
Queenslanders with Disability Network Annual Report 2015-2016

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 are active and valued citizens.

Our mission

Empowering people with disability to be fully included as citizens in the social and economic life of the community.

Our values

AUTHENTIC VOICE: We are with, and for, all people with disability and ensure those with limited or no voice are heard and valued.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION: We work together to learn from the collective experiences, values and wisdom of people with disability.

RIGHTS: We believe in, and model a human rights approach that 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 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:

- 756 Ordinary Members –
- And an additional 500 members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network who identify as Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders
- 489 Supporters
- 35 Corporate Members

There are also an additional 70 organisations or individuals who receive our e-Bulletin. There have been 96 new members and supporters added to our network in this financial year, demonstrating a growing membership base.

Chairperson's report

There has never been a more exciting time to be a Queenslander with a disability. 2015-2016 has been another successful and action packed year here at QDN with a focus of all our work staying true to our vision and mission that people with disability are active and valued citizens, included in the social and economic life of the community. I would like to thank my fellow Directors for your active involvement in many activities throughout our network, your commitment, time and efforts on the Board of QDN during this year.

Nothing about us without us has been at the forefront of our decision making as a Board of Directors, and in the delivery of the work of QDN this year. Our focus on peer led work has been evident across all parts of our work including National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant readiness, Local Support Groups, Regional Facilitators and most recently the establishment of a group of Policy Champions in the area of housing. Our work this year has showed our strong voice and the importance of people with disability leading, influencing and actively contributing to the solutions to bring about transformational change.

We were pleased to see the NDIS implementation gaining momentum this year with the early launch site in North Queensland from January 2016, and the signing of the bilateral agreement between the State and Commonwealth Governments on 17 March 2016. Queenslanders with disability look forward to the progressive roll out over the next three years and the access to much needed supports to enable people's social and economic participation in their communities. It is essential that people with disability and their families can access the NDIS in Queensland on time, and with the right support they need to participate in meaningful planning. We have seen that the implementation to date has experienced a number of challenges and will continue to monitor these impacts. QDN recognises that it has not been a smooth run for many people with disability, their families and carers and service providers in their transition. I believe it is essential that we make sure that this new system achieves its goals and aims, and that the value proposition remains focused on people with disability having real choice and demonstrated control and delivering better outcomes in their lives. We also need to make sure that the NDIS delivers National safeguards for people, especially people who experience increased vulnerabilities.

QDN's work in 2015-2016 as a Disability Support Organisation, supporting the establishment of locally based groups, led by people with disability is an integral part of the successful implementation of the NDIS and in particular the functions of Information, Linkages and Capacity Building. Peer led groups are a key mechanism to bring about community change and build inclusive communities. The Local Support Groups are demonstrating the benefits to both individuals and the community in helping people be ready for the NDIS, and building pathways for social and economic participation of, by and for people with disability. QDN local support

groups have many great examples and stories to share of work that has happened this year showing the power of groups of people with disability coming together with a shared purpose and vision, and the generosity of the community, families/carers, community organisations and both Local Government and State Government Departments as supporters and enablers.

QDN presented in Townsville to the inquiry conducted by Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and raised these important issues that impact upon successful implementation from the perspective of participants. QDN looks forward to hearing about the progress of the work of this Joint Standing Committee once the newly elected 45th Parliament presents this information.

QDN continues to have a focus on leadership, of, by and for people with disability. We were pleased to hold the LEADing Change forum at the Parliamentary Annexe on 19 May this year. It was a great event with over 100 people in attendance, including QDN members, people with disability, families/carers, supporters and representatives from Government, Chairman of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Mr Bruce Bonyhady, and State Government Departments. The forum was an opportunity to hear directly from people with disability how they are leading change in their own lives, their communities, and at the system level. QDN thanks Honorable Coralee O'Rourke, MP, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier of North Queensland for her support of this forum and for hosting it at Parliament House. We were pleased to have Minister O'Rourke come to QDN in February this year and be able to talk with her about the work that QDN has been doing in this area. Our peer facilitator representatives, Donna Best, Alex Baker and Peter Tully were able to share feedback and anecdotes of the work, and positive changes they are seeing as they deliver workshops across Queensland for people with intellectual and learning disability to help them get ready for NDIS.

We continue to talk with both State and Commonwealth Governments about the importance of investing in people with disability, to develop their skills, knowledge and build capacity to drive innovation in service and system planning, design and delivery of services across disability and mainstream including housing, health, transport, education, and employment.

QDN has also been focused on strengthening our public profile this year, with our footprint on social media, our physical presence through our marketing and branding, our communications, and our branding across our programs. During 2015-2016, we have refreshed our website, our publications, grown our members in our virtual network, and also our marketing materials such as t-shirts, hats etc. It has been great to see the visual imagery when QDN members are collectively at events with our new marketing materials.

Over the past two years, the Board has been working to achieve a long term goal around governance structure in line with a contemporary Australian Not For Profit Corporation Limited by Guarantee. This has involved a number of key steps including constitutional changes that

members voted on at the 2015 Annual General Meeting to enable the Board to restructure to gather the skills and capacity needed as QDN moves into the future. The Board of Directors looks forward to continuing to deliver on our long term goals which will position QDN as we transition to a market driven national environment.

The Board of Directors thanks the CEO, Paige Armstrong and QDN staff for your hard work, dedication and the achievements you have delivered during 2015-2016.

I would also like to thank all our friends, allies, consultants and partners for your support and for working with us this year. QDN would like to also acknowledge McCullough and Robertson Lawyers for the significant probono assistance provided to the Board of Directors with regards to governance and constitutional matters this year.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to each and every member for your continued engagement and support to QDN.

2016-2017 is shaping up to be another exciting year, with many opportunities for people with disability to continue to have a strong, united voice to influence and deliver better outcomes. QDN's strength lies in our members, our collective knowledge, skills and lived experience of disability. I encourage all members to help us grow QDN in this coming year, and build our strength and capacity to engage with Queenslanders with disability and be a strong state-wide knowledge network.

Nigel Webb

Chairperson

Chief Executive Officer's report

Over the past 12 months, QDN has demonstrated its strength, resilience, and agility within a dynamic and ever changing environment. As an organisation that is of, by, and for people with disability, I am proud of the work we have delivered and our achievements this year and our ability to provide a voice and the perspective of people with disability to Government, decision makers and other stakeholders.

Thank you to QDN members for your contribution to helping us strengthen our membership base across the state to ensure we can bring a diverse range of views and feedback to the policy table. Throughout this year, QDN members have continued to highlight the critical need for mainstream services to be able to respond to people with disability, across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of the state. This includes housing, health, transport, employment and justice. Of these, members have continued to tell us that housing is one of the highest priority areas.

In response to this, QDN hosted a forum on International Day of People with Disability on 3 December 2015. Over 45 people came together, including QDN members, allies, and supporters to look at what is QDN's vision and core principles for housing. We were pleased to have 22 of our members from areas across the State agree to becoming policy champions in this area of housing, to work together to progress this issue.

