

QDN

QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

**Queenslanders with
Disability Network**

**Annual Report
2014 - 2015**

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Part 1: Introduction

About us

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is a Company Limited by Guarantee, governed by a Board of Directors, who are all people with disability.

QDN receives funding from State and Commonwealth Governments for undertaking activities around information, referral and systemic advocacy, and for specific projects that align with our work and values.

QDN's work includes:

- informing people about important issues and working together to create change;
- referring people onto other Government and community agencies;
- supporting local groups of peers to lead a good life in their community;
- helping people with disability to have a voice in disability policy; and
- projects that help improve the lives of people with disability.

QDN is a member organisation. It has three membership categories:

- Ordinary Members – people with disability
- Supporter Members – family and others who support QDN's goals
- Corporate Members – corporate bodies that support QDN's goals

Only Ordinary Members have voting rights and are eligible for election to the Board of Directors. New members are welcome. Membership is free.

Our vision

People with disability achieve full citizenship and are active and valued members of the community.

Our mission

QDN is a state-wide network of people with disability connecting for collective and affirmative action.

Our values

- **Authentic voice:** being for, of, with and by people with disability, speaking with a strong voice, and ensuring that those with no voice are heard and valued.
- **Collaborative action:** we work jointly with others to build an inclusive network and culture based on shared experiences, shared values and collective wisdom.
- **Rights:** we model a human rights approach which recognises disability as a social issue.

- **Respect:** we value human difference and diversity and build mutual respect through openness and fellowship.
- **Resilience:** we are hopeful, even about the most complex challenges, and we are here for the long term.

Our motto

Nothing about us without us

Our strategic priorities include: successful implementation of the NDIS; accessible, quality and affordable housing, health, education, aids and equipment and transport.

Membership

QDN has the following membership numbers:

- 651 Ordinary Members – including 42 who identify as Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders
- 438 Supporters
- 42 Corporate Members

There are also an additional 60 organisations or individuals who receive our e-Bulletin. There have been 95 new members and supporters added to our network in this financial year, demonstrating a growing membership base.



QDN Members participating in a community conversation on 26 June 2015



Chairperson's report

2014-2015 has been another successful year for QDN and for our state's progression towards the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We have been a strong and present voice of people with disability, influencing and contributing to generational change within our community. We will need to continue our strong and united voice to deliver on an accessible and inclusive community where all people with disability can access the supports they need.

I would like to thank my fellow Directors and their families for your time, energy and commitment to QDN members, Queenslanders with disability and the Queensland community. I acknowledge three of our long serving QDN Directors who are stepping down from their roles, Deputy Chair Rachel Matthews, Treasurer Lyn Coyle and Director Willie Prince. Each of you has contributed significantly to QDN's governance, strategic oversight and our day to day work. On behalf of the Board, staff and our members, thank you Rachel, Lyn and Willie for all that you have done to ensure *nothing about us without us* is central to the decisions, governance and policy frameworks within QDN and also our systemic advocacy. Please see page 35-36 for some moving reflections from our retiring Directors on their time serving on the Board.

Our strength lies in our members who bring their lived experience of disability. Thank you to each and every member for your contribution to QDN, and your work in your local communities to make a difference in the lives of people with disability every day.

Leadership

Choice, control and participation are the driving principles of the NDIS. People with disability as leaders and change makers in their own lives are essential to realising the goals of the NDIS. This has been a focus of QDN's work this year, working to help people tap into their own capacity and leadership and be a strong voice in their own lives and a strong voice at the policy table.

QDN has continued its work in NDIS Participant Readiness across Queensland for people with intellectual disability. Almost 2000 participants, alongside their families, carers or supporters have been learning about the scheme, unpacking their hopes and dreams and starting their journey towards the NDIS. Congratulations to the NDIS *Ready to go* project and our dedicated Peer Facilitators on this innovative and trail blazing work.

QDN is also pleased to be undertaking work to support emerging leaders through our work as a Disability Support Organisation (DSO) funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). This work to establish Local Support Groups of and by people with disability across Queensland will help people with disability connect with

each other, learn about the NDIS and gain confidence to influence and shape the support they need to live their lives.

I congratulate the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments for funding these initiatives which focus on building the capacity and skills of people with disability to be leaders of their own lives and realise the opportunities offered through the NDIS and to be influencers of the 'big picture' policy direction of the NDIS as it is progressively rolled out.

Renewal and growth

Our Board has been focused on renewal and growth across all parts of the organisation.

At the Board level, we recruited for the role of Company Secretary and welcomed Colleen Papadopoulos to the Board in this year. A strong focus this year has been on governance and through constitutional changes and our strategic objectives, QDN will be in a strong position both now and into the future.

We have grown three-fold in our number of employees this year through NDIS Participant Readiness and Disability Support Organisation funding. QDN would like to congratulate Minister O'Rourke and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services on the extension of the NDIS Participant Readiness work until July 2016, and we look forward to continuing to deliver quality outcomes that help people with disability, including people with intellectual and learning disability, to get ready for the NDIS.

This year, we also committed to a process of membership renewal and growth, through progressively phoning all of our members. We believe it is essential to have a good understanding of who our members are, the key things they are interested in and how they would like to engage with QDN. This will enable QDN to continue to serve our members well, provide relevant information, build capacity, leadership and deliver a strong voice representing people with disability at all levels of Government. We are also undertaking a website renewal to ensure we can engage and communicate more effectively with members and the wider community about our work.

QDN has had a Facebook Group for several years where QDN members and our supporters can share information and their opinions about a wide variety of often disability related issues and topics, both locally in their communities and globally, with references to innovative products and service supports. QDN now has its own Facebook Page operating with nearly 350 likes with a wide range of information and resources available for interested people to access, reflect upon and share, given the world can now fit in our pockets. I encourage everyone to join QDN via whichever social media suits them. QDN's facebook is at www.facebook.com/queenslanderswithdisabilitynetwork We are also on twitter.

The voice of people with disability needs to be strong as we continue to influence and shape the current reforms and ensure that people with disability can access the support they need now and into the future.

We welcome the Government's commitment and we also look forward to seeing the roll-out of the NDIS on time from 1 July 2016 in Queensland and the public release of Queensland's implementation plan so that 97,000 Queenslanders with disability can access the support they need to live their lives.

Housing, employment, transport, healthcare, education and justice that is accessible, affordable, timely, responsive to individual need and delivers quality outcomes to people with disability are all important issues to our members and the focus of our work into the future.

The Board of Directors thanks the CEO, Paige Armstrong and QDN staff for your commitment, hard work, and the many outcomes you have delivered.

