, our planned preparations will be modified on the basis of experience. If we have not thought of that problem already, it will be added to the list. In this way, the Board is preparing Interaction for uncertain times.



Karen Hinton

Since so much of our lives are constantly changing, many of us find great comfort and confidence in anything that lasts and can truly be relied upon. While I have served on the Interaction Board for just nine years so far, Interaction's forty years of empowering people carries great significance to me because of the strong foundation it provides for Interaction's future evolution. Empowering people is in our DNA, and we commit to stay centred on those we serve. We keep striving for quality, not being satisfied with mediocrity or what is easiest. And we won't compromise on acting in the best interests of those we serve because of our heritage as a values based organisation.



Ken Lynch

Consistency, compassion, dependability and innovation are stand-out trademarks which characterise Interaction as it strives to fulfil its mission of person-centred support to the people for whom Interaction's very existence is founded.

Making a real difference in the lives of people who face complex needs is the driving force for our dedicated, loyal and conscientious staff. They readily embrace our selfless service culture which enables extraordinary outcomes to be everyday occurrences.



Craig Moore

The ongoing challenge of navigating the NDIS was, and is, at the forefront of all we have done in the past year. However, we planned for this challenge by building on our solid strategic, financial and personal foundations. Interaction has continued to grow as an organisation in the number of programs we provide, the number of people we serve and the number of staff we employ. Key highlights were moving into our brand new offices, senior staff presenting at international conferences and progressing our plans for worthy, purpose-built accommodation.



Kevin Pike

Another year centred on looking after the people in our care giving them respect and encouragement. The high ethical focus of the staff and the quality care they provide ensures Interaction will continue to be a leader in our field.



Pauline Vamos

Providing services to those most vulnerable in our society is a noble service – and my reason for being on the Board. As directors, our role is to ensure that we provide services in line with community expectations, and that the organisation is sustainable in line with our stakeholder expectations.

I am proud of our diligence in achieving both of these goals, and look forward to our continuous improvement under the NDIS and planned growth in providing fit for purpose accommodation.

Reports

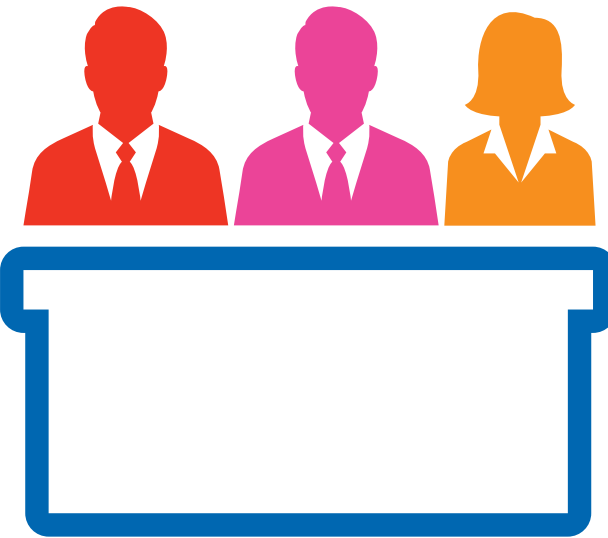
Board Executive Committee

This Committee, consisting of three Board members and the CEO, meets on a needs basis to:

- Guide and assist the CEO on issues that may arise in operational and governance areas,
- Make decisions on urgent matters with Board approval, and
- Discuss and plan recommendations for future Board meetings.

Governance Committee

The year in review was characterised by ever-increasing complexities, regulatory demands and operational risks on the organisation. In response, the Governance Committee set a program of work which commenced with a review of the risk framework and the Board’s risk appetite. The resultant Risk Register is fit for purpose and a welcome business and governance tool. The committee will continue to apply the latest AICD NFP governance standards across the Board’s oversight responsibilities to ensure directors meet their fiduciary duties.



Finance Committee

Interaction’s monthly financial reports are tabled at each Board meeting where directors are free to ask any questions thereon. The Finance Committee meets approximately quarterly, mainly to review and approve the annual budget as prepared by management before it goes to the full Board for approval, to approve the annual financial accounts before our auditor signs off and to meet several other times to monitor progress. As Chairman of the Finance Committee, I also speak with Gurdeep Masson (Financial Controller) on an ad hoc basis. Where possible, we have at least one representative from the ‘front line’ staff attend our meetings so that we can understand what is happening at the ‘coal face’ and they can understand what we are trying to achieve.

NFPs like Interaction need help to overcome numerous obstacles, including dealing with the NDIA (who are also learning how a good NDIS should operate), while maintaining their financial stability and viability. With money being ‘rationed’ by the NDIA, Interaction also needs to maintain a high standard of transparent integrity and support of the people they serve. The staff’s dedication and continual above the line of duty caring for our participants is wonderful to watch and hear about.

It has been my privilege as the Finance Director to continue serving on our Board and when asked, give advice or suggestions to Gurdeep and her finance team. In my opinion, their management of our finances has been very good and they look after the finances as if they were their own.

Allan Dodd
Treasurer

Strategic Planning Committee

Interaction’s Strategic Plan developed in 2017 is assessed, reviewed and evaluated through:

- Ongoing reporting at Board meetings by the executive and committees
- Rigorous evaluation of programs, their successes or the need for further review and adjustment
- Reporting to stakeholders through newsletter items, the Annual Report and the Annual General Meeting
- Reviewing the Plan and affirming the direction set in the plan
- Agreeing to explore the need for Aged Care facilities for people with intellectual disabilities and how Interaction can move into this space.

The Strategic Plan can be found on page 8 of this Report.

Well-Being Committee

The Well-Being Committee has been recently revitalised with the acquisition of new members, and is now composed of Sherilyn Tablada, Philip Drury, Kirstin Rowberry & Yolanda Williams. A key element of the current Well-Being Committee is that its members span three very different divisions within the company - HSP, Direct Support & Office - so ideas on promoting Well-Being don’t just stop with head office, but reach all the way to staff in residential and direct supports.

Current projects in the works include formulating a communal recipe book for staff to access and working on the logistics for a proposal to acquire some indoor plants and ambient music at head office. Ideas reaching beyond the office include but not limited to; flu shot promotional emails, inspirational quotes and the creation of a calendar containing all future important days over the next 12 months so that the Well-Being Committee can plan accordingly. Our aim is to promote Well-Being holistically across all sectors of the company, and provide opportunities to recognise what a great company culture we’re blessed to be a part of.