Following on from this in December, QDN has undertaken a significant amount of work in this area, with our 22 Housing Policy Champions central to the design and delivery of this work. I am very proud of the work that QDN has been able to do during this year including partnering with Griffith University and Community Resource Unit around the NDIS Symposium, a joint project with National Shelter and Griffith University to produce an issues paper, and work with the Department of Housing and Public Works to develop an easy to read version of their discussion paper, and specific engagement with people with disability to inform the development of their 10 year strategy for Department of Housing and Public Works. This work showcases the importance and benefits of having the voice and feedback of people with disability at all stages of the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of policy, services and program.

QDN in partnership with QCOSS, Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland, Griffith University and the Public Advocate held a one day forum on 17 August, 2015 called "**Marginalised Queenslanders influencing public policy workshop.**" Professor Gerrad Quinn, a leading authority on international and comparative disability law and policy and a professor of law at NUI Galway, stressed the delivery of good governance and good policy decision making relies on ensuring all parts of the community have a voice and a say. He talked about the importance of building the capacity of our most marginalised to be able to speak up and give feedback, as well as ensuring the system has the capacity and ability to engage with marginalised people. This greatly reflects the work that QDN has been doing over the past year, and the past 15 years to inform and influence public policy.

The NDIS continues to be a key issue within the policy environment, and I have been able to represent QDN on a number of committees and advisory groups including:

- Ministerial Advisory Group member: QTAG- Queensland Transition Advisory Group, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services – Participant Readiness Initiative organisational planning group
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services Partnership forum member
- Queensland NDIS Workforce Strategy Advisory Group – Workability Strategy

QDN has also provided policy responses and participated in key policy consultations during the year around NDIS, National Advocacy Framework, Quality and Safeguards, Employment, Human Rights and abuse, neglect and exploitation. We have presented to three Senate Standing Committees around NDIS, Abuse, and Human Rights. I am pleased that we have been able to engage with members to inform these positions, and our Regional Facilitators continue to play an integral role in connecting with what is happening in their communities across Queensland, and informing our work.

I echo Nigel's words with regards to QDN's achievements during 2015-2016 with our key events and delivery of outcomes across all our projects and programs. As a small organisation, QDN has been able to deliver, participate and contribute to a wide range of areas this year.

QDN has also continued to build upon our communication with members and the general public through our new website, new look publications and our membership renewal contact. QDN has been progressively contacting members to ensure details and information is correct on our database system, get your feedback on areas of interest, and how you want to engage with the organisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank QDN's staff during 2015-2016, both those who have moved onto other endeavours, and those who are still with us for your tireless dedication, commitment and contributions to the work and the organisation.

I would also like to thank the Board of Directors for your leadership, your stewardship and strategic insight. The work of the Board and the sub-committees has ensured that we maintain good governance, and deliver a sustainable, agile and ethical organisation that is here to serve its membership, and work towards influencing and delivering better outcomes for Queenslanders with disability.

We appreciate the support, collective wisdom and shared vision for the future of our partners and allies in working with us.

Finally, thank you to all our members, to our peer facilitators, regional facilitators, housing policy champions and local group convenors who take on specific roles and responsibilities in the organisation, to our members who are part of local support groups or come along to QDN events or workshops or forums, and to our members who engage with us in different ways. QDN appreciates the work you do to promote the values of the organisation, and ensure that it is focused on 'nothing about us without us.'

Paige Armstrong

Chief Executive Officer

Part 2: Our achievements 2015–16

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 acts as a knowledge network to give people with disability opportunities to receive information about issues important to them, and a way to engage and have a voice around these issues.

QDN members continue to highlight key areas of policy such as housing, transport, employment and health as important issues, as well as the NDIS.

Our Board of Directors, staff and current members have been active in growing and strengthening our membership. We have had an increase in members in the 2015-2016 year which is a positive reflection of the work undertaken, and the value that people with disability see in being connected, through receiving information and having a say in policy.

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

Stalls holding promotional material at events such as:

- **10 July 2015**, stall at **NAIDOC Week**, Musgrave Park, South Brisbane
- **19 September 2015** stall "**Gold Coast Inclusive Communities Expo - I can, you can, we can...**" "event to promote QDN activities, and encourage new members to join Gold Coast Hot Topics Group hosted by Gold Coast Hot Topics Group Convenor, Rob Ellis.
- **25 September 2015** stall at the "**Caboolture Community Expo- Is Everybody here?**" to promote the QDN events and the Caboolture Local Support Group, hosted by members from QDN.
- **26 August 2015**, stall at the "**Ipswich Fresh Futures Market Expo**" to promote QDN events and projects, hosted by Ipswich Regional Facilitator Peter Tully.
- **18 May 2016**, stall at the "**Brisbane Fresh Futures Market Expo**" to promote QDN events, and the Brisbane Local Support Group and Hot Topics, hosted by Peter Tully.

- **1 June 2016** stall at “**Breaking Barriers Opening Doors - Post-School Options & Disability Expo 2016**” to promote the Logan LSG to new members hosted by Logan Local Support Group Convenor, David Swift.
- Promotion of membership at over 130 *Ready to go* workshops across Queensland and in 17 rural and remote communities across Queensland.

Membership renewal project

During 2015-2016, QDN has been engaging with members via email and phone to confirm membership details, contact information and to gather information about people’s disability and areas of interest. QDN has undertaken this activity to ensure that its database and information contains up to date information, and helps the organisation have a better understanding of who are members are, how they want to engage with QDN and what we can do to better serve their needs.

Throughout this time, QDN has made contact with almost 500 people and updated information within our database system.

QDN has also reviewed our membership form to align with this, and ensure we are collecting relevant information to better serve our members.

Building capacity: Member participation and development

One of the most important ways for people to be able to engage in public policy, and to lead change in their own lives as empowered citizens, is access to information, development opportunities and resources.

As part of supporting individual member capacity building, QDN has sponsored members to attend QDN led events, events that we have partnered with and other sector led events. This has included representatives from the Board of Directors, Local Support Group Convenors, Regional Facilitators, Housing Policy Champions, Peer Facilitators, members of local support groups, and QDN members. Some of the key events have included:

Marginalised Queenslanders influencing public policy workshop: 17 August 2015

QDN partnered with QCOSS, Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland, Queensland Public Advocate and Griffith University to host an event for approximately 70 participants. The workshop featured key note speaker Professor Gerard Quinn, a leading authority on international and comparative disability law and policy and a professor of law at NUI Galway. Professor Quinn is the Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy at the School of Law which was established by a grant from Atlantic Philanthropies in 2008. The day included a keynote address by Professor Gerard Quinn focused on restoring the Human in human rights and how marginalised populations can influence public policy.

NDIS New World: Disability in the 21st Century Conference and Trade Show: 27-29 October 2015

QDN sponsored 20 QDN members to attend the Inaugural NDIS conference held in Brisbane on 27-29 October 2015. QDN members were able to gain knowledge, skills and learn more about the NDIS, opportunities, technology developments, as well as network with almost 2,500 people who attended the conference over three days. QDN also had a stall at the conference to promote our work and engage with new members and other key stakeholders on a national level.