Thank you to all our friends, allies, consultants and partners for your support and working with us to bring about change.

I would also like to thank each and every member for your continued engagement and support to QDN. I look forward to continuing QDN's work as a strong voice for people with disability both now and into the future.

Nigel Webb
Chairperson



Chief Executive Officer's report

This year has again been one of rapid change and significant reforms. QDN has been agile and responsive to the changing needs, and our work continues to be informed by our active and strong members state-wide. It has been a busy and exciting year at both program and systemic policy levels.

Within the scope of the NDIS reforms we have informed some significant systemic policies through submissions such as the recent National Advocacy Framework, the Information Linkages and Capacity Building Framework (ILC – Tier 2), National Disability Employment Framework, and the National Quality Safeguards Framework.

I have been a member on a national committee that has informed a National Report to the NDIA around pre-planning within the NDIS. Our experiences and work in NDIS Participant Readiness, along with feedback from our Peer Facilitators and workshop participants have shaped our input into this important report. QDN feedback focussed on the importance of accessible planning for all participants who enter the NDIS scheme and the need for dedicated strategies to ensure vulnerable and marginalised people do not get left behind or out of the NDIS.

QDN also undertook work to inform our submission into the McClure Welfare Review conducted by Department of Social Services. QDN jointly held a Policy Forum with Queensland Voice for Mental Health, to engage with members about the issues that were important to them and the implications of these reforms on the lives of people with disability. QDN thanks members for their feedback and willingness to engage in these activities.

We have also made submissions across other important areas such as the Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with disability in institutional settings, and transport and building access standards. Accessible, affordable, timely housing, transport, healthcare, education and justice that meets the needs of people with disability continues to be a major focus of our work at all levels.

Recently Minister O'Rourke established the NDIS Queensland Transition Advisory Group and I was pleased to be invited onto this committee to ensure the voice and interests of people with disability are represented in Queensland's planning and transition to the NDIS.

In my role as CEO and as a representative on a number of key steering and reference groups, QDN has continued to ensure the voice of people with disability is part of the conversation. QDN has highlighted policy matters, including the NDIS, with all levels of Government, peak organisations and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. These groups include:

- Steering Group – discrete and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and small rural and remote community capacity building project;
- NDIS Communications and Engagement Reference Group;
- NDIS Provider Readiness Reference Group;
- NOUS reference group – Building the capability of providers to respond to consumer demand in the NDIS;
- The Partnership Forum – comprising peak and key stakeholder organisations which come together to discuss policy matters relating to disability;
- Queensland Planning and Implementation Group; and
- Minister’s Queensland Transition and Implementation Advisory Group.

This year QDN has worked with the Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy Inc. (QADA) to facilitate the transition of the operation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland to QADA. QADA is well positioned to support and grow this network through their established work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. QADA has taken on this work with enthusiasm and commitment, delivering great outcomes to date and continues to work collaboratively with QDN.

QDN was pleased to be invited onto the inaugural Disability Advisory Committee for Metro South Hospital and Health Service (HHS) to ensure the voice of people with disability shapes and informs the health services planning and delivery of quality health services. I thank Michelle Moss and Rachel Matthews for their representation on this committee and the Metro South HHS on its initiative to establish this high level advisory committee.

People with disability as strong leaders of their own lives and in roles to mentor and develop other people’s leadership is vital to delivering an NDIS that is true to its principles and aims.

I would like to thank our emerging leaders at QDN who have taken on this role with courage, determination and resilience. These leaders are our *Ready to go* project Peer Facilitators, our Local Support Group Convenors and our Regional Facilitators. These people are leading by example in showing that everyone has the capacity to be leaders in their own life, and exercise choice and control. Your work in helping other people with disability learn about the NDIS, to tap into their own strengths and abilities and to start to imagine and dream about a future where they are in the driver’s seat and anything is possible, is an inspiration to others.

QDN’s work this year has also had a focus on ensuring that vulnerable and marginalised people do not get left behind in the transition to the NDIS and they have fair access to the scheme. As part of the NDIS Participant Readiness project, *Ready to go*, our team has had a focus on working with people who live in Level 3 supported

accommodation facilities. QDN is leading this work nationally through our innovative approaches and engagement and will continue to provide advice and information to the NDIA and State Government to shape and inform responses and activities around pre-planning and planning for the NDIS.

Our state-wide network of members continues to play a pivotal role in the work of the organisation, informing discussions, advice and policy issues centred in the experiences of people with disability. We have continued to sponsor activities for members to develop their knowledge and skills to engage in policy and systems thinking through events such as the Griffith University Symposiums.

I would like to thank all the staff of QDN for your hard work and commitment to QDN’s mission and vision and people with disability. Collectively we have achieved outstanding things this year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge two of our staff who left during this year, Mark Edmonds and Karen Hardy. I thank them for their work and contributions to QDN over the time of their employment and wish them all the best in their next endeavours.

I especially extend my thanks to the members of QDN for your engagement and participation to ensuring the voice of people with disability informs decision makers at all levels.

Thank you also to the Board of Directors, our key allies, and stakeholders for your tireless work, activities and commitment to QDN.

Paige Armstrong
CEO



Part 2: Our achievements 2014–15

Nothing about us without us

QDN's Strategic Plan guides our work along with our vision, mission, values and motto.

Goal 1: To promote and maintain active, vibrant networks that inform our work

QDN continues to undertake work to promote and maintain an active, vibrant member network that informs our programs and our systemic policy work.

QDN supports members with disability to come together in varying ways and locations across Queensland. Members cross a range of disabilities and life situations. Network members contribute a rich source of lived experience and information which is harnessed to guide and shape QDN's position on policy issues and the strategic direction of its programs and projects.

State-wide member network

QDN's state-wide network continues to undertake significant work to support and promote opportunities for people with disability to receive information about issues that are important to them and to engage and have a say on all these matters.

Network members continue to highlight the NDIS as one of the most important issues for them, consistent with feedback from our member survey from 2013-2014. Housing, transport, employment and health have also been important issues for members.

Throughout all our activities, QDN's Board of Directors, staff and current members actively promote membership to strengthen our network, and this is reflected in our increase in membership this year.

QDN has undertaken a wide range of activities to grow and build the state-wide network including:

- Stalls holding promotional material at events such as:
 - Logan Expo – “Breaking Barriers - Opening Doors” Disability Post School Options, 18 July 2014;
 - Ipswich Expo – “Fresh Futures”, 6 August 2014;
 - Caboolture “Is Everybody Here” Expo, 16 September 2014;
 - Cerebral Palsy League Health Expo, 10 December 2014.