Marketing Committee

During the environment of Interaction’s first three decades, little active marketing was considered necessary. The last decade, however, has seen enormous change as Interaction moved to accommodate the NDIS. Around 2010, the Board and management of Interaction gave fresh attention to what activities and communications would strengthen Interaction’s opportunity to influence the future favourably for those in our care.

In 2012 the Board determined to create a Marketing Committee with both Board and staff representatives to give the marketing function higher visibility at Board level, make resourcing and accountability of marketing activity more explicit at an operational level, and pro-actively build the Interaction brand in support of our vision and mission.

Within weeks, work was underway to integrate a marketing mindset and radically up-skill and accelerate marketing activities to better understand the needs of those we serve, build the Interaction brand, fund-raise, liaise with government, and improve public relations and media contact, all defined in our first Marketing Plan with a determination to be ready for the new world of the NDIS in July 2013.

The Marketing Committee operated from 2012 to 2017 supporting and developing strategic marketing activities to facilitate Interaction’s smooth transition to the NDIS. Once it was clear that Interaction was ready to appoint a dedicated Marketing Manager, it was unanimously agreed to suspend the Committee and allow the Marketing Manager freedom to drive this operational function. The Marketing Committee remains available to re-convene as a resource for the Marketing Manager when needed.



2019 - 2021

Areas of focus:

People We Serve

Interaction will continue its strong financial practices to ensure longer term financial sustainability.

Interaction will monitor key indicators to ensure the high quality services participants receive is maintained.

Interaction will invest in staff training and education in an unfunded environment.

Interaction will be responsive to the evolving needs of individuals with intellectual disability and work alongside them for the best outcomes now and in the future.

Interaction will give due consideration to growth opportunities and partnerships that benefit the people we serve.

Behaviour & Allied Health Services

Interaction is committed to providing multidisciplinary allied health services that benefit the people we serve.

Interaction will attract and retain a diverse range of high quality allied health professionals.

Interaction will provide BAHS in more locations across North Western Sydney and surrounding areas.

Prader-Willi Syndrome Services (PWS)

Interaction will continue its sector leadership in providing holistic PWS services.

Interaction will invest in the expansion of its existing PWS-specific accommodation.

Interaction will seek interstate opportunities to provide PWS-specific services including clinical, training and accommodation services.



Accommodation and Individual Options (AIO)

Forty years, what an achievement! I can remember my very first day with Interaction, 14 December 1998. At that time, Interaction was based in a small council-owned building in the Balcombe Heights Estate, vast green fields around us and a backyard to enjoy some fresh air at lunch time.

We had one black and white computer to share between the whole team, and a client information system 'Woomera' that by today's standards was a small step above pen and paper, but we were very excited to have the opportunity to be part of this new computerised world.

We had our only female CEO leading us, and even back then it was a wonderful organisation to be a part of, with solid family support and an eye on what opportunities were ahead of us.

Much has changed over the past forty years. In my years with Interaction I have seen a further three CEOs lead Interaction to become the well-respected organisation it is today.

Many of the participants whom I met during my first weeks with Interaction are still with us today. I see this as a firm testament to the quality of staff Interaction has had and still has in its teams.

I am extremely proud of my own teams and their dedication and commitment to the rights of the people we support, I could not undertake my role without them.

The AIO team continues to have three distinct support areas:

- Accommodation and Shared Living
- Support Coordination; and
- Direct Support

It has been very pleasing to see all support areas have grown over the past twelve months.

Maggie Vincent

General Manager Operations



Narara PWS Property

At the time of writing this report our Development Application is sitting with Central Coast Council for approval. Hopefully by the time we meet at our AGM we can tell you that it has been approved and we have a commencement date for the build. On a positive note, two of the three young people with PWS have already relocated to the Central Coast supported by Interaction in readiness for their new purpose built home.

A New Lease On Life For Jennifer

Twelve months ago Jennifer had a bad fall, fracturing her hip. She spent months in hospital, followed by rehab where she remained for a further few months. The allied health team at rehab made attempts over this time to engage Jennifer to regain mobility and strength, but were unsuccessful. It got to the point where the suggested next plan for Jennifer was to transition her into an aged care facility – basically putting her in the “too hard basket”.

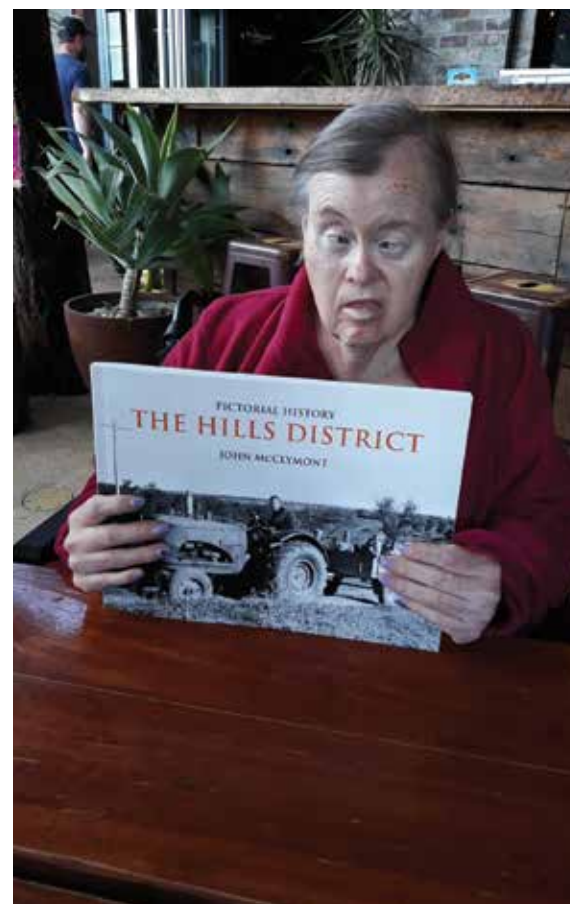
This was devastating news to Jennifer, her family and all of us at Interaction. We made a collaborative decision that we would remain committed to Jennifer and her transition to one of our High Support accommodation houses, as the last thing we wanted for Jennifer was to be placed into aged care. This decision involved Interaction advocating to the NDIS for transitional funds and increase in supports. Our commitment required house modifications – we completely modified the bathroom to a full disability bathroom, widened doorways and modified outdoor areas, making it wheelchair friendly to accommodate Jennifer’s new needs. Interaction arranged for hospital grade equipment, and within just a couple of weeks we had Jennifer transitioned.