Griffith University NDIS Symposium: Housing for people with disability: A Place to call home: 15 February 2016, Brisbane

QDN sponsored 20 members as Housing Policy Champions to attend the Griffith University NDIS Symposium around housing. The event provided a great opportunity for the newly formed group to network with key stakeholders in the housing sector, linking with private and community sector stakeholders around QDN's vision and housing principles going forward

Community Resource Unit (CRU) Conference: Claiming a Positive Future: The power of possibility, 20 and 21 May 2016, Brisbane

QDN sponsored a number of QDN members, and CRU (through their leadership development program) sponsored 6 QDN members to attend the CRU Conference, including people from outside Brisbane area. Participants heard about the work being undertaken both locally and internationally to encourage social participation for people with disability which they were able to then share with their groups.

Queensland Advocacy Incorporated: Advocacy Forums "Rights and advocacy for ALL people with disability" Part 1 – 15 September 2015 and Part 2- 30 May 2016

QDN sponsored local support group convenors to attend the forum and share their ideas and thoughts about what is needed going forward in the context of the NDIS.

Summary of events:

A summary of events during 2015-2016 that QDN has supported members to attend include:

- **Marginalised Queenslanders influencing public policy workshop**, 17 August, 2015, event partners: QDN, QCOSS, Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland, Queensland Public Advocate and Griffith University.
- **Griffith University NDIS Symposium: Employment opportunities for people with disability: 'Real jobs for real pay'** 24 August, 2015, event partners: QDN, CRU, Griffith University.
- **QAI – Disability Action Week Advocacy Forum "Rights and advocacy for ALL people with disability"**, 15 September 2015.
- **QCOSS State Conference**, 13 October 2015.

- **QDN AGM**, 17 October, 2015.
- **NDIS New World: Disability in the 21st Century Conference and Trade Show**, 27-29 October 2015, National Disability Insurance Agency.
- **QCOSS and Legal Aid Qld – Connecting disability sector workers and their clients to Legal Aid services**, 17 November, 2015.
- **QDN Your Voice Housing Policy Forum**, 3 December, 2015.
- **Griffith University NDIS Symposium: Housing for people with disability: a place to call home**, 15 February, 2016, event partners: QDN, Griffith University, Menzies Health Institute Queensland, CRU.
- **QDN LEADInG Change Forum**, 19 May, 2016. **Community Resource Unit Conference, Claiming a Positive Future: The power of possibility**, 20 and 21 May 2016, Brisbane.
- **Women with Cognitive Disability and Domestic Violence Discussion Forum**, 26 May, 2016, event partners: Community Living Association, WWILD-SVP, QDN.
- **QDN Brisbane Housing Strategy Targeted Consultation**, 27 May, 2016.
- **QAI – Disability Action Week Advocacy Forum “Rights and advocacy for ALL people with disability”**, 30 May, 2016.
- **QDN Sunshine Coast Housing Strategy Targeted Consultation**, 2 June, 2016, event partners: QDN, Inclusion Plus, Parent to Parent.

Building capacity: Leadership development

Peer led Local Support Group Convenor Training and Development: 30 July 2015, JFA Purple Orange

Belinda Epstein-Frisch and Allan Blackwood from JFA Purple Orange came to Brisbane to deliver some initial training with Queensland Group Convenors. The presenters gave Group Convenors an overview of the Disability Support Organisation initiative, how this project was working in other states and some key points on creating and facilitating networks that empower people with disability

Everything you do has an effect – QDN Leadership development days: 15 and 16 October, 2015

QDN held two training and development days on 15 and 16 October 2015 for 30 emerging leaders who take on valued roles within QDN including Regional Facilitators, Peer Facilitators, Group Convenors and Board Directors. These days had the focus of bringing people together, to build upon their knowledge, skills and leadership, and explore ways of working together to progress and lead change by and for people with disability across Queensland. The two days focused on the theme, ‘everything you do has an effect’ and how do we move into our own personal and collective leadership to bring about change as active citizens and build more inclusive communities.

Local Support Group Convenor – Facilitation Development Day “Working with groups” Brisbane, 26 February 2016

QDN held a training day in Brisbane on 26 February 2016 for Group Convenors to come share information with each other including working with groups, what was working well within the local support groups, as well as where they can find resources and up to date information.

Ready to go Peer Facilitator Training: 24 and 25 February 2016, Brisbane. Skill development and co-design training

QDN’s Ready to go peer facilitators came together for two (2) days of training in February to participate in a co-design process for the project with the changed focus and principles for the delivery of NDIS Participant Readiness activities to 30 June 2016. The two days also focused on skill development as facilitators, looking at what is important in facilitating and holding the space for people with intellectual disability to learn and participate well at our workshops.

LEADing Change Forum: 19 May 2016

Leadership, excellence, ability and direction by people with disability was showcased in the Undumbi Room at the Queensland Parliamentary Annexe. The forum brought together over 100 people, including QDN members, people with disability, families/carers, supporters and representatives from community, disability service providers, Members of the Queensland Parliament, and Mr Bruce Bonyhady, Chairman of the National Disability Insurance Agency. The forum provided an opportunity to hear from those leading change in their lives, their organisations and their communities, what is working well here and now in Queensland, and what is needed into the future to ensure people with disability can access what they need to grow as strong leaders.

“The feel of the forum at Parliament House was very positive, and QDN did an amazing job of making sure the information was accurate and accessible to everyone. Looking ahead into the future, I think more of these sorts of forums are needed. It really showed people with a disability they’ve got a choice. That’s powerful!” – Shahram Jabez, keynote speaker

Building capacity: information and communication with members E-Bulletin

During the 2015-2016 year, QDN produced **ten (10) e-Bulletins** to inform members of the work of the organisation, including a special edition in May for the LEADing Change Forum.

Distribution to over 1,500 people across Queensland

As well as being a way of delivering information to people with disability about important policy issues, they also provide a way of communicating and advocating the views of people with disability within the policy area, and decision makers.

QDN's e-Bulletin is sent both electronically or via the post. Its distribution is to over 1,500 people across the state, including people with disability, families, supporters and Government representatives.

QDN's Website

QDN launched its new website in December 2015 as a way of improving its ability to be able to communicate regularly with members and the general public about key issues, activities and important policy information. 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. QDN's website is now averaging 2,000 visitors a month.

Disability Support Organisations – Local Support Groups

QDN received funding from the National Disability Insurance Agency in 2015 to be a Disability Support Organisation and support the establishment of Local Support Groups in targeted areas throughout Queensland. This work is an integral part of the National Disability Strategy, and realising the key goals of the NDIS around the functions of Information, Linkages and Capacity Building and the power of peer led grass roots capacity building.

QDN established the following groups during 2015-2016 under this initiative:

- Brisbane Local Support Group
- Brisbane Hot Topics
- Gold Coast
- Gold Coast Hot Topics
- Virtual Local Support Group via QDN Facebook group
- Logan
- Caboolture
- North Lakes

- Townsville
- Sunshine Coast

QDN has also been engaging in developmental work to establish groups in the next financial year in Charters Towers, Mackay, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Normanton, Cairns and Ipswich.