- Promotion of membership at over 100 *Ready to go* workshops across Queensland
- Conference presentations at:
 - QCOSS State Conference, October 2014
 - State-wide Disability Support Workers Conference, February 2015
 - Griffith Symposium series, November 2014 and April 2015
 - Roundtable on Issues for People with Intellectual Disability, May 2015

Building capacity - member participation

Access to information and resources which builds the capacity of people with disability to engage and empower people to have a voice, is essential to building a strong and vibrant network.

To support this, QDN has also had the opportunity to sponsor members to attend a wide range of QDN led, QDN partnered and broader sector events, including:

- McClure welfare review forum held in partnership with the Queensland Voice for Mental Health, August 2014
- A&TSIDNQ Digital Stories Launch, September 2014
- Griffith University NDIS Symposium series, November 2014 and April 2015
- AGM, Regional Facilitator and Directors Information Session, December 2014
- NDS Conference, March 2015
- Queensland Roundtable on Issues for People with Intellectual Disability, May 2015

Griffith University has hosted two symposiums in partnership with the Community Resource Unit and QDN to provide updated information, share ideas, knowledge and experience in the lead up to the application of the NDIS.



Members have found the events to be valuable forums for sharing ideas and knowledge. QDN members and staff made presentations from both lived and professional experience.

QDN and QV Forum and Consultation – McClure Report August 2014

Queensland Round Table on Issues for People with Intellectual Disability 2015 Theme: Creativity and Collaboration for 'Choice and Control'

The 2015 Roundtable on Issues for People with Intellectual Disability took place on Friday 29th May 2015. This event, held annually, highlights, discusses and debates specific issues for people with lived experience of intellectual disability in Queensland.

The Roundtable organising committee members are WWILD-SVP Association Inc., Community Living Association Inc. (CLA), Endeavour Foundation, Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy Inc. (QADA), and Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) representatives and volunteers - self-advocates, academics and parents.



Peter Tully, Dan Rivers, Sam Matheson, Alex Baker, Kane Wojciki.

The Roundtable was well attended by many QDN members, especially members from our Hot Topics groups in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The Roundtable provided an opportunity to showcase the achievements of people with intellectual disability, and this year also highlighted the issues for people with complex needs, those experiencing significant social disadvantage and/or exclusion and those who may not have their needs met by the NDIS.

Donna Best, Peer Facilitator from the *Ready to go* Project and founding member of the QDN's Hot Topics group, was QDN's representative organising committee member for the Roundtable. Donna said the day was a success because it showed the great things that people with intellectual disability can achieve if they work together and reported the following about the Roundtable: "It was good that we had over 100 people attend the Roundtable, and over one-third of them were people with intellectual disability, including some people who travelled to be there. It was also nice to see all different people there and a broad range of people from Government, organisations and people with disability. It is important that we raised the issues for people who might get left behind by the NDIS such as people with mental health issues, victims of crime, people living in long stay health facilities, and people in boarding houses and hostels."

Local networks

QDN continues to support a number of Local Network Groups across the state. Local Network Groups usually meet on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Meetings are used to mentor and support members, discuss and action local issues and to provide feedback on “bigger picture” policy issues in line with QDN’s Strategic Plan.

QDN supported the following Networks during 2014-15:

Networks

Brisbane Local Area Network
Gold Coast Local Area Network
Brisbane Hot Topics
Gold Coast Hot Topics
Regional Facilitators Network

Brisbane

The **Brisbane Local Area Network** met seven times this year. Members shared stories and experiences from their lived experience of disability and life issues.

Brisbane Group members discussed issues including Quality and Safeguarding under the NDIS, issues around public transport and the Griffith Symposiums that members attended.

Gold Coast

The **Gold Coast Local Area Network** met seven times this year. One topic discussed was employment and the Employment Framework Consultation. This was an insightful conversation for members as many people from the group work in different roles around the community.

Members shared their experiences about working and getting a job and provided some valuable feedback which informed QDN’s response to the Employment Framework.

Other topics discussed during the year included the NDIS and changes it could make to people’s lives, including what things should be included in the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Framework to keep people safe, and what activities people can be involved in, in the local community.

Hot Topics

Hot Topics groups are forums for people with intellectual disability to speak up for themselves and learn about the things that matter to them. There are active Hot Topics groups in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast and both have developed the information below, to report on their key activities during 2014-15.

Brisbane Hot Topics

Brisbane Hot Topics has had a busy year with lots of change. Our focus has again been on the NDIS and making sure people with intellectual disability in Queensland are heard LOUD and CLEAR.

One of the changes was meeting at the Community Resource Unit office and we extend our thanks to CRU for hosting us. We are now back meeting at the QDN office. Another change is our name - we are now Brisbane Local Support Hot Topics Group. We have some funding and a budget!

We continued to be involved in the Plan Ahead workshops assisting people with intellectual disability learn about the NDIS. Two of our Brisbane Hot Topics members, Donna Best and Alison Maclean, have been working as Peer Co-facilitators for this project. Some new people have also recently joined our group after hearing about us at Plan Ahead workshops.

Many of our members went to the Roundtable for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Our Brisbane Group focused on advocacy and the NDIS, housing, and getting our message across.

At the moment we have about eight members who come regularly. We meet six times a year. We want everyone to know we want to keep speaking up and invite new members to join us.

Gold Coast Hot Topics

Gold Coast Hot Topics meets formally every second month and socially every other month. This year the Gold Coast Hot Topics group has met formally seven times.

Topics discussed have included transitioning the group to be a Local Support Group in line with QDN's role as a Disability Support Organisation, the NDIS and how to be safe in the community.

A highlight this year has been Gold Coast Hot Topics members being part of the *Ready to go* project and members being sponsored to attend the Queensland Roundtable on Issues for People with Intellectual Disability.

This year the group also co-designed their own group budget and group guidelines and got involved in the Annual General Meeting.

Regional Facilitator's Group

The Regional Facilitators group is made up of QDN's Volunteer Facilitators from across regional and rural Queensland. The group meets by teleconference on a monthly basis. Each teleconference meeting includes a catch-up from each region followed by feedback on current QDN issues and developments in relation to policy and project issues as they arise.

In 2014-15 Regional Facilitators held nine teleconferences and met face to face on two occasions.

Regional Facilitators continue to play a key role in shaping and influencing QDN's work. Teleconferences have provided the opportunity to gain additional perspective, lived experience and local insight to inform consultations and our broader systemic policy work.