Fast forward twelve months and what a year it has been. Kristina and other support staff have worked incredibly hard to support Jennifer in her new environment so that – coupled with intensive therapy and a lot of grit and determination – she can now self-transfer, walk small distances, be

transported in a vehicle, engage in regular exercise, has returned to a day program (which she loves) and has lost a whopping 15kgs! Most importantly though, Jennifer is healthy and happy, surrounded by support and people she cares for, and who care for her.

In a recent NDIS review meeting, Rachel (Senior Manager Accom and Shared Living) and Maggie (GM, Operations) asked Jennifer and her sister if they were happy with everything. They both were, with Jennifer’s sister saying “I couldn’t be happier and I’m so grateful for everything Interaction has done and continues to do for Jennifer”.

What a testament to Kristina (Team Leader) and all the support staff at Jennifer’s home, congratulations to them on the ongoing high quality of work and genuine commitment. Definitely onwards and upwards for Jennifer!



Report

Our accommodation senior staff team has remained stable over the past twelve months, however we have seen an expansion in our accommodation services. This has resulted in the recruitment of two new team leaders and a third Senior Manager Accommodation and Shared Living.

Interaction currently provide accommodation support to eighty individuals aged between 19 and 83, and four individuals over 65 under the Commonwealth Continuity of Support Programme - Specialist Disability Services for Older People (CoS).

Over the past twelve months our Senior Accommodation and Shared Living Manager, Rachel Carey has been working closely with SDA providers to explore new and innovative accommodation options to people with disability.

We are especially excited to see the fruition of our collaboration with the team from AccessAccom which will see Interaction as SIL provider for ten High Physical Support SDA apartments at Sheffield Quarter Penrith. These apartments provide a unique opportunity for people with disability that has only become possible through collaborations such as ours with AccessAccom.

The coming twelve months will see further expansion of accommodation services.



Direct Support

At present, Interaction have a team of three Coordinators of Direct Support. The role of the Coordinator is to liaise with participants and/ or carers to identify and roster staff of their choice to provide a range of direct support services. At present, Interaction is providing direct support to over 140 participants including adults and children. Over the past year, support has been provided to a total of 454 participants.

The past twelve months has seen the introduction of a new position with the Direct Support Team. Mirna Makko

has commenced as Leisure and Lifestyle Planner. The role of the Leisure and Lifestyle Planner is to facilitate increased opportunities for participants to learn new skills, make new friends and become more involved in their communities.

The Leisure and Lifestyle Planner is also responsible for managing our sensational new Sensory Room . We are very proud of the Sensory Room, and promoting its use to the wider community is a goal for the team.

PARTICIPANT STORY

Supporting Family Unions

Frances has enjoyed being a part of Interaction’s activities and supports for more than 22 years. Most recently, Frances has received support through her NDIS funding to do some of the things she loves most in life, like visiting her family or enjoying a day of manicures and morning tea.

While at an expo in Newcastle, Interaction happened to meet with Frances’ sister Christina, who mentioned that Frances had not yet had the chance to visit Christina in her new home near Newcastle. The idea to support Frances to visit Christina quickly grew, and plans were put into motion. Soon after, Frances jumped on a train up north with the help of her support worker, Kim. Frances’ family were so happy to see Frances make the trip, and it gave them confidence that this could now happen more often. The whole family enjoyed the day and Frances loved her train journey. They were extremely grateful to Kim for providing the excellent level of support throughout the trip and look forward to more visits.



An Individual Approach To Accommodation

Starting with Interaction’s Direct Support team many years ago as a teenager, Brenton and his family struggled to secure NDIS funding for suitable accommodation. With challenging behaviours placing more demands on his parents, the best solution was for Brenton to remain in the family home while his parents moved into temporary accommodation nearby, ensuring consistency and stability for Brenton. For the last eight months, he has been supported by Interaction with a 24/7 Supported Independent Living (SIL) program, funded by the NDIS.

This solution, the first stage of a permanent transition into supported accommodation was an incredibly difficult and emotional time for Brenton’s family. However, with the care of Brenton’s Interaction support team, his family have been able to work through the journey together. Brenton’s Mum Karyn, describes Interaction’s support as

‘absolutely amazing, always ensuring that the care provided to Brenton was at the highest level. They not only care for the person in need of support, but the whole family unit.’

The future is looking bright for Brenton and his family as they prepare for the second and third stages of his transition into supported accommodation – searching for a compatible housemate with the view of moving into their own home using SDA funding.

Karyn reports that Brenton has grown immensely since receiving Interaction’s SIL support. ‘He is rapidly moving towards being able to live the life he deserves. Brenton can now access the community, has gained independence, can visit my home for dinner and is starting to use a communication system.It is just so wonderful to be Brenton’s mum again and not his carer, and we are so excited for his future’



Support Coordination

Support Coordination has continued to provide a valuable support to participants struggling to navigate the NDIS. The role of the Support Coordinator is to support participants / carers implement their NDIS plan ensuring services provided meet both the participants' needs, but also that NDIS regulatory requirements are met. The focus of the role is capacity building for participants and their families/ carers.

At present, Interaction has a team of four Support Coordinators providing assistance to more than 189 participants. Throughout the past year, more than 516 participants received over 4,483 hours of Support Coordination from the Interaction team.



Restrictive Practices

In line with changes to reporting requirements under the Quality and Safeguards Commission (QSC), Interaction has reviewed and adapted our Restrictive Practices processes to meet these requirements.

Monthly reporting of all restrictive practices is completed within the required five day window.

Interaction convene a Restrictive Practices Authorisation Panel each month to assess and where appropriate approve restrictive practices. A Family and Community Services (FaCS) allocated independent practitioner is part of each panel to provide a completely independent assessment of each submission.

In the last financial year, Interaction had 21 requests for the use of restrictive practices, 20 of these practices were approved.



