Queenslanders with Disability Network

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

INFORM

CONNECT

LEAD

INFLUENCE

QDN

QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the people who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Land on which we gather. We thank the peoples of the land past and present for their custodianship and for the opportunity to meet in this place.

QDN also acknowledges people with disability who have come before us and died in institutional settings, as well as those who are still trapped in institutions or silenced by institutional practices. We take on the responsibilities of being clear about the rights of ALL people with disability and, where necessary, speak in an informed and considered manner, for those who cannot speak for themselves.

QDN Annual Report 2019-2020

QDN
QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Membership

- 1115 Ordinary members
- 619 Supporters
- 47 Corporate members

ATSIDNQ

ATSIDNQ
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland

- 1216 members
- 9 yarning circles across 3 regions
- 8 newsletters
- Approx. 3,000 people engaged with across Queensland
- 6 NAIDOC events across Queensland
- 6 policy responses/ consultations
- 100 Service providers engaged

COVID-19 activities

- Person Centred Emergency Preparedness tool
- 3 COVID- 19 easy read factsheets
- 2 COVID-19 informational videos
- QDN COVID-19 Advisory Group

Policy Contributions

- 52 policy submissions, consultations and forums
- 17 policy submissions

Projects

- Everyday practice
- Halwyn
- Self management
- Power of Peers

Changing Lives Changing Communities

- 6 locations
- Over 700 participants across 10 forums
- 68 ideas for action to contribute to change and inclusion

Queensland Community Support Services Linkages

- 449 individuals were supported to transition from QCC to QCSS

Vision

People with disability are active and valued citizens

Targeted Outreach

- 5 local champions
- 3 regions

Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

- 25 peer leaders
- 190 participants including 66 people with disability

Media Engagement

- 7 media releases
- 5 press and radio interviews

Local Support Groups
Connecting people with disability

Local Support Groups

- 20 Local Support Groups
- 272 members joined online meetings during COVID 19
- 2 Group convenor training days
- 22 Group Convenors across Queensland

Communications

- 79 e-Blasts to members
- 5 e-Bulletins

QDeNgage

QDENGAGE

- 207 people with disability engaged as QDeNgage consultants
- 20 engagements

Social media

- 2,300 followers
- 223 items posted

Nothing about us without us

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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, all people with disability.

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

QDN's work includes:

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

QDN is a member driven organisation. It has three categories: Ordinary member, Supporter and Support Organisation.

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

Our Motto

Nothing about us without us.

Membership

Membership numbers 2019-20

- **1,115** Ordinary Members
- And an additional **1,216** members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network who identify as Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders
- **619** Supporters
- **47** Corporate Members

Deception Bay
Local Support Group

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our Vision

People with disability are active and valued citizens of Queensland.

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.

RIGHTS We believe in and model a human rights approach that recognises disability as a social issue.

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

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.

QDN Board of Directors

Our Strategic Goals

In 2019-20, QDN reviewed its strategic direction and strategic goals.

The goals are:

Goal 1

To promote and maintain active, vibrant local networks that inform our work and build local capacity.

Goal 2

To enhance the leadership and influencing capability of people with a disability.

Goal 3

To let people know about the lives of people with disability and how to best engage with us.

Goal 4

To influence governments and others to bring about full and equal participation, citizenship and protection of rights for all.

Goal 5

To grow an independently-sustainable, effective, accountable and rights-based organisation that reflects our vision, mission, values and principles.

Chairperson's Report

2019-2020

is certainly not going to be a year that any of us forget in a hurry. What an incredible time in our lives it has been, and one that I don't think any of us could have imagined. COVID-19 has brought much heartache, distress and challenges but I think it is also important to acknowledge at this point in time the place we are in as Queenslanders. It has also brought an incredible period of change with business, Governments and the community sector called to 'pivot' to respond to the challenges. I am proud of the work that QDN has done during this time, the Board in their leadership and stewardship, CEO Paige Armstrong and our team of staff, our Group Convenors and local peer networks, our members and our allies and colleagues who have all worked tirelessly to make sure people with disability have been able to get information about COVID-19, make a plan and stay connected to services and supports as well as family and friends.

People with disability have experienced a range of additional challenges and had additional needs during this pandemic. I am pleased that QDN has been able to continue to ensure that the voice and needs of Queenslanders with disability has been front and centre, co-creating solutions by and for people with disability. This public health emergency has reinforced the critical need for people with disability to be part of emergency and disaster preparedness, the work we have been part of over the past year in partnership with the University of Sydney, Community Services Industry Alliance and Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. I am proud of the work that QDN has been part of to develop a COVID-19 Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness tool for people with disability. Our peer support groups have played a key role in supporting each other during this time to work through this information and be able to share their plan with the people in their lives who support them.

QDN has continued to grow and mature this year as an organisation, and this is reflected in our achievements to be able to secure a diversity of funding from a range of Commonwealth, State and businesses through QDeNgage. I am pleased to be able to report to members that QDN has been able to be agile, flexible and responsive, to understand our strengths and pursue opportunities that have aligned with our vision, mission and values as an organisation. This year has been a challenging environment throughout, made even more challenging with COVID-19 that will have impacts that we will be dealing with as community in years to come. QDN's range of projects, contracts and work has meant a growth in our reach across the state, and enabled connections and engagement with a broad range of stakeholders. The funding we have received through Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) this year has enabled us to continue to grow and support a strong network of peer support across the state. The new funding from the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors to deliver Targeted Outreach with our partners Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) and Aged and Disability Advocacy (ADA) through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland

(ATSIDNQ) will assist more Queenslanders with disability to access the NDIS. I am pleased that the organisation has continued to deliver high quality outputs that have also delivered impact and outcomes to drive change, led by and for people with disability.