QDN took advantage of the high number of Regional Facilitators attending the AGM in December 2014 and the Griffith Symposium in April 2015 to hold two capacity building and information sharing sessions. Both of these opportunities to bring together Regional Facilitators to engage with QDN's work and future direction were energizing and productive experiences.

Regional Facilitator Profile

Name: Peter and Linda Tully **Region:** Ipswich **Regional Facilitator since:** 2010
QDN Member Since: 2008

What Networks, Committees and Groups are you active with? We are very highly involved with our Federal, State members of Parliament and local councillors. We actively engage with all service providers from Gatton to Wacol and Peter co-ordinates and chairs the monthly Ipswich Interagency meeting. We are also on the founding committee for the Ipswich Fresh Futures Market.

Best thing about your region? We have a network with services providers, people with disability and local members of parliament, and everyone is right behind the NDIS.

What is the top disability issue in your region? The biggest issue for people with disability in Ipswich is the lack of awareness of available local support services and a lack of a forum to share experiences in the region.

Taxi services are also a big problem for people with disability in Ipswich due to drivers not wanting to pick up people with disability and the limited numbers of accessible taxis.

What is your highlight from this year? Just want to say thanks again to the QDN team for the Regional Facilitator Training and Information Day held in April 2015. After the two days of training we felt energised and excited about the future direction of QDN.

Peter & Linda Tully
Ipswich Regional Facilitators

Ready to go Peer Facilitators

As part of the *Ready to go* project, QDN has trained a team of 16 people with disability, including people with intellectual and other disability as Peer Facilitators. They are running workshops across the state, educating other people with intellectual disability about the NDIS and opening up people's thinking about their hopes and dreams for the future.

QDN believes peer support and peer led education is a powerful vehicle for bringing about change in the lives of people with intellectual disability. Through the workshops, the impact of the peer learning environment has seen participants grow in their confidence, knowledge, and self-esteem around being in the driver's seat on their journey to the NDIS, and planning for a good life. QDN's peer development program focuses on developing leadership, mentoring skills, group facilitation and content knowledge around the NDIS.

Ready to go Peer Facilitators have grown in their own confidence and knowledge and are a strong group of emerging leaders and self-advocates.



*Peer Facilitator training
New Farm February 2015*

NDIS Participant Readiness work with people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

In recognition of the importance of supporting people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, QDN in partnership with the Community Resource Unit (CRU) and Mamre-Pave the Way have funded Amparo Advocacy to undertake specific NDIS Participant Readiness work with this population. Their activities have included:

- Working in partnership with multicultural organisations and networks to inform multicultural workers and community leaders of the upcoming NDIS through workshops, forums and network meetings;
- Promoting the NDIS to ethnic community leaders and communities;
- Raising awareness of key issues for CALD communities to the NDIS through targeted information sessions and workshops;
- Development of culturally appropriate resources;
- Information sheets and video development.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland



*A&TSIDNQ Members
NAIDOC Week
celebrations July 2014*

QDN continued work during 2014-2015 with the consortium as a group of organisations that are supporting the planning and next priorities of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland (A&TSIDNQ). One of the highlights this year was the launch of the Yarning Circle Digital Stories. Minister Tracy Davis launched this resource at an event in Maryborough on 17 September 2014 which was attended by up to 100 people.

To maximise the capacity of this network to operate in a culturally sensitive way, in February 2015, QDN negotiated the transfer of the A&TSIDNQ to Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy (QADA) to host the A&TSIDNQ and support its activities until 1 July 2016.

In its work to date QADA has:

- Developed a new network flyer 'Are You Ready' for circulation and promotion of the network (3,000 hard copies printed plus soft copy for circulation);
- Engaged with key stakeholders and local communities in a number of locations across Queensland including:
 - National Disability Insurance Agency (Brisbane)
 - National Disability Insurance Agency (North Queensland)
 - First Peoples Disability Network Australia
 - Synapse
 - Reconciliation Queensland
 - Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
 - Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement Services
 - Carbal Medical Centre
 - Yulu Burri Ba Medical Clinic
 - Aboriginal Hostels Limited
 - Medicare Local
 - Apunipima Cape York Health Council
- Hosted a stall at the Laura Dance Festival in Far North Queensland with the NDIA, enabling people to learn about the A&TSIDNQ and the NDIS. At this



event, news of A&TSIDNQ was well received and many valuable connections were made.

- Included articles in QADA's e-newsletter distributed to 2,247 members, informing people about the A&TSIDNQ and reporting on the Laura Dance Festival.
- Represented feedback from A&TSIDNQ members to inform three policy submissions to Government.

Communication with members

In this financial year, QDN produced seven e-Bulletins to inform members of the work of the organisation, including two special State election issues in January 2015. The e-Bulletins are also a tool to present and advocate for the views of people with disability to be included in policies, processes and decisions that impact on their lives.

The QDN e-Bulletin is emailed or posted to over 1,400 people across the state each edition and is widely read by people with disability, families, supporters and Government representatives.

QDN has also commenced producing a monthly email to members to update them about events and key issues on the alternative months that the e-Bulletin isn't distributed.

News items are also distributed through the QDN website www.qdn.org.au. During this year, 33,618 visitors made 107,761 visits to the QDN website.



*Front: Gary Matthews, Peter Gurr, Peter Tully.
Back: Caleb Rook, Paige Armstrong, Lesley
Chenoweth. Griffith Symposium April 2015*

Goal 2: To let people know about the lives of people with disability and how to best talk with us

QDN has undertaken a wide range of activities to raise awareness about the lives of people with disability and how to engage with us.

Community and stakeholder education

QDN led and partnership events:

- Digital Stories 'The Yarning Circle' launched by Minister Tracy Davis, 17 September 2014
- Celebration of Digital Stories in Brisbane, 5 December 2014
- Regional Facilitators' and Directors' Conversation, 6 December 2014
- Griffith NDIS Symposium "**Implementing the NDIS in Queensland**", 8 December 2014
- Griffith Symposium on "**What makes a great support worker? Opportunities and challenges for support**" in the NDIS, 20 April 2015

The Yarning Circle



Presentations

- QCROSS State Conference Presentation – "**Building Capacity and Resilience through innovation: Ready to go project**", 17 October 2014
- **Ready to go**: Brown Bag Lunch meeting, 22 October 2014
- State-wide Disability Support Workers Conference – "**Supporting people with intellectual disability to get ready for NDIS**", 24 February 2015
- Metro North Hospital and Health Service "**Preparing for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**" forum held, 16 April 2015
- Griffith Symposium on "**What makes a great support worker? Opportunities and challenges for support workers – What is the role of the service user**" in the NDIS, 20 April 2015
- The 2015 Roundtable on Issues for People with Intellectual Disability "**Creativity and collaboration for 'choice and control'**", 29 May 2015
- **Disability in Professional Practice Presentation** to Human Services and Social Work students from Logan and Gold Coast Campus of Griffith University and Panel Host, May 2015
- Presentation to final year Human Services and Social Work students "**Disability policy perspectives**" from Gold Coast Campus of Griffith University, May 2015
- QDN Chairperson, Nigel Webb, was on a **Question and Answers Forum** with Fiona Anderson from National Disability Insurance Agency at