Jenny's Path to Independence

Jenny has an intellectual disability and other medical conditions. Sadly her mother passed away, and her elderly father took ill within twelve months of Jenny's mother passing. With no other informal support network or family to care for Jenny, she was placed in an aged care facility. Due to subsequent medical issues, she was transferred to her local hospital where she resided for TEN (yes ten!) years.

Jenny had a social worker at the hospital who looked into getting her an NDIS plan, as well as searching for a service provider who offered supported accommodation – enter Interaction Services.

Jenny has learned to maintain friendships with her housemates. This was difficult for her as she came from a very sterile environment at the Hospital, and unfortunately with no friends. She has learned that meeting new people isn't so scary after all, and now has a bunch of friends from Interaction's weekly craft, music and bowling activities.



With the help of Support Workers, Jenny has not only developed her social skills, but also developed skills to maintain appropriate hygiene and appearance, which she takes pride in (she loves to accessorise!). Not to mention the success she has had in developing independent living skills such as cooking dinner, baking desserts, doing her washing and chores. Jenny enjoys praise from staff and housemates when these tasks are completed.

Due to the nature of Jenny's history, initially there were some difficult times in the home with the other housemates, this was to be expected with the transition. With the assistance of Interaction's BAHs team, Support Workers and understanding and friendship from Jenny's housemates, it didn't take too long before there was more harmony in the house than difficulty. Staff, housemates and Jenny are now all like sisters which is great to see.

Jenny has a key Support Worker – Holly – who has been particularly supportive with Jenny during this transition. She is very appreciative of all the work Holly puts in to support Jennifer to achieve her goals. Holly always finds fun and exciting activities for Jenny to partake in, and she really enjoys the one on one time she gets with Holly.

Jenny has done exceptionally well in finding herself again. Her independence level has soared. There's still some goals for Jenny to achieve, but she's well on her way – the staff and her housemates enjoy watching her blossom each day!



NDIS Roundtable With Scott Morrison

In June, disability activists from around the country met with Prime Minister Scott Morrison at the NDIS Roundtable. One of the activists invited to attend was Interaction participant Kevin.

For Kevin, this meeting with Scott Morrison provided an important opportunity to share how the NDIS has changed his life. He says: ‘The NDIS has added years to my life as far as I’m concerned. It’s prolonged my life for another fifteen years.’

Speaking at the round-table in the Sydney suburb of Penrith, Scott Morrison explained how the NDIS aims to be an equalising force in the sector and beyond. He said: ‘[The NDIS is] not compensation, it’s not welfare. It’s not any of these things. It’s a support that enables people to realise their potential, in the same way any other Australian can.’

As a passionate advocate for disability for over 25 years, Kevin has experienced the improvements in the disability sector first-hand. From the complications of the previous system, to the specific challenges faced by elderly participants – the NDIS has been instrumental for participants like Kevin.

‘The NDIS has helped me in a big way. Because I’m 65 years old, I wouldn’t have gotten the support I needed through the My Aged system, which is very complex’, says Kevin.

After his successful meeting with the Prime Minister, Kevin doesn’t appear to be slowing down. Next on



his list of achievements for the year is securing new accommodation with the help of Interaction.

‘My plan for the future is to do my housing plans and to get it submitted through the NDIS... Interaction is helping me look for housing. There is brand new accommodation there’, says Kevin.

Reflecting on his time with Interaction and his experience navigating the NDIS, Kevin couldn’t be happier with how his plan has been progressing. ‘My support from the Interaction team has been extremely professional in every aspect. I’ve gotten wonderful support from my support worker Cyndi, she’s been absolutely wonderful as a full time supporter.’



Report

The BAHS team currently provide services across two key areas: Improved Relationships and Improved Daily Living. Improved Relationships essentially surrounds all aspects of behaviour support, with varying degrees of complexity. This includes all practitioners being registered with the QSC to provide Specialist Behaviour Support, which is required to support people who require the use of Restrictive Practices for any period of time. The BAHS team also offer services under the Improved Daily Living category predominantly in areas such as individual psychological therapy and assessment for various reasons, such as cognitive capacity. In this reporting period, the BAHS team provided 125 blocks of service to participants with behaviour support (Improved Relationships) taking the lead with 63% of services.

The BAHS team have actively advocated for reasonable and necessary supports for participants’ NDIS plans, both for services the team directly provide as well as for the overall services that form part of a person’s network. The previous year has seen significant challenges in gaining adequate funding to complete best practice work. The team are increasingly seeing more suitable funding for behaviour support and therapeutic services. That being said, there is still much more to be done in this space, particularly where a person requires the use of a Regulated Restrictive Practice.

The move to new head office premises in Bella Vista also meant the opportunity to contribute to therapeutic space needs. Interaction now has 3 therapy rooms and 2 assessment rooms. It is planned that these will be utilised by multiple Allied Health Professionals in the near future.

The NDIS QSC is now well established, with legislative rules and reporting requirements governing the way in which practitioners and implementing

providers of specialist behaviour support work. Concurrently, FaCS also implemented their requirements for Authorisation of a Regulated Restrictive Practice in NSW. A significant amount of time has been invested by BAHS in navigating the behaviour support requirements both as practitioners and also the implications for implementing providers as they arise. Interaction initiated a self-developed and assessed audit of practices to align with the new rules and guidelines, which gave direction on priority action, planning and compliance requirements. This is an actively changing area, requiring regular attention from the BAHS team.

The Principal (now Senior) Psychologist successfully gained a contract with FaCS to be one of their Independent Specialists on Implementing Provider panels for the authorisation of Restrictive Practices.

Looking ahead to 2019-2020, the BAHS team will be contributing to the certification process with the QSC with particular focus on the Specialist Behaviour Support module; progressing the implementation of the QSC Behaviour Support Capability Framework; and expansion of the practitioner team within a new model, co-ordinated by a Practice Administrator.

Lisa Osborne
Senior Psychologist, BAHS

Improved Relationship and Improved Daily Living Funding



Report

The past twelve months has been a very busy time for Interaction in our plans to raise the profile of and improve services to people with PWS in Australia.