A snapshot of highlights for 2015-2016 Local Support Groups

- 1695 members across all the groups including 704 members of groups in geographic locations who meet regularly face to face
- 10 groups established
- Developmental work undertaken for establishment of further 10 groups

65 face to face meetings held across Queensland by peer led local support groups

The following provides a summary of the key activities of each group

Brisbane Local Support Group

The Brisbane Local Support Group held meetings on the third Wednesday of every second month. The Group Convenors Rachel Matthews and Geoffrey Cooper have facilitated discussions around topics like housing for people with disability as well as inviting guest speakers to talk to the group about topics from consumer rights and responsibilities to transport issues in Brisbane.

Brisbane Hot Topics Local Support Group

Brisbane Hot Topics Local Support Group met on the last Friday of the month to discuss topics from housing to advocacy. Donna Best, Group Convenor with Jen Barrkman Group Facilitator, invited speakers to talk to the group about a variety of topics including Michelle O'Flynn from Queensland Advocacy Incorporated talking about advocacy and the NDIS and Nance Haxton, ABC journalist speaking on getting your message across to the media. The group also provided feedback to the Department of Housing and Public Works discussion paper to inform the Housing Department's 10 year strategic plan which includes housing under the NDIS.

Gold Coast Local Support Group

The Gold Coast Local Support Group met on the second Saturday of the month with Group Convenors Bev and Warwick Best facilitating discussion around issues that are important to this region. The group has a keen interest in their local area and discussed topics from the introduction of the light rail system to upcoming events like the Commonwealth games and how these impact people with disability. During the year a member in the Gold Coast area brought up the issue of the number of signs and obstacles on the pedestrian footpath

on a street in Coolangatta for vision impairment people using white canes. After discussion with the group, the group convenors have developed a report on the issues with suggestions on ways to fix this problem including tactile markers, to engage with Local Council and decision makers. The group has also had speakers like Margaret Ward, Griffith University talking about housing and how this will work in the future with the introduction of the NDIS.

Gold Coast Hot Topics Local Support Group

The Gold Coast Hot Topics Local Support Group met on the first Friday night of the month at the Southport Community Centre. This group with Group Convenors Rob Ellis and Josey McMahon have shared stories and events over a meal prepared by one of the group members. In 2016 the group began having every second meeting as a social gathering at the local hotel. It has been a great opportunity for people to get to know each other in a social setting. The group has also invited local guest speakers like Councillor Dawn Crichlow OAM who talked about what the Gold Coast Council can do for people with intellectual disability.

Virtual Local Support Group

The virtual local support group which has been running through the QDN Facebook page has been busy sharing information with each other. Group members regularly post information and links to articles on the National Disability Insurance Scheme to help people get ready for the scheme. The group also shares information on new technology and equipment that is available to assist people with disability to live the life they want. The Facebook group has 317 members, and is also used to source information from other members on key policy issues like housing and employment.

Townsville Local Support Group

The Townsville Local Support Group started on the 17 September 2015 with two community conversations to bring together key stakeholders and people with disability. The group held their first meeting on the 20 October 2015 with Peter Gurr as the Group Convenor. At the start of 2016 Daniel Flynn joined Peter as the Co-Convenor for this Group. The group have been busy working on NDIS planning and have had regular speakers from the National Disability Insurance Agency to inform their group planning work.

Logan Local Support Group

The Logan Local Support Group held their first meeting on Wednesday 7 October 2015 at the Marsden Library. The group meet on the third Wednesday of each month with David Swift as

Caboolture Local Support Group

The Caboolture Local Support group had its first meeting on 10 October 2015 at the

Caboolture Sports Club. Matt McCracken, the Group Convenor has organised for several speakers to talk to the group about topics including assistive technology and consumer rights. The Group met

on the first Saturday of the month at the Caboolture Sports Club to talk about topics that are important in the Caboolture area and to catch up with other members for a chat.

North Lakes Local Support Group

The North Lakes Local Support Group formed after two community conversations on the 9 December 2015. The Group have been meeting on the first Tuesday of the month at the

North Lakes Community Centre. Group Convenors Rebecca Bellis and Peter Gray had invited local speakers like Luke Howarth MP, Federal Member for Petrie to talk about the services that are available in this area. From April 2016 the group focused on organising a North Lakes disability community expo in Disability Action Week to be held in September 201

Sunshine Coast Local Support Group

The Sunshine Coast Local Support Group formed after two community conversations on the 20 and 21 April 2016. The group met on the third Wednesday of the month with Peter Parkes a Sunshine Coast local as the Group Convenor. The group have been busy getting to know each other as well as sharing information and ideas with each other on the National Disability Insurance Scheme and planning.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland

QDN has auspiced Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) Australia (formally known as Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy – QADA) to operate and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland (ATSIDNQ). QDN receive funding from Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for this network.

ADA has undertaken a significant amount of work in supporting the growth and development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland over the last 12 months. The Network has seen considerable growth in this time and is establishing itself as a recognized resource for members and the wider disability industry. The Network now has almost 500 members and is being called upon for industry consultation and providing formal submissions to inform sector development.

A snapshot of 2015-2016 highlights:

- Almost 500 members
- Bi-monthly yarning groups in 4 areas around Queensland
- 6 newsletters produced
- 7 ADA Australia staff supporting the network
- 179 posts made on ATSIDNQ public and closed group Facebook page
- 900 likes on posts on Facebook pages
- 12 general email communications to members on range of information and updates
- 3 formal policy submissions made

Representation at 4 policy consultations

The Network is working towards the further development of this culturally safe platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities, their families and carers to connect with each other and have their issues and concerns heard. In the last 12 months the Network has established local bi monthly yarning groups in 4 areas around Queensland. The network team have also travelled extensively around the state to spread the word about the network and have reached new members who live in rural and remote areas to engage.

The Network team has 7 ADA Australia staff who also support the Network all around the state and they have engaged the first Local Champions in Maryborough and Brisbane.

During 2015-2016, the Network has also developed new marketing, Facebook profiles, newsletters, its own website, staff shirts, member stickers/ hats and much more.

The Network completed the following formal submissions and participated in the following formal industry contributions:

Formal Submissions:

- National Disability Advocacy Framework Review – 11 points of recommendation
- National Disability Advocacy Program – 6 page paper of recommendations.
- Review of National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 – Network contribution within a larger QADA paper.

Formal Consultations:

- NDIA project concerning the barriers facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in engaging with the NDIS.

- A focus group for the Department Communities inputting on engagement ideas moving towards the NDIS for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities.
- ILC planning consultation for the NDIS/NDIA.
- Logan local council on accessibility in the Logan region.

QDN looks forward to continuing to work with ADA Australia, and the work it is doing to increase member communications and engagement facilitating a stronger voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability in Queensland.

QDN's Peer Leaders – Communities of Practice

QDN believes peer support and peer led education is a powerful vehicle for bringing about change in the lives of people with disability. QDN's work focuses on delivering a peer led approach across projects, programs and work.