“**Breaking Barriers – Logan Expo**” facilitated by Cr Swenson, 18 July 2014

- **Ready to go project presentation** to small service provider workshop “The 30 Mob”, 1 June 2015
- Metro North Health Forum “**National Disability Insurance Scheme**”, 17 June 2015

Forums or workshops

- Community Forum - When Medical Treatment is Futile, 15 July 2014
- QAI Forum: Continuing the de-institutionalisation of people with disability, 8 August 2014
- Consumer Health Forum, 29 August 2014
- NDS Forum: Collaboration approaches and transformational change in human services, 9 September 2014



Dame Quentin Bryce, Donna Best and Karin Swift, DV Taskforce Launch, January 2015

- NDIS Essential Briefing, 26 September 2014
 - NDS, Essentials in Visual Thinking and Graphic Facilitation Workshop, 4 November 2014
 - DV Taskforce, 20 January 2015
 - Griffith NDIS Symposium, 8 December 2014
 - QShelter Housing Forum, 17 December 2014
 - Working with CALD Communities Forum, 3 February 2015
 - Governance for NFPs Workshop, 24 February 2015
 - DSO National workshop, 26 March 2015
- NDS Conference, 31 March 2015
 - Finding your Leadership Niche, 15 May 2015
 - QAI Launch dis-abled Justice, 28 May 2015

Website

The QDN Website has undergone a complete rebuild. The new site is more accessible and easier to navigate and contains more valuable information for members. QDN continues to use the website as a way of communicating and promoting the work of the organisation.

Media Releases

During the period QDN has distributed nine media releases including a joint media release with Queensland Advocacy Incorporated refuting two articles in the Courier Mail that sought to demonise people receiving disability support pensions. Other topics have included the federal budget, the Queensland Election, the NDIS and QDN joining calls for an independent national inquiry into disability service providers.

QDN has been successful in providing comment and interviews to a number of local radio stations on the *Ready to go* project including ABC Radio Mackay, HOT FM Cairns Radio and SEAFM Mackay Radio.

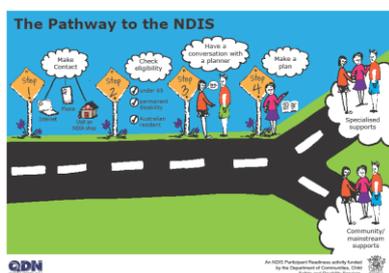
Social Media

Over the reporting period QDN has established a much more significant social media presence. QDN and the *Ready to go* Project each have a Facebook page with hundreds of likes and shared post, articles and stories. The QDN Facebook Group has also become increasingly active with members posting numerous articles and stories to the group. QDN also has a Twitter and YouTube account.

As at 30 June 2015, the QDN Facebook page had 314 likes and the *Ready to go* Facebook page had 414 likes.

Program delivery

Ready to go project



QDN has been funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for the state-wide *Ready to go* project; an NDIS Participant Readiness Initiative. QDN is one of nine organisations funded under this initiative to help people with disability prepare for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This project builds upon the pilot Plan Ahead workshops that were delivered in 2013-2014.

QDN's commitment in doing this work is to ensure a dedicated focus upon disability groups who 'may get left behind' or become excluded from the NDIS conversation.

Through *Ready to go*, QDN is supporting Queenslanders with intellectual or learning disability to get ready for the NDIS, and also have a focus on working with people living in Level 3 supported accommodation.

QDN has designed the project in a developmental way to meet the learning needs of participants and offers a range of different workshops and learning opportunities from introductory Plan Ahead workshops to masterclasses.

These workshops are delivered and led by people with disability. During the year the project team have worked to develop an online resource to ensure a wide range of

people across Queensland can have access to the information. The online resource will be released later in 2015.



*Redcliffe
Masterclass 16
June 2015*

During 2014-2015, Ready to go project delivered **67 Plan Ahead and master classes to**

- **620 people with disability**
- **259 support people who are carers, family and support workers**

Ready to go has also delivered presentations and training to **949 people** at conferences, workshops, forums and meetings across a wide range of audiences.

**“Thank you for the
opportunity to talk with
my son about his future”**

*Mother of participant –
Ipswich Masterclass 24
June 2015*

Goal 3: Influence governments and others to bring about full and equal participation and citizenship

QDN continues to influence across Local, State and Commonwealth levels of Government through its activities of systemic policy and advocacy to ensure the voice of people with disability is represented and heard.

It has been a significant year for reforms through the transformational change of the NDIS. QDN has been able to engage with members and allies to inform engagement and consultations around these critical policy issues which will directly impact upon the lives of people with disability.

During 2014-2015, QDN made contributions at 22 policy consultations/forums and submitted 11 policy submissions. QDN also engaged with members of parliament, departmental representatives and key decision makers about issues important to our members and the lives of people with disability.



Adjourned Annual General Meeting 29 December 2014

Disability Support Organisation (DSO)

In 2015, Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) successfully applied for funding from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) as one of 18 organisations across Australia as a Disability Support Organisation (DSO). This initiative focuses on the establishment of local groups to support the implementation of the NDIS. This work builds on QDN's traditional local network meetings which have been a valuable and important part of the organisation's activities and sits with the transition of this funding to a national scheme.

A DSO supports people with disability connect with peers to be a collective voice to help people move towards the life they want. To facilitate people with a disability to connect with peers QDN is establishing 10 local support groups in targeted locations throughout Queensland in 2015 and an additional 10 groups in 2016.

In establishing these groups QDN has been undertaking consultation with key stakeholders. The community engagement has included two community conversations in Brisbane on 26 June 2015 to discuss the formation of two local support groups in Brisbane. The conversations brought together 30 people with disability, representatives from other peer networks and other key stakeholders to discuss QDN's role as a Disability Support Organisation and the local support groups.



*Community conversation
people with disability 26 June
2015*

The conversations gave people the opportunity to share their stories and experiences and to connect up with people they had not met before. Attendees from both the outer southside and outer northside of Brisbane are now planning to get together locally for a coffee catch up.