Interaction was well represented at the September 2018 PWS Professional Providers and Carers Conference in Munich. Our CEO presented to the conference on the changes in Australian disability legislation with the introduction of the NDIS. He spoke of the opportunities the NDIS brings to raise the awareness of PWS and to develop services that meet the unique needs of people with PWS. In attendance was our Chair, John Lucas. His presence was well received by the Conference as it sent a powerful message concerning Interaction's commitment to PWS. Significantly, Damien Jones, Senior Manager Accommodation and Shared Living, was elected to the Professional Providers and Carer's Board.

Interaction once again sponsored the Asia Pacific PWS Conference held in Brisbane in October. Our CEO and Damien Jones gave presentations and we had a number of staff in attendance to answer questions on service provision.

Plans to open three new PWS specific accommodation programs at Mt Gravatt (Brisbane), Narara (Central Coast)



and Cranebrook (Sydney) have progressed, but at a slower rate than hoped. The development application to build at Mt Gravatt was granted by Brisbane City Council. We had the Ground Breaking Ceremony on October 18th, a wonderful occasion. Importantly, in attendance, we had some of the pioneers of PWS in the Australian context. It was appropriate that David Robertson, Interaction participant, turned the first sod of ground, along with his parents Don and Lesley Robertson.



Jack & Phil, A Wonderful Friendship

Before making the transition to Interaction's supported accommodation in 2017, Jack and Phil struggled to find the care they needed. But with the help of their support workers, Bikky and Peter, the two young men have flourished in their new homes.

Along with building great relationships with staff, Jack and Phil have struck up a supportive friendship. Taking on the role of mentor is something that comes naturally to Phil. House Manager Anthony says, 'We encourage Phil to take on a mentor role. He likes to be a bit of a big brother to his friends.'

Phil has also received just as much encouragement from Jack. Being inspired by Jack's energy and love of socialising, Phil has taken initiative in engaging with social activities. In May, he took the opportunity to organise his own birthday party.

While socialising has played a big role in Phil's day to day life, he has also made sure to prioritise work. After many years of searching, Phil found a job on his own accord, and willingly takes on challenging tasks. Phil's hard work has led to an increase in his working hours, and another opportunity to give back. Phil donates to a charity every month to help pay for necessities for a young boy in Africa and he's always saying he needs more money for him.

Jack has spent the last year building up his social contacts. 'It's hard to catch him off his mobile these days. Between the friends he meets at discos and singles events, he's out and about all the time', says Anthony.

While socialising keeps Jack busy, it has also given him the opportunity to make great strides in building trust and overcoming negative impulses. He is getting ready to start a new day program and is hoping to transition into the wider community with full independence.

When reflecting on a positive year for Jack and Phil, Anthony says the big wins will keep on coming. "Phil and Jack are two of the loveliest, kindest guys I've ever met. They're always surprising, hilarious, and working hard to improve themselves. It's a bit cliché but I feel very lucky to know them!"



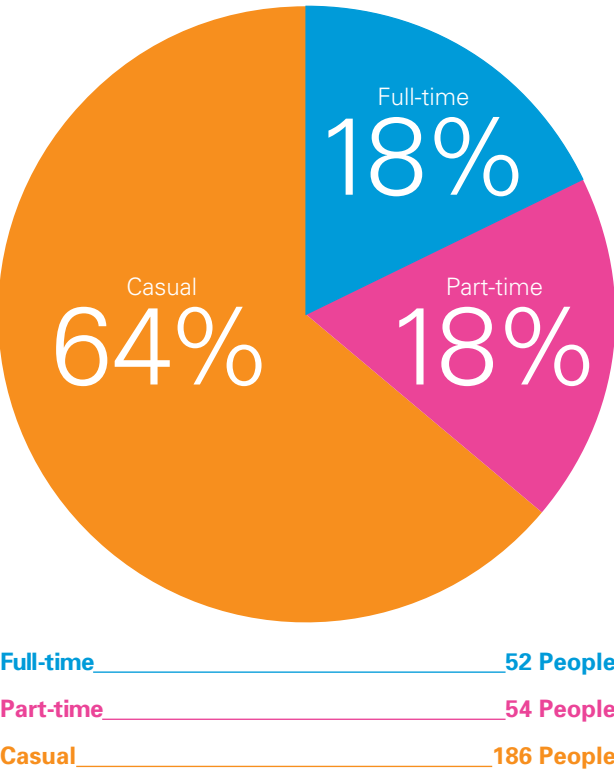
Human Resources

As the Interaction team continues to grow, so do the number of long-term employees. We view the high number of long tenured staff members as a major achievement, and a demonstration of how Interaction’s values have served our team well. We remain committed to internal succession planning, with training and mentoring of our staff both new and old.

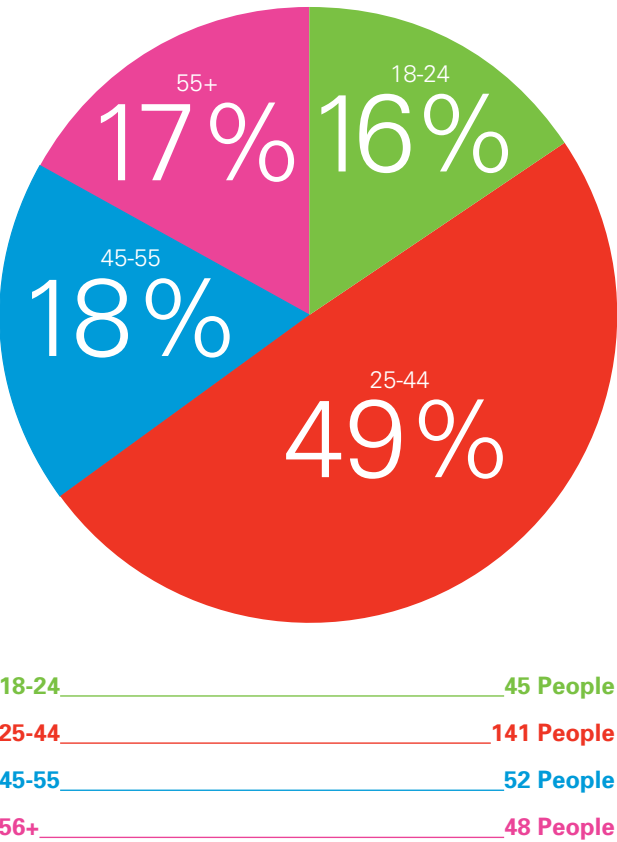
Interaction staff have adapted well to the ever-changing NDIS environment. New staff complete the NDIS Worker Induction Module prior to commencing employment, and Human Resources have implemented group sessions of the NDIS Worker Orientation Module, to support all current staff to complete the training. This is our way of ensuring that the Interaction team is able to assist our participants in implementing their NDIS plans effectively, and for the best outcomes possible.