QDN believes it is important to invest in our leaders and their development through both training and development opportunities, as well as structured ways such as a 'community of practice' where people can come together to share, learn and reflect. Members of our different peer led networks come together regularly either via teleconference, virtually or face to face, as a 'community of practice,' focusing on a common and shared interest, with the purpose of gaining knowledge. Through sharing information and experiences together, members learn from each other, share their collective wisdom and build a strong platform to lead and influence change. QDN's peer development program focuses on developing leadership, mentoring skills, group facilitation and content knowledge around key policy areas that the group focuses on. QDN currently supports the following groups to deliver on the relevant activities, and engagement with community. Each group have different focus and purpose which includes:

- **Regional facilitators** – connection to local community and what is happening at a grass roots level from the perspective of people with disability;
- **Local Support Group convenors** – peer led networks to enable people with disability learn about NDIS, and bring about change in their local communities;
- **Ready to go peer facilitators** – peer led education and mentoring through the provision of workshops and learning activities focused on people with intellectual disability getting ready for NDIS.

Regional Facilitators

The **Regional Facilitators** group is made up of QDN's Volunteer Facilitators from across regional and rural Queensland. QDN's Regional Facilitator group enables a two-way

communication process between QDN and our members in regional areas of Queensland. It is an essential means for QDN members to inform us of issues in the regions, for QDN to keep members up-to-date with the latest information and for QDN to seek a state-wide perspective on our policy response work.

Regional facilitators continue to be strong connectors and ‘the eyes and ears’ on the ground in their local communities. Understanding what is happening within local communities across Queensland is essential in communicating to Government and peak organisations important policy perspectives from the view of people with disability.

Local Support Group Convenors

Local Support Group Convenors come together via teleconference for monthly meetings to provide members to provide peer mentoring, support, and space for reflective practice in what they are doing in their local communities. It is also an opportunity for members to discuss and action local issues and to provide feedback on “bigger picture” policy issues in line with QDN’s Strategic Plan.

Ready to go Peer Facilitators

QDN’s **Ready to go peer facilitators** are a group of 15 people with disability, including intellectual disability who have been working together since 2014. They continue to deliver workshops and activities across the state, helping other people with disability learn about the NDIS and what it means for them.

Throughout the time on this project, the Peer Facilitators have engaged in processes of co-design to ensure that the end product is one that meets the learning needs of the audience, and is delivered in an engaging and fun way. There is an ongoing process of building both the capacity of participants in the workshops to be ‘in the driver’s seat’ in their own lives, and the peer facilitators have been showing how they can lead change in their own lives as well as inspiring others.

Building capacity – Peer leaders communication and information

QDN has launched a new publication for members of QDN’s Leader’s Community of Practices called “QDN Voices”. This publication has the purpose of building the knowledge of emerging leaders about key policy issues, and important messages and content information to support them in their work. It gives members key information when they are taking on the different voluntary roles including giving people information about the NDIS, the changing policy environment, and what is important to people with disability.

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:

- **Marginalised Queenslanders influencing public policy workshop**, 17 August, 2015, event partners: QDN, QCOSS, Anti-Discrimination Commission of Queensland, Queensland Public Advocate and Griffith University.
- **Griffith University NDIS Symposium: Employment opportunities for people with disability: ‘Real jobs for real pay’** 24 August, 2015, event partners: QDN, CRU, Griffith University.
- **QDN International Day of People with Disability Housing Policy Forum**, Riverside Centre, 3 December 2015.
- **Griffith University NDIS Symposium: Housing for people with disability: a place to call home**, 15 February, 2016, event partners: QDN, Griffith University, Menzies Health Institute Queensland, CRU.
- **LEADing Change Forum**, Parliament House, 19 May 2016.
- **Domestic Violence Forum** in partnership with Community Living Association, WWILD-SVP, ASID State Board, Brisbane, 27 May 2016.
- **Bringing the NDIS to Life** in partnership with QCOSS and Townsville City Council, Townsville, 1 and 2 June 2016.

Presentations

- **“Ready to go”** *We are worth the investment* Conference, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability, Sydney, 16 and 17 July 2015.
- **“In the driver’s seat – road to the NDIS and living a good life”**, *Making it real together*, Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability National Conference, Melbourne, 11 and 12 November 2015.
- **“In the driver’s seat”**. *Have your say* Conference, VALID, Geelong, 12 February 2016.
- **“Participant perspective on workforce expectations”**, *Workability Forum Townsville*, Peter Gurr and Daniel Flynn, 27 April 2016.
- **“Road to the NDIS”** *Claiming a positive future: The power of possibility*,

Community

- *Resource Unit Conference*, 20 and 21 May 2016, Brisbane.
- **“Social Work Practitioner Workshop –**
- **QDN Participant Readiness**
“NDIS and Health – Panel” *Engage, connect, act. AGPAL and QIP Conference*, Brisbane, 27 May 2016.
- **“Panel Discussion – Basics of the NDIS”** *Bringing the NDIS to Life*, Townsville, QCOSS, QDN and Townsville City Council, 1 and 2 June 2016.

Conferences, forums, workshops, and key events attended by QDN

- **NDS Queensland Budget Breakfast**, 15 July 2015, Brisbane Convention Centre.
- **QCOSS State Budget Breakfast**, 17 July 2015, Brisbane Convention Centre.
- **People with Intellectual Disability Living with Domestic Violence**, 7 August 2015, Woolloongabba.
- **Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID) Qld Inc. Annual General Meeting and Forum People with intellectual disability and their experience of the Criminal Justice System**, 30 October 2015.
- **Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) NDIS Chairperson Bruce Bonyhady**, 5 November 2015. **Off the Grid Forum-Intellectual Disability, Complexity and NDIS**, Brisbane, 27 November 2015.
- **Life without Barriers NDIS Information Session**, Brisbane, 4 March 2016.
- **Disability Support Organisations, National DSO Organisation Planning and review of initiative**, Sydney, 9 March 2016.
- **NDS Conference, Shaping the future, preparing for change**, Brisbane 11 and 12 March 2016.
- **NDIS Remote Disability Service Providers Forum**, Adelaide, 22 March 2016.
- **Consumer directed care and GST, McCullough and Robertson**, Brisbane, 6 May 2016.
- **QCOSS Financial Resilience Workshop**, Brisbane, 10 May 2016.
- **QCOSS Budget Breakfast**, Brisbane, 17 June 2016.

Media engagement

QDN has been engaged proactively with the media through the release of five (5) media releases around key policy issues, as well as engagement initiated by media outlets where QDN featured in 10 media articles/interviews to get the perspective and voice of people with disability

A summary of media engagement activities during this financial year includes:

Media Releases:

- 15 July 2015 – Queensland Budget
- 25 September 2015– NDIS Early Launch site welcome news for Queenslanders with Disability
- 22 October 2015 – NDIS learning goes online
- 8 March 2016 – Queenslanders with disability says My Choice – Who is in control?
- 17 March 2016 – Queenslanders with disability network welcomes signing of bilateral agreement
 - 25 September 2015 – Queensland Government to roll out NDIS trial sites for disabled youth (Peter Gurr – Board Director and Townsville Local Support Group Convenor)
 - 25 September 2015 – 4 page newspaper article in Townsville Bulletin, including Townsville Local Support Group
 - 15 October 2015 – Cultural change needed to address barriers in investigating abuse of people with disability (Michelle Moss – Projects Manager)
 - 16 February 2016 – Experts propose novel ways of solving disability accommodation shortfall (Nigel Webb – Board Chairperson)
 - 16 February 2016 – NDIS Majority of people will not receive housing support working group finds (Nigel Webb – Board Chairperson)
 - 17 March 2016 – What will the NDIS mean for Queensland? (Nigel Webb – Board Chairperson)
 - 29 March 2016 – NDIS Roll out (Nigel Webb – Board Chairperson and Gary Matthews – Mackay Regional Facilitator)
 - 27 May 2016 – Domestic Violence Forum – Women with Cognitive Disability and Domestic Violence (Karin Swift – Projects Officer)
 - 9 June 2016 - Community groups call for Human Rights Act in Queensland (Nigel Webb- Board Chairperson)

- 17 June 2016 – Getting ready for NDIS Western Queensland (Troy Wolski – Projects Officer)

Social Media

QDN continues to grow its social media footprint, and have a QDN and Ready to go project Facebook page. QDN also has a closed Facebook page for members to share information, ideas, and engage in conversations together about what matters most, share tips and views, and interesting articles.