Similar community conversations are planned for later in 2015 including Townsville, Logan and Caboolture.

QDN has established a Strategic Advisory Committee to assist in the delivery of the DSO project. The Committee's role includes providing high level strategic advice and input into the work of QDN as a DSO and the establishment of Local Support Groups throughout Queensland. This Committee consists of:

- Matt McCracken - QDN Board of Directors;
- Paige Armstrong - QDN CEO;
- Fiona Anderson - National Disability Insurance Agency;
- Geoff Rowe - Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy Inc;
- Margaret Rogers – Community Resource Unit;
- Valmae Rose - Queensland Council of Social Services;
- Frances Porter - Spinal Injuries Australia; and
- Lesley Chenoweth - Griffith University.

The Committee held their first meeting on 18 June, 2015.

In 2015 QDN will be establishing eight local support groups in targeted areas throughout Queensland, as well as two virtual groups. Networks/Groups that have previously been run through QDN are transitioning to become Local Support Groups under this initiative. The Brisbane Hot Topics, Brisbane Network, Gold Coast Hot Topics and Gold Coast Network groups will become Local Support Groups.

QDN has been working with key stakeholders in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Logan, Caboolture, Redcliffe/North Lakes and Townsville, towards establishing groups in these areas. Members and staff from QDN are meeting with organisations in these areas to discuss peer support groups already in existence and how QDN can work collaboratively with these organisations. Two virtual local support groups will also be launched later in 2015. One virtual group will be a women's group and focus on topics that are important to this group. The second group will be for all people with disability and will focus on topics trending now, with a focus upon the NDIS and mainstream services such as housing, transport, health, aids and equipment, education and community infrastructure.

Queensland Election

During the 2015 Queensland State Election Campaign QDN members engaged with local candidates from all political parties. Members emailed, called and met with local candidates across Queensland to help them better understand the lived experience of disability and what Queenslanders with disability need from our State Government.

QDN also released a policy platform calling for bi-partisan commitments across five main areas that impact upon the lives of people with disability.

The Platform received written responses from most of the political parties and candidates.

Engagement with members of Parliament

QDN has met members from the three major parties (the Liberal National Party, The Australian Labor Party Queensland, and the Queensland Greens) including Premier the Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk, previous Disability Minister Tracy Davis, new Disability Minister the Hon Coralee O'Rourke and Minister for Housing the Hon Leeanne Enoch.

These meetings have been productive, giving QDN insight into the direction of government and an opportunity for QDN to make members' voices heard on key issues.

NDIS trial site visit

With QDN's work in 2014-2015 having a strong focus on the NDIS, the CEO also visited the trial site of the Hunter Region with the Deputy Director General – Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in November 2014. This visit has given QDN information and insight into what the key issues are in the trial site and informed our systemic policy work here in Queensland.

Policy Submissions

QDN has undertaken a wide range of consultations with members to inform our policy and systems advocacy work over the period 2014-15.

To ensure QDN continues to speak with an informed and considered voice we have undertaken a wide range of consultations to be informed by members' lived experience.

Members have been consulted by email, post, interviews both in person and by phone, survey, at focus groups and at regular group meetings. QDN has also regularly consulted with Regional Facilitators, Group Convenors and Hot Topics Facilitators.

Additionally, QDN collaborated with key sector organisations aligned with QDN's values, within the disability sector in Queensland, to inform the development of QDN's work.

One of our key pieces of policy work this year was QDN's submission to the McClure Report into Welfare Reform and Review in July and August 2014, informed by our consultations. QDN hosted a joint member/stakeholder consultation forum with the Queensland Voice for Mental Health on 8 August, 2014. This forum assisted in informing QDN's policy submission in response to the Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform: A New System of Better Employment and Social Outcomes.

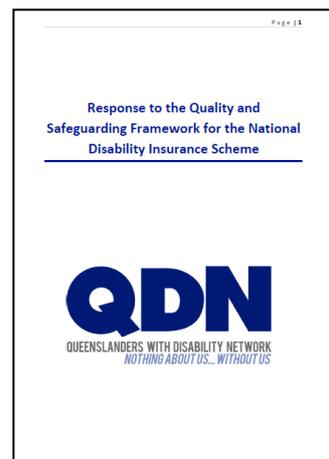
National Disability Insurance Scheme

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Presentation at the Public Hearing to the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme – Queensland's Readiness.
- Ministerial Advisory Group member: QTAG - Queensland Transition Advisory Group, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Price Waterhouse Coopers NDIS Readiness, *Community Capacity Building in Small Rural and Remote Communities* Steering Group
- Consultations in Cloncurry, Barcaldine and Normanton. Reference group member - NDIS Capacity Building in Three Discrete and Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, Price, Waterhouse Coopers Indigenous Consulting
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Consultation
- NDIA Pre-planning and Planning Consultation
- Steering Committee Member – National Report to NDIA: Pre-planning and planning (JFA Purple Orange)

Submissions

- Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Policy Framework
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework Consultations
- Written submission to Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme



Employment

Consultations, committees and presentations

- McClure Welfare Review Report - Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform: A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes
- Disability Employment Framework Forum: People with disability, Brisbane

Submissions

- The National Employment Framework
- Welfare Review Submission - Response to the Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform: A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes

Housing

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Australian Network for Universal Housing Design (ANUHD)
- Queensland Action for Universal Housing Design

Health

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Metro South Hospital and Health Disability Advisory Committee
- Check-UP, NDS & QDN workshop on NDIS gaps and opportunities across Disability Services and Primary Health Care Sectors

Submissions

QDN provided input through the Australian Association of Social Workers Queensland Branch for a submission on the Mental Health Bill 2015.

Metro South Health held its first Disability Advisory Committee meeting on Thursday 11th June, 2015.

This committee will develop a Disability Service Plan to enhance health services for people with disability and prepare for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The committee includes people with disability, disability support organisations and representatives from Metro South Health streams and facilities. In coming months there will be opportunities for Metro South staff, patients and the public to provide input into the Disability Service Plan.