292 Annual figure of total staff
4.1% ↑ Increase from last year

Employment Status



Staff Breakdown by Age



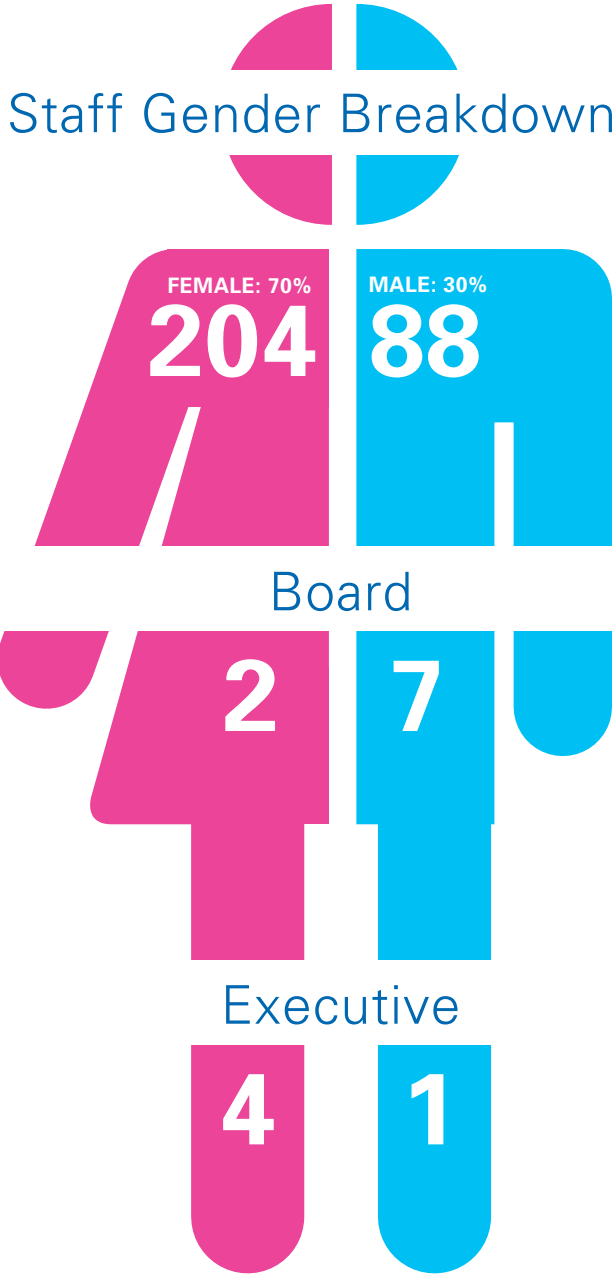
Staff Breakdown by Category



*Graph not to scale

Gender Composition

In accordance with the requirements of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Act), Interaction lodged its annual compliance report for 2018/2019 with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). The Act provides for feedback from the community to comment on the report either to Interaction via email or to the WGEA.



Employee Recognition

We congratulate all staff nominated for Employee of the Month Awards throughout the last 12 months. Listed are the recipients, along with the Employee of the Year, who were recognised at Interaction's AGM held in November 2018.

Employee of the Month Winners

Damien Jones

Fantastic manager and role model

Alma Burr

High quality of care

Samantha Hiley

Friendliness and professionalism

Nicole Concepcion

Providing calm and proactive support

Kylie Edmondston

Kind and respectful

Kimberly Herivel

Hard working and great attitude

Karl Farrugia

Caring, reliable and proactive

Chelsey Fletcher

Genuine care and support for participants

Holly Nicol

Positive attitude

Anneli Cavallaro

Passionate, polite and friendly

Jenny Celebrin

Promoting the ethos of Interaction

Employee of the Year



Damien Jones

Senior Manager Accommodation and Shared Living

Throughout 2018, Damien received multiple nominations for Employee of the Month. The main theme of the nominations was his calm, patient leadership. Damien is always approachable and supportive of his teams, and this is reflected in the loyalty his staff show to him. Damien has a keen eye for detail and always has thoughtful, insightful input into all areas of the organisation.

Participant Incentive Program

At Interaction, we do our best to eliminate barriers to inclusion by increasing access to opportunities and independence for people with disability. Encouragement is high on the agenda, when we see our participants reach goals we celebrate with them, and we love to tell the community about the tremendous efforts a participant has gone to, in order to exceed even their own expectations at times.

Introduced in April 2019, 'Goal Kicker of the Month' is a way for us to recognise the hard work our participants put in to achieving their goals. With the very first Goal Kicker of the Year to be announced at the 2019 AGM, the first monthly winners are recognised here.

Goal Kicker of the Month



Graeme Castle

An exceptional individual with a wonderful personality, Graeme is active in his community and works hard to keep his house in tip top condition.



Elizabeth Tod

After joining a craft group at her local library, Elizabeth worked hard with her new friends to knit a blanket which she donated to the homeless.



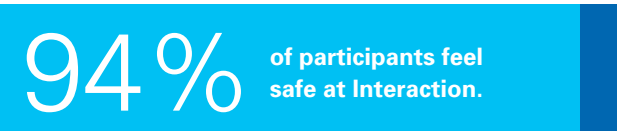
Adrian Grogan

After a two year search for mainstream employment, Adrian secured a job at Bunnings Warehouse, as well as completing an RSA Certificate from TAFE Digital.