As at 30 June 2016, the **QDN Facebook** page had **643 likes** and the **Ready to go Facebook page** had **691 likes**, and **QDN's Member Facebook page** (Virtual Network) had **317 members**

NDIS Videos – Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services engaged QDN to work with three QDN members to be part of some digital stories that the Department produced to assist participants and service providers in the NDIS readiness. This resource is available on the Department's website and YouTube.

Program delivery

Ready to go project – NDIS Participant Readiness

QDN continued to operate the state-wide **Ready to go** project, an NDIS Participant Readiness Initiative funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services during 2015-2016. The project was originally due to be completed as at the 30 December 2015, and was extended for another six months till 30 June 2016 with a changed funding envelope.

QDN has continued to have 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.

The workshops are delivered and led by people with disability.

During 2015-2016, Ready to go delivered:

130 activities across Queensland, to

2,807 participants including people with disability, and their supporters

“The workshop was fun, interactive and thought provoking and enjoyed by all. Activities included dream and goal setting, identifying just what you need to make you happy and fulfilled and how to start your own journey towards the life you want”. (Plan Ahead workshop: Participant’s supporter)

“The strong message from this workshop is that members need to start preparing now by thinking what support they have and what extra support they will need, to achieve their goals in the future” (Plan Ahead workshop: Participant’s worker)

“Everyone had a voice.” Participant Plan Ahead workshop

My Learning Passport

At the QDN Annual General Meeting 2015, “My Learning Passport” was launched and Minister O’Rourke provided a statement that was read out during the meeting as an official launch. QDN has also produced DVDs of this resource, a workbook and a supporter’s guide to assist participants to engage with the resource. It has been a great addition to the suite of learning opportunities delivered under this project. It also enables people who do not enjoy group learning environments, or who live in areas outside of towns and cities where the project has been delivered, an opportunity to engage in the content and tools to start their planning and thinking about what is important to them.

During 2015-2016, 949 participants have connected to My Learning Passport

NDIS Participant Readiness work – People living in Level 3 Supported Accommodation

One of the key components of the Ready to go Participant Readiness work during 2015-2016 focused on the delivery of Plan Ahead workshops to people with intellectual and learning disability who live in Level 3 Supported Accommodation Facilities.

Level 3 Supported Residential Facilities provide communal living for people who require help in some daily tasks. We know that people living in private Supported Residential Facilities generally have some form of impairment or disability and require assistance in order to function on a day-to-day basis and some people receive support from Residential Service Providers (RSPs) funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. QDN recognises that there are a number of residents who do not receive any coordinated support and require further support than the Level 3 Supported Residential Facility can provide.

The National Disability Insurance Agency estimates 3383 people from *all* residential

support facilities (private, government, community managed) will be supported by the NDIS. QDN recognised the possible

challenges in place for people living in Supported Residential Facilities to be able to access information, attend workshops and in getting ready for the NDIS, and therefore wanted to provide access to this information so that people can access the support they need if they are eligible for the NDIS. QDN has engaged with facility owners, managers and RSPs to plan and deliver these activities.

Of the total Ready to go NDIS Participant Readiness activities in 2015-2016, QDN delivered

40 activities reaching **399 people with disability (and their supporters)** living in **level 3 Supported Accommodation facilities**

NDIS Participant Readiness work – Rural and Remote Queensland

This project was approved by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the Department) under the 'one off unspent funds' to enhance National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) preparedness of people with disability, their families, community and disability organisations and Local Government Authorities in a number of rural and remote locations across Queensland. This work was undertaken from February 2016- June 2016.

A snapshot of achievements:

- Engagement with **241 community, disability and government organisations** as part of the project's broad community capacity building work,
- building the capacity of participants to engage in the scheme in **17 rural and remote communities**, and placement of the NDIS as a major national, transformational reform initiative,

Total of **221 participants** attended the range of activities

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive and included feeling more informed, more connected, more confident, and ultimately more engaged with NDIS and the objectives of the scheme.

To maximise reach and cultural relevance with project participants Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) intentionally partnered with two other community organisations in undertaking components of project work. When planning and actioning

the Normanton trip QDN worked with Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy (QADA), now known as Aged and Disability Advocacy

Australia (ADA Australia), given their state-wide indigenous staffing component and community connections. When planning and actioning subsequent trips to South West Queensland locations QDN worked with the Community Resource Unit (CRU), given their focus and expertise in working with families and knowledge of the communities to be visited.

QDN was able to broaden the membership of QDN and ATSIDNQ in regional Queensland, develop a network of key stakeholders and supporters in these regions to assist with NDIS transition, and commence work to establish local support groups in a number of the regional locations.

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

QDN in partnership with the Community Resource Unit (CRU) and Mamre-Pave the Way have continued to fund Amparo Advocacy in the 2015-2016 year to undertake specific NDIS Participant Readiness work with people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

This work has been recognised by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services through the funding of Amparo in the next extension of the NDIS Participant Readiness work.

Amparo has continued to work in partnership with multicultural organisations and networks to inform multicultural workers and community leaders of the upcoming NDIS through workshops, forums and network meetings; delivered targeted information sessions, and a range of resources including information sheets and videos.

QDN Consultancy

Network Leaders Development Program – Uniting Care Communities

QDN was engaged by Uniting Care Communities (UCC) to undertake a leadership development program with people with intellectual and learning disability supported by UCC Disability Services in May 2016. QDN worked with 12 participants over 8 days to support their learning and development as peer leaders within their organisation, and their communities to help other people with disability learn about the NDIS. The Network Leaders will also work with UCC as individuals and as a group to provide feedback on organisational policy and development as a way of engaging with the key stakeholder group as they move to customers under the NDIS.

Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre – now Prospect Services

QDN was engaged by Charters Towers Neighbourhood Centre, now known as Prospect Services to deliver NDIS readiness workshops and activities to families supported by their service. QDN worked with over 30 participants to support their knowledge and awareness about the NDIS, and undertake pre-planning activities in preparation for their engagement with the NDIA.

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 2015-2016, QDN made contributions at

- 28 policy consultations/forums and
- Submitted 15 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.

Engagement with Government

Local and Federal Elections

QDN members engaged in the Local Council elections and related activities in March 2016 with local candidates around key issues for their communities.

During the 2016 Federal Election Campaign QDN members engaged with local candidates from all political parties. Members emailed, called and met with local candidates across Queensland to provide information and feedback about the key issues for Queenslanders with disability within the Commonwealth context.