Source: Metro South Health Facebook page post June 2015



*Metro South Disability
Advisory Committee June
2015*

Transport and accessibility

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Queensland Rail DDA Advisory Group
- Transport and Main Roads Access Committee
- Public Transport Focus Group
- Bus Stop DDA Compliance Consultation

Submissions

- Australian Human Rights Commission consultation: input to the Australasian Rail Association Exemption from Transport Standards application
- Review of the Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards, 2010

Advocacy and human rights

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Democracy in the Community (Electoral Commission Queensland)
- Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dog Review Panel
- Community Safeguards Coalition (CSC)
- The Zero Tolerance to Abuse Project Reference Group, NDS national project
- Social Action Partners Advisory Group with the University, NSW and People With Disability Australia

Submissions

- Senate Inquiry into Violence, Abuse and Neglect Against People with Disability in Institutional Settings

- Human Rights Bill and Legislation in Queensland – sector ally and signatory to letter to Minister
- Response to the Australian Law Reform Commission: Equality, Capacity and Disability in Commonwealth Laws Discussion Paper

Goal 4: Grow an effective, sustainable and accountable organisation that reflects our values, vision and mission

As a Company Limited by Guarantee, QDN has a strong commitment to growing an effective, sustainable and accountable organisation that reflects our values, vision and mission. Corporate governance is a key factor to delivering on this for our members, and our work in influencing policy to improve the lives of people with disability.

QDN has undertaken a number of important activities in this area of corporate governance during 2014-2015 and is in a strong position as an organisation to move forward into the future.

Long-term sustainability

QDN's budget for 2014-15 was similar in funding to the previous financial year, with NDIS Participant Readiness funding enabling QDN to maintain its focus on ensuring vulnerable people are not 'left behind' in the rollout of the NDIS.

Quality Management System

QDN strives to incorporate a quality framework into all of its work and operates under ISO9001:2008.

In May 2015, QDN underwent re-certification against the ISO Framework and was successful and received a very positive report. QDN will continue to use this information as part of its continuous improvement and improving our corporate governance.

Board governance and renewal

Post the 2014 AGM, the Board has engaged in a process of review and renewal. As part of this process, Directors decided to recruit for an honorary Company Secretary to ensure best practice around governance arrangements in the organisation. We were fortunate enough to secure the services of Colleen Papadopolus. Colleen, who comes with a great wealth of knowledge and experience, both in the USA and Australia, is actively working with Directors to build the capacity and broaden the skill-set of the Board to put QDN into a stronger position into the future, across all areas of corporate governance.

Board development

QDN's Board of Directors met regularly during the year to make decisions on strategic direction, governance, staffing and financial matters.

The Board of Directors has worked alongside staff to develop strong plans for the future of QDN.

Name	Position	Location	Board member since
Nigel Webb	Chairperson	Brisbane	2009
Rachel Matthews	Vice Chairperson	Brisbane	2009
Willie Prince	Secretary	Brisbane	2008
Lyn Coyle	Treasurer	Far North Qld	2011
Sharon Boyce	Board Member	South West Qld	2013
Matt McCracken	Board Member	Caboolture	2014
John MacPherson	Board Member	Brisbane	2002
Colleen Papadopoulos	Company Secretary	Brisbane	2015

Staff recruitment and retention

QDN had a stable team of staff members during 2014-15, with growth in the organisation through the *Ready to go* project.

Mark Edmonds (Network facilitator) finished at QDN in September, 2014 to move onto other opportunities at Carers Queensland through their NDIS Participant Readiness project. We also farewelled Karen Hardy after four years as QDN's part-time administration worker. Karen is currently enjoying a life-style change in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

A number of consultants worked alongside QDN staff during 2014-2015 to assist with our work.

Staff		Status
Chief Executive Officer	Paige Armstrong	Current
Network Facilitator	Mark Edmonds	To September, 2014
Network and Policy Officer	Caleb Rook	Current
Disability Support Organisation	Olivia Spadina	Current
<i>Ready to go</i> Project Manager	Michelle Moss	Current
Administration Officer	Janell Tong	Current

Business Coordinator	Pat Morgan	Current
Administration Assistant	Karen Hardy	To March, 2015
<i>Ready to go</i> Senior Project Officer	Michelle Crozier	Current
<i>Ready to go</i> Project Officer	Karin Swift	Current
<i>Ready to go</i> Communications Project Officer	Mel Geltch	Current
<i>Ready to go</i> Project Officer	Lynda Alsop	Current
<i>Ready to go</i> Project Support Officer	Lyn Canning	Current

Consultants

A number of consultants have helped QDN meet its goals during 2014-15, as part of QDN's work.

Consultants	
QDN consultants	Elissa Farrow
	Carol Holt
<i>Ready to go</i> consultants	Jen Barrkman

Retiring Directors – QDN Board

This year we have three of our Directors retiring from their positions on the Board. They each have brought a wealth of experience, knowledge and different perspectives to the governance of the organisation. QDN would like to thank Lyn Coyle, Rachel Matthews and Willie Prince for their dedication and commitment to QDN, as Directors, in the Executive roles they have taken on, and as active members of the organisation.

Each retiring Director has shared their thoughts on QDN's achievements, their highlights as a Director, their Executive roles and their hopes for QDN into the future.

Rachel Matthews

2010 – 2015, Deputy Chair

“QDN has grown extensively in membership over the last six years and coming through a massive leap forward in governance practices, is now in a strong position as a company limited by guarantee. There have been many challenges with the introduction of the NDIS, changes in governments and funding arrangements. There have been dark days when we wondered how we would have the financial resources to maintain our precious team. However, with the drive and imagination of our staff we have moved forward into a good position. I have been delighted to be the Board representative on QDN's Plan Ahead and *Ready to go* projects since their original inception. I have stuck my oar in at various stages of the development, having been at many of the sessions, getting to know the Peer Facilitators and meeting many inspirational people.

It was QDN's motto: 'nothing about us without us' that drew me to QDN in the first place. As a person with a progressive neurological disease [MS], I had never been involved with the disability sector before moving to Brisbane ten years ago. I believe my extensive experience campaigning at the grass roots level for another minority group [community arts] in regional and remote Queensland over forty years, gave me a useful skill-set and regional perspective to contribute to QDN. I have appreciated the opportunity to be on the Board and, in addition to contributing my skills and experience, I have appreciated the opportunity to learn from the other people who it has been my privilege to work with, especially Nigel as Chair. I still intend to participate in many QDN activities, but feel now is a good time to make room for new blood on the Board.

QDN has built a great team and I'm confident the organisation will continue to grow and develop as the mouthpiece for all Queenslanders with disability.”

Lyn Coyle 2012 - 2015

2014 – 2015, Treasurer

“I see QDN's commitment to people with disability and its ethos 'nothing about us without us' as its greatest strength. I believe QDN's work over the years, highlighting

the issues and experiences of people with disability, has been instrumental in bringing about the NDIS and helping to improve the system.

As a Director, I have enjoyed seeing the organisation thrive, and since my involvement it has grown and is progressing. QDN has never been stationary and is always active. It is successful and in a good financial position and still has lots of committed people willing to be involved.