Voice Project

Participant Satisfaction Survey 2018

Participants report that Interaction’s top strengths are:



Participants feel they have a say in what they do:



Participants feel they are helped to make choices about their life:

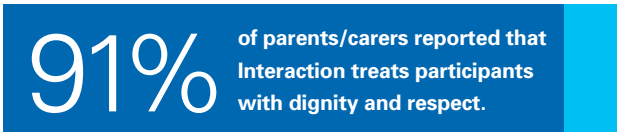


Participants feel supported if they want to try new things:

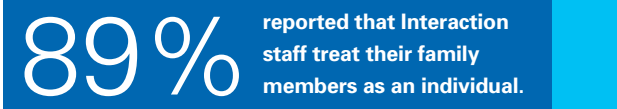


Parent/Carer Satisfaction Survey 2018

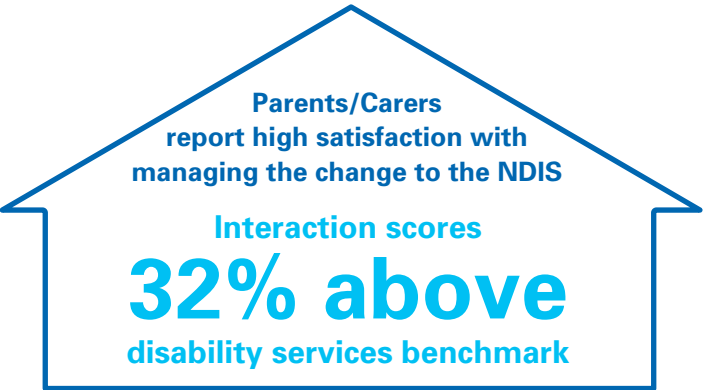
Parents/Carers report that Interaction’s top strengths are:



Parents/Carers feel that Interaction supports participants to do things in the community that are important to them:



Interaction fosters change & innovation



The following areas have been identified for improvement

ISSUE: Lack of awareness of Interaction’s strategic plan

SOLUTION: Refer to page 8 of this report for the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan

ISSUE: Need for more regular news updates from Interaction

SOLUTION: Parents, carers and all others interested are encouraged to sign up for the Interaction newsletter via our website, and to follow our official social media channels for regular updates.

ISSUE: Desire to be connected with other families and carers

SOLUTION: Interaction’s new Leisure & Lifestyle department publishes a monthly calendar of events and activities, we welcome parents and carers to accompany participants to meet other families.

40 YEARS OF STRONG FOUNDATIONS

In 2019, Interaction Disability Services was proud to celebrate its fortieth anniversary.

The Hills School For Specific Purpose in Northmead is where the idea of a registered charity called 'Interaction - The Hills Association for the Intellectually Disabled' was conceived. Starting from humble beginnings in 1979, with a focus on maximising independence for people with intellectual disability, to opening the first shared and supported accommodation facility in 1982, Interaction successfully transitioned to the National Disability Insurance Scheme in 2016, with many milestones in-between.

The newest chapter in Interaction's long history saw the organisation moving into its brand new premises at Bella Vista. Opened by His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, the official opening and fortieth anniversary celebration was a wonderful day for staff, participants, families and friends.



Fit-Out & Move

On 18 December 2017, Interaction became the proud new owners of Unit 6, 16 Lexington Drive Bella Vista; a semi-industrial warehouse with lots of potential. Interaction envisioned an accessible space that focused on meeting participants' recreational interests, therapeutic supports and sensory needs whilst accommodating increasing staffing numbers and business growth.

Through consultation with participants and staff, floor plans were developed and adjusted, and then revised

again. The ultimate priority was ensuring participants could freely access key areas of the building for therapy, counselling, catching up with friends socially, engaging in fun activities and relaxing in the Sensory Room. An accessible bathroom with shower was a must!

After months of office displacement whilst Interaction 'made good' at its leased premises, and concurrently constructed mezzanines, walls and ceilings, Interaction made the move on 20 July 2018 to call Bella Vista home.

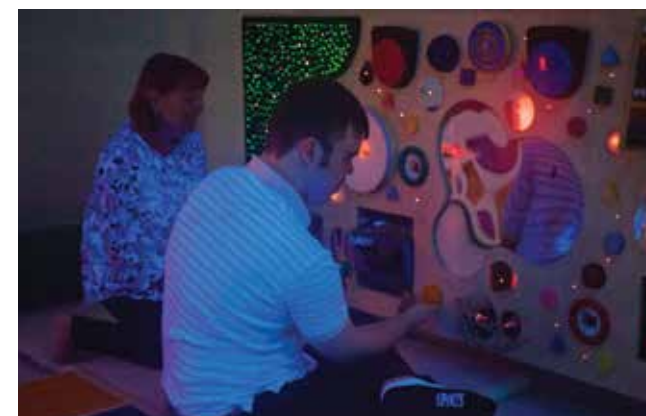


Activity & Sensory Rooms

As part of the new Bella Vista offices, Interaction was committed to providing fully accessible spaces that could be enjoyed by all.

The brand new, custom-built Sensory Room provides a multi-sensory environment where sensory stimulation can be controlled and matched to fit the needs of the user. We are extremely proud of this space, as it promotes relaxation, stimulation and therapeutic benefits for every participant!

Since moving in, our multi-functional Activity Room has been used for a huge range of events – including pamper days, high tea, cooking classes, music and games sessions, as well as movie nights! With a fully accessible kitchen, bathroom and shower, it has been exciting to watch our participants make the most of this beautiful space.



Bella Vista Opening

The newest chapter in Interaction’s long history saw the organisation moving into its brand new premises at Bella Vista. Opened by His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret’d), Governor of New South Wales, the official opening and fortieth anniversary celebration was a wonderful day for staff, participants, families and friends.



As someone who has been supported by Interaction since its inception forty years ago, Ian Muggleton was a wonderful choice to welcome our guests at the official opening.

Ian was one of the first people to move into the Balcombe Heights Group Home in 1982, where he enjoyed looking after the house by gardening, mowing and cleaning, as well as helping his housemates learn to look after their home.

Interaction staff, alongside Ian’s family, have continuously supported him to become more active in the community. Ian now lives independently and has held a number of long-term jobs over the years. According to Ian,



‘Interaction has helped me with taking me out into the community and to my appointments. They arrange services for me when I need it, and I like the staff. They are helpful and friendly.’

With a long history of supporting Ian and seeing him succeed in his goals, Interaction looks forward to many more years together.



Ongoing Learning and Staff Development

Interaction is committed to providing up to date training, learning and development opportunities for all staff across a range of topics and areas.

Throughout the last twelve months, Interaction staff participated in numerous training opportunities including 'Working with People who have an Intellectual Disability & Dementia,' a Driver Safety course and attendance at The Disability Support Workers Conference in Brisbane.