QDN's Chairperson provided some key policy platforms across the key areas that impact upon people's lives, calling for bi-partisan support.

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 Tracey 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.

Minister for Disability Services, Coralee O'Rourke came to QDN on 9 February 2016 following an invitation to discuss the work QDN is doing with regards to peer leadership and NDIS participant readiness. The meeting was attended by QDN's Chairperson Nigel Webb, Paige Armstrong (CEO), Michelle Moss (Projects Manager) and three Ready to go project Peer Facilitators, Donna Best, Alex Baker and Peter Tully.

Peak Body Collaboration

During 2015-2016, QDN has been engaging with the Queensland peak organisations strategic futures group to work collaboratively around key issues, projects and collectively influence Government around key priorities. The group has come together through a series of meetings and workshops during this financial year, and also collaborated to join with QCOSS to support the Queensland State Budget Breakfast on 17 June 2016.

Policy leadership by and for people with disability

QDN believes that it is essential that people with disability are leading the policy changes and reforms that affect them in their lives. Good governance is derived from having all parts of the system involved in planning, designing, delivering and evaluating policy and services. As part of its work this year, QDN has focused on developing policy leadership from our membership in the area of housing.

Housing policy champions

QDN hosted a member housing policy forum on 3 December 2015 with 45 people in Brisbane. At this meeting, 22 QDN members indicated that they would like to take on the role of being a Housing Policy Champion to assist QDN to progress its housing policy work, finalise QDN's vision around housing for people with disability and four key principles to underpin the achievement of this vision.

QDN's Housing Policy Champions are a group of people with disability with a key interest in achieving better housing outcomes for people with disability, and a strong

collective knowledge base about issues and solutions for housing by people with varied and wide lived experiences.

The four principles are as follows:

Rights: People with disability have the right to access quality housing and are assisted to exercise their rights when needed.

Choice: People with disability choose where, how and with whom they live.

Inclusion: People with disability access appropriate housing which enhances independence and social and economic participation in family and community life.

Control: Management of housing is kept separate from the provision of support.

The Housing Policy Champions have been integral to QDN's ongoing systemic engagement and consultations outlined below

Housing systemic policy engagement and projects

Housing

QDN members have identified housing as the number one challenge facing people with disability across the state. Our members told us they want 2016 to be the year of "housing solutions" and QDN have taken on this challenge undertaking a range of initiatives to ensure the voice of people with disability is part of the collective solutions for housing reform.

QDN has undertaken a number of key initiatives and projects in this policy area during 2015- 2016 which has included:

Department of Housing and Public Works:

QDN was engaged by Department of Housing and Public Works to undertake targeted consultations with regards to the Departments development of a 10 year strategy "Working together for better housing and sustainable communities." This included engagement with approximately 70 people with disability at two consultations:

- QDN Caboolture Housing Strategy Targeted Consultation, 13 May, 2016.
- QDN Brisbane Housing Strategy Targeted Consultation, 27 May, 2016.

As part of this work, QDN also developed a user friendly summary of the Departments consultation paper.

QDN will continue working with Department of Housing and Public Works during 2016-2017 to continue to build upon this work, and ensure that the principles are embedded

in policy and practice.

“A place to call home” Joint project with Griffith University and National Shelter

QDN in partnership with Griffith University and National Shelter, Department of Housing and Public Works have worked together with the Housing Policy Champions to develop an issues paper “A place to call home”. The work commenced in April 2015, and the position paper was launched at the 8 August Griffith NDIS and Housing Symposium and will inform QDN’s work during the next financial year to finalise a position paper, which will clearly outline the reforms being sought by the membership. QDN will continue to work with all levels of government, private and community stakeholders to achieve inclusive, accessible and affordable housing for Queenslanders with disability – a place to truly call home.

Policy Submissions

QDN has undertaken a wide range of consultations with members to inform our policy and big picture policy work during this financial year.

QDN continues to speak with an informed and considered voice. We have undertaken a wide range of consultations to ensure our policy submissions are 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, Local Support Group Convenors, and Housing Policy Champions.

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.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Ministerial Advisory Group member: QTAG - Queensland Transition Advisory Group, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services – Participant Readiness Initiative organisational planning group
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services Partnership forum member
- Presentation at the Public Hearing to the Australian Parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme – Queensland’s

Readiness.

- Queensland NDIS Workforce Strategy Advisory Group – Workability Strategy
- Participant Readiness Providers delegation meeting with Director General Department of Communities, Child Safety, and Disability Services
- NDIS - Information, Linkages and Capacity Framework (ILC)
- National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Pricing and Payment Framework

Submissions

- Written submission to Australian Parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Framework, National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Pricing and Payment Framework, National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- Accommodation for people with disabilities and the NDIS, Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS
- Independent Review of the Operation of the *NDIS Act 2013 (Cth)*, Australian Government

Employment

Consultations, committees and presentations

- “Willing to Work” Consultation – Employment Discrimination against People with Disability
- New Disability Employment Framework Consultation – Round Two, Department of Social Services

Submissions

- National Disability Employment Framework, Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination against Older Australians and Australians with Disability, Australian Human Rights Commission.

Housing

Consultations, committees and presentations

- QDN North Lakes Housing Strategy Consultation
- QDN Sunshine Coast Housing Strategy Consultation, (Event partners QDN, Inclusion Plus and Parent to Parent)
- QShelter Housing Strategy Consultations
- Australian Network for Universal Housing Design (ANUHD)
- Queensland Action for Universal Housing Design
-

Papers

- Summary Paper - Working together for better housing and sustainable communities Discussion Paper
- Easy English Overview - Working together for better housing and sustainable communities Discussion Paper Summary

Health

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Metro South Hospital and Health Disability Advisory Committee
- Metro South Hospital and Health Service Disability Action Plan consultation

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
- Opportunities for Personalised Transport (OPT) Review Taskforce Panel

Submissions

- Response to the application for Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport exemption by the Australasian Rail Association (ARA), Australian Government
- Queensland Rail New Generation Rolling Stock (train carriage accessibility), Departments of Transport, Infrastructure Local Government and Planning and

Trade

Advocacy and human rights

Consultations, committees and presentations

- Presentation to Senate Community Affairs References Committee on violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings, including the gender and age related dimensions, and the particular situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability.
- Presentation to Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee with regards to legislation for Human Rights Act for Queensland

Submissions

- National Disability Advocacy Framework, Department of Social Services
- Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Amendment Bill 2015, Queensland Government
- *Disability Services and Other Legislation Amendments Bill 2015*, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee
- Human Rights Act in Queensland, Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

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

QDN's Board of Directors and staff have worked hard during 2015-2016 to continue to grow an effective, sustainable and accountable organisation that ensures all our work is focused on QDN's mission of a community where people with disability are active and valued citizens. Our work has the explicit focus of serving our members, and working together to influence policy that improves the lives of people with disability. Our corporate governance is central, and QDN has continued to have a focus of renewal and strategic direction as we have engaged in a time of reflection and forward planning through business planning processes.

As part of the review and renewal, QDN has engaged in a number of core activities in the area of governance during this financial year, and has worked hard to consolidate and form a strategic vision for the organisation going forward along with the actions to make this happen.