I think it's important for the Board to be representative of people across our State, and it has been important to me to make sure things aren't Brisbane centric so I have been a "thorn in peoples' sides" about maintaining a focus on rural and remote issues.

I hope for the future that QDN maintains its independence and unique position of being for the people and by the people, and remembers its core values, its history and the people that started the organisation. I hope it remains responsive to members, and can get out there and move around the state visiting and connecting.

I have enjoyed my time and it has been really helpful and I thank QDN for all they have done and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the organisation."

Willie Prince, 2009 – 2015

Secretary 2010-2015

"QDN has grown to be a vibrant organisation that strives to support everyone. We need QDN to be here to be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves, and for people who want to get information, build people's knowledge and help people learn about things like the NDIS.

For me, my highlight as a Director is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland. I have been there from the very beginning, and I have valued the way QDN has supported the network from its very infancy and helped guide us along the way, and in turn we were able to assist QDN in relation to our awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I believe my time on QDN's Board has helped build better understanding and better relationships with Aboriginal people with disability. It has also helped me grow and mature to strive to be a better person in understanding the issues around disability.

We have a long road ahead as we continue to make sure people can access the funds and supports they need. However, QDN stands out as a leader and continues to be the voice, showing members that we can be that strong voice.

I hope for the future that QDN continues to grow as an organisation, involves its members wherever possible, gives the members a voice within the organisation, and help it grow, be strong and vibrant and a voice for everyone into the future."

Part 3: Financial overview

The report below is a summary of QDN's income and expenditure for the 2014-2015 financial year. (Note that these figures do not include GST).

Income

QDN's total income for the 2014-2015 financial year was \$1,165,845. This was primarily comprised of:

\$305,170	QDN core business
\$650,000	<i>Ready to go</i> project
\$107,318	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Disability Network Queensland
\$ 30,000	Disability Support Organisation
\$ 21,609	Investments

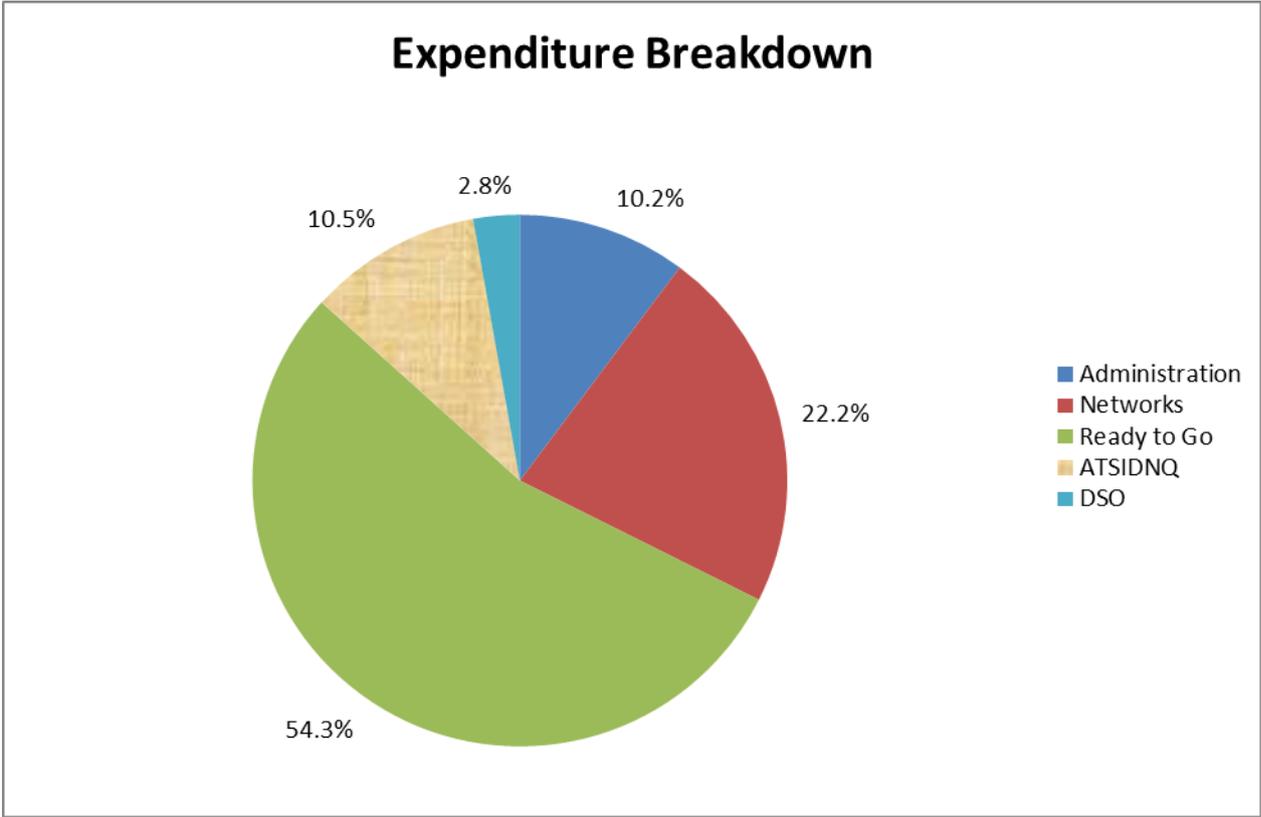
Expenditure

QDN's total expenditure for the 2014-2015 financial year was **\$1,046,306**.

The *Ready to go* project contributed to a large proportion of the expenditure. This project is funded to continue to December 2015. QDN has been contracted by the National Disability Insurance Agency to be a Disability Support Organisation (DSO), to establish up to 20 local support groups across the state. This contract extends to December 2016. In the 2014-2015 year QDN incurred \$30,052 of expenditure on DSO activities in the period.

QDN has used its core funds to continue to engage members from across the state on issues that impact upon their lives. Through engagement with the Network and members, QDN has been able to undertake specific activities that support issues that have been highlighted by the membership base.

QDN has continued to support members' participation in activities in a variety of ways in recognition of the various impacts that people experience in their life. Other expenditure has continued to reflect previous years in terms of rent, information technology, staff development and operational expenditure including governance, communication, regional member resourcing and staffing costs.



Surplus

The current surplus of **\$119,538** represents approximately 10% of QDN’s 2014-15 budget. The majority of this surplus relates to *Ready to go* project activities with funding supporting a committed program of work to December, 2015.

QDN's Board of Directors will also continue to explore ways of supporting the financial sustainability and viability of the organisation.

Part 4: Appendix

Organisational structure 2014-15