As part of the NDIS, Interaction staff also have access to the Workforce Essentials e-Learning Library. Staff are able to complete the training online themselves, or participate in regular team sessions at head office in a group setting. Some of the sessions completed by Interaction staff include:

- Active Listening
- Preventing Abuse
- Understanding Abuse – Zero Tolerances
- Bullying Awareness for Workers
- Infection Control for Disability Support Workers

- Disability Safe Medication Management
- Food Safety for Disability Support Workers
- Risk Management
- Fire Awareness and Extinguisher Training
- Human Rights for Disability Support
- Provide First Aid



Report

The Finance Department has been working towards processes of transparency and accountability. Interaction's accounts are prepared in accordance with accepted accounting standards including the Australian Accounting Interpretations and regulations set out in the Australian Accounting Standard Board and Corporations Act 2001.

There have been few changes in the accounting standards this year. Relevant changes will be made to next year's financials to comply with the new accounting standards.

To align with professional standards, all Finance Department activities are documented, and records maintained and accessible for relevant audit purposes.

The Financial Management Policy is reviewed regularly to ensure procedures are set up properly to manage processes without error, and with a view towards compliance, fraud and theft prevention.

Our role tends to focus on immediate financial issues, management and to help the business navigate through growth stages and downturns.

The Finance Executive Team meet on monthly basis to go through the detailed Profit & Loss Analysis to measure the performance of programs, and discuss strategies to manage their income and expenses within the budgeted limit.

The Finance Department consistently work with managers to recover pending claims for the services provided.

Due to the amounts involved and the changing requirements of NDIA, the Finance Department work closely with the CEO and Board Finance Committee to go through financials, to get their advice and discuss strategies to resolve any concerns.

The Finance Department is committed to maintaining transparency and accountability in all financial matters. The focus remains on Interaction's financial viability and stable cash flow.

Gurdeep Masson
Financial Controller



Income Statement

For the year ended 30th June, 2019

	2019	2018
Income	\$	\$
Revenue from State Government	111,885	794,751
NDIS Income	14,564,620	12,569,398
Interest received	23,660	31,235
Other income	821,687	849,572
Revaluation of freehold properties	0	1,770,322
Total Income	15,521,852	16,015,278
Expenses		
Depreciation	345,817	135,738
Finance expenses	242,204	26,578
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	12,439	90,487
Motor vehicle expenses	396,765	315,322
Occupation costs	309,315	609,210
Other client expenses	476,195	391,204
Other expenses	288,403	324,826
PWS - Project Cost	-17,720	141,156
Professional fees	82,532	85,810
Service charges	541,655	532,462
Staff remuneration	13,233,831	11,450,879
Staff training	90,389	106,700
Total Expenses	16,001,824	14,210,371
Surplus/(loss) for year	-479,971	1,804,907

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30th June, 2019

	2019	2018
Opening retained equity	8,667,445	6,862,538
Surplus/(loss) for year	-479,971	1,804,907
Closing Retained Equity	8,187,474	8,667,445

Balance Sheet

For the year ended 30th June, 2019

Assets	2019	2018
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	994,361	2,528,782
Trade and other receivables	707,373	699,506
Tax asset	41,871	132,057
Current Assets	1,743,605	3,360,346
Non-Current		
Total Fixed Assets	12,643,031	11,793,617
Non-Current Assets	12,643,031	11,793,617
Total Assets	14,386,637	15,153,963
Liabilities		
Current		
Trade and other payables	606,465	783,815
Provisions	692,505	646,542
Tax liabilities	104,246	75,400
Financial liabilities	210,141	117,877
Current Liabilities	1,613,357	1,623,632
Non-Current		
Provisions	367,925	220,360
Financial liabilities	4,217,882	4,642,525
Non-Current Liabilities	4,585,807	4,862,885
Total Liabilities	6,199,164	6,486,517
Net Assets	8,187,474	8,667,445
Equity		
Retained earnings	8,187,474	8,667,445
Total Equity	8,187,474	8,667,445

INTERACTION Empowering People

FITABILITY

Thanks to financial grants supplied by Hills Shire Council and Slater & Gordon Health Projects and Research Fund, Interaction's Fitability was able to continue throughout 2018 and 2019.

Covering the full cost for participants over multiple twelve week terms of outdoor group training led by PT Rebecca Carey of Capable Fitness, and basic gymnastics skills at Sydney Hills Gymnastics, Fitability has been a fantastic opportunity for participants to learn new skills to ensure a healthy focus on the importance of fitness and movement.

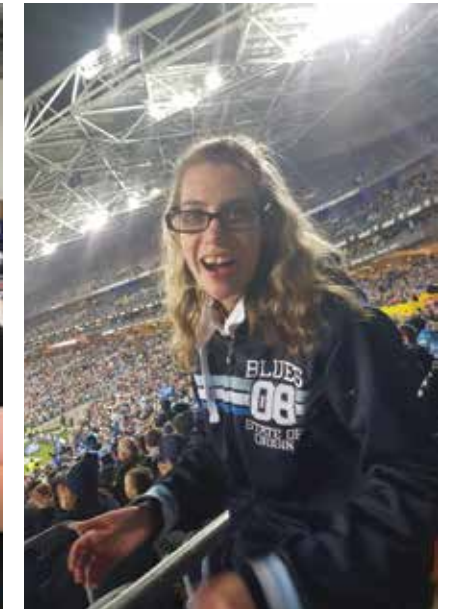
As part of the Fitability program, Hit 100 visited Interaction's Head Office to run an interactive seminar on the importance of healthy eating, where participants learnt about portion sizes, food groups and gained hands on experience in creating healthy meals and snacks they could then use later at home.



Out and About



Out and About



2018-2019 Contributors

Interaction sends a special message of thanks to every person and business who made a donation (financial or otherwise) this past year. Your support is valued and has enabled us to continue to provide excellent services and resources to the people we support.

Contributors

P Dalgliesh

J & G Gelb

M Hodge

C Hoggan

J Lucas

J Plant

B Sorby

M Stacey

R Yeap



INTERACTION
Empowering People

INTERACTION SERVICES

6/16 Lexington Drive, Bella Vista NSW 2153

1300 668 123

www.interactionservices.org

ABN 23 002 979 928

NDIS Registration No. 4050001424