Board of Directors Strategic Planning and Review

On 10 December 2015, the QDN Board of Directors met to review QDN's strategy and begin the process to identify the core elements and strategic direction of the

organisation over the next 1 to 2 years.

In recognition of the changing policy and funding environment as the disability sector moves to a national scheme with alternative funding arrangements and sources, QDN has engaged in a process of review and repositioning.

QDN has undertaken some key pieces of work at the direction of the Board of Directors, to respond to the challenges and opportunities in this environment, and ensure that the organisation is well positioned, has developed partnerships, and a clear plan and vision for the organisation into 2019.

QDN has undertaken a review of its vision, mission, values and principles, and a commitment to ensure the future direction of the organisation remains grounded and aligned to these.

Other activities have included engagement with key allies, market research, environmental analysis, and a proposed strategic direction and actions which have been presented and considered by the Board of Directors

The next steps include engagement with members and other key stakeholders, and further refinement and development of the strategic opportunities and resources to be able to translate these to actions.

Quality Management System

QDN operates under ISO9001:2008 and ensures that quality practices are part of the work and day to day operations of the organisation.

QDN underwent re-certification against the ISO Framework in May 2016, and again was successful and received a positive report.

QDN was able to successfully demonstrate the implementation of recommendations from last year's audit with regards to corporate governance through the establishment of the Board's two sub-committees: the Audit and Compliance Committee and the Nominations Committee. The Auditor provided positive feedback on the actions and delivery of programs that QDN has achieved during 2015-2016. Information and recommendations for the audit will inform our continuous improvement and actions throughout the next year.

Board governance and renewal

Two years ago, the Board set a long term goal to achieve a governance structure in line with the governance principles, practices and expectations of a contemporary Australian NFP Corporation Limited by Guarantee. During this same period, the reporting requirements, governance principles and economic realities for Not-for-Profit Charity Corporations like QDN have been increasing at an accelerated rate.

Of all the sectors in which NFP Corporations are present, the disability sector faces the strongest challenge as the transition to NDIS has introduced a market-based economy.

The NFPs in our sector are dealing with the unknown, facing an environment never experienced by the disability sector in Australia. Those who continue as they have been will not find themselves sustainable in the short to medium term. This is why the QDN Board has worked to put the very best talents, skills and practices into place to assure QDN the strongest leadership for navigating the challenges ahead.

At the 2015 Annual General Meeting, members made constitutional changes that would allow the Board to restructure to gather the skills and capacity needed to inform the strategic direction of QDN. The changes allowed the Board to recruit the skills and talents it required by expanding the size of the Board to include more elected directors, and by allowing the board the capacity to appoint limited term directors who have the knowledge required to help the Board gain tactical advantage in transitioning to a market-based economy. Nominees for Elected Directors at the 2015 AGM were of a high quality and high numbers and this reflects QDN's work around Board renewal and engagement more broadly. The result was three new directors whose skills and knowledge has improved the Board's governance capacity.

The new Board got to work developing strategic and business plans. Each director took on an additional role as a committee member in one of the two new committees enabled by the constitutional change. The Nominations and Audit and Compliance Committees each meet four times a year. These committees help the Board to focus stronger attention on QDN's financial, business and compliance requirements, and free the Board to consider strategic opportunities that answer the new market niches now developing in our sector.

As the new Board approaches the completion of its first year, it is putting the new governance structure into practice, making refinements and adjustments as they are needed. The Board has adopted charters and policies for itself and its committees. The director's code of conduct has been expanded and updated. Policies for disclosure and conflict of interest have been updated.

This year's annual Board performance review and director's self-assessment show that governance capacity has increased as a result of the restructure. Directors agree that the board's greatest achievement in its first year is the building of excellent relationships both internally and externally. Through continued working together, the board's performance will improve as will the reliability and speed of its collaborative decision making.

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 have worked alongside staff to develop strong plans for the future of QDN.

Name Since	Position	Location	Board	Member
Nigel Webb	Chairperson	Brisbane	2009	
Philia Polites	Vice Chairperson	Brisbane	2015	
Peter Gurr	Board Director	North Qld	2015	
Grahame Robertson	Board Director	Brisbane	2015	
Sharon Boyce	Board Director	South West Qld	2013	
Matt McCracken	Board Director	Caboolture	2014	
John MacPherson	Board Director	Brisbane	2002	
Colleen Papadopoulos	Company Secretary	Brisbane	2015	

Staff recruitment and retention

QDN had a stable team of staff members during this financial year with some changes of project staff during 2015-2016. QDN's staff team have worked collaboratively to deliver on a wide range of outcomes, and deliver on our achievements reported on in this document.

QDN farewelled a number of staff during 2015-2016 including Caleb Rook, Michelle Crozier, Mel Geltch, Pat Morgan, Matthew Ford, Lyn Canning, Lindsey Butler and Janell Tong. QDN takes this opportunity to thank them all for their contribution to QDN, their hard work and efforts, and wishes them the best in their future endeavours.

We have welcomed a number of new staff during this time also to assist us in being able to continue to deliver the successful outcomes and our work. We welcomed Margaret Micale, Denise Sands, Troy Wolski, Sharyn McManus, Cindy Hannam and Jo Galvin

Chief Executive Officer	Paige Armstrong	Current
Projects Manager	Michelle Moss	Current
Administration Officer	Janell Tong	To May 2016
Business Coordinator	Pat Morgan	To April 2016
Project Officer (Networks)	Karin Swift	Current

Project Officer (LSG)	Olivia Spadina	Current
Network and Policy Officer 2015	Caleb Rook	To September
Ready to go Senior Project Officer	Michelle Crozier	To October 2015
Ready to go Comm Project Officer	Mel Geltch	To December 2015
Ready to go Project Officer	Lynda Alsop	Current
Ready to go Project Support Officer	Lyn Canning	To June 2016
Short term project officer 2016	Matthew Ford	Dec 2015-April
Project Officer	Denise Sands	Current
Project Officer	Troy Wolski	Current
Financial Administration Officer	Joanne Galvin	Current
Administration Support	Cynthia Hannam	Current
Project support Officer	Margaret Micale	Current
Communications and Media Officer	Sharyn McManus	Current

Consultants

A number of consultants worked alongside QDN staff during 2015-2016 to assist with our work. This includes Jen Barrkman, Elissa Farrow and Clare Locke – Clocke Design.

Part 3: Financial overview

Income

QDN's total income for the 2015-2016 financial year was **\$1,292,570.66**. This was primarily comprised of:

\$265,663.23 QDN core business

\$615,000.00 *Ready to go* project

\$115,194.98 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Disability Network Queensland

\$212,333.33 Disability Support Organisation

\$ 84,379.11 Other income

Expenditure

QDN's total expenditure for the 2015-2016 financial year was **\$1,474,217.69**

This included the approved expenditure by Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for the special one-off treatment of unspent funds for the total of \$171,500.

Deficit

QDN had an operating deficit of \$181,647.03 for the 2015-2016 financial year, which is attributed to the expenditure of \$171,500 of unspent funds held by QDN and approval given by Department for expenditure of this money for Rural and Remote NDIS Participant Readiness activities.