2019-2020 has also been a dynamic and changing policy environment, and has been monumental in terms of a time in history. We saw the commencement of the Disability Royal Commission this year, that has been a culmination of decades of advocacy by people with disability, families, and services and supporters calling for an end to the abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation of people with disability across multiple settings and services. How we can keep people safe and free from abuse is an issue that keeps me awake at night. We have also seen people with disability lose their lives this year through neglect and abuse, and I pay my respects to those individuals and their lives. QDN has made a number of submissions to the Disability Royal Commission and I acknowledge the people with disability, their families and others who have stepped forward to share their experiences in difficult situations with the intention to make a difference for others in the future. The Disability Royal Commission, and the National Disability Strategy that was due to be delivered this year both provide important policy levers to be able to make sure that the next decade is one that sees action and real change.

QDN has been able to continue to ensure that the voice and needs of Queenslanders with disability [are] front and centre

Peter Gurr and Nigel Webb

My thanks to QDN members for your engagement with QDN and ensuring we are a strong force of influence, to our local peer support groups and Group Convenors and leaders for your tireless efforts and dedication to informing and connecting and showing the power of peers, to our dedicated team of staff led by Paige who never let an opportunity go by and to my fellow Board Directors for your commitment and leadership.

These are uncertain times as we move into next year with COVID the 'new normal'. We face an important Queensland State Election where we need to make sure our candidates understand that disability matters and our voice matters. It is a significant time and I know QDN will continue to play a crucial role in informing, connecting, leading and influencing change, and ensure it is nothing about us without us.

Nigel Webb
QDN Board of Directors, Chairperson

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Looking back on the year that has been, I certainly never imagined what this year would hold, the challenges that we would all face, and the importance of the human spirit and our human connection. There have been many fantastic achievements this year, by our members, our leaders, our staff and our allies amidst a time of adversity and challenge.

I acknowledge that the past few months have been challenging times for QDN members, families and our supporters. COVID-19 has posed additional challenges for people with disability the world over. In my almost 7 years here at QDN, I can't think of a time where we have been busier. There has been an incredible amount of collaboration across Local, State and Commonwealth Governments and the Departments, and working with people with disability and the community sector. Everyone has worked with a strong commitment to ensuring that people with disability have the information they need, and that their rights to services and supports are upheld. QDN members have been engaged in a variety of ways informing, leading and influencing the policy environment to ensure the voice of people with disability is strong and listened to. There have been significant reforms happening across NDIS, health, housing, domestic and family violence during this period, and some have had positive benefits and outcomes for people. It will be important that we continue to work together to ensure the positive reforms can continue into the future.

Caboolture Changing Lives, Changing Communities

I am proud of the work that QDN has delivered in 2019-2020, and to receive funding for the Power of Peers Project under the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Grant round for our local support groups for peer support was positive news. The Peer Support Groups have demonstrated their flexibility and adaptability during COVID to learn new skills and new technology and meet together in a virtual environment, continuing to provide each other with peer support. Members have told us that this has been greatly appreciated and the support and connection during this challenging time has been needed now more than ever.

QDN has been pleased to partner with a range of our allies on a number of projects during this year and we have worked hard together to deliver great work and positive outcomes. Our project funded under ILC, Changing Lives, Changing Communities with our partners QCOSS, Queensland Human Rights Commission and local councils in six communities across Queensland had a key focus on inclusion. Communities came

together to hear about inclusion, change and work together to co-create solutions and ideas working together to create communities where everyone contributes, matters and belongs. QDN has also worked to co-design some peer-led resources and information around self-management through another ILC Grant and implement a new Customer Relation Management (CRM) system delivered by our provider Datacom. Our work with Amergin, and our partners at the Community Resource Unit and Richmond Fellowship Queensland on the Everyday Practice project delivered great information and products for NDIS participants and providers in understanding the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission standards and what they mean everyday in the support and services that are delivered. QDeNgage consultants have co-designed and starred in a range of video resources ensuring people with disability get information in ways that work for them.

QDN was also successful in receiving funding for the Targeted Outreach Project that is funded in collaboration by Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (DCDSS) and the Commonwealth Government. QDN is working with partners QCCOS and Aged and Disability Advocacy to deliver targeted engagement and outreach to support more people with disability, specifically aimed at marginalised people and help them to access the NDIS. The Targeted Outreach Project works closely with the Assessment and Referral Team within DCDSS. This project builds upon QDN's work over the past 5 years in NDIS participant readiness and responds to the critical issues and barriers that QDN has been raising for people's access to the Scheme.

I extend my thanks to QDN members, peer leaders and QDeNgage consultants for your dedication, engagement and willingness to not only provide support and connection to your fellow members and the broader community, but also to engage in key policy issues to inform and influence what needed to happen as COVID-19 emerged. To the team of dedicated staff at QDN, thank you for your work, your contribution to making a difference, and delivering on positive outcomes and great work. I also want to thank QDN's Board of Directors for your tireless efforts and contribution to leading and governing this organisation, to ensure it stands of, by and for people with disability and delivers on our goals, mission and vision.

Paige Armstrong
Chief Executive Officer

The Peer Support Groups have demonstrated their flexibility and adaptability during COVID to learn new skills and new technology and meet together in a virtual environment

QDN Members and Paige Armstrong at 2019 Annual General Meeting

(L-R) Wayne Maitland, Esperence Kalonji and Rebecca Bellis

Part 2 An Overview of Our Year

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

In 2019-20, QDN continued to exemplify inclusion and influence in communities and systems, by and for people with disability. Key highlights from this year's work and engagement by QDN's Board of Directors, Peer Leaders, members, and staff in increasingly difficult circumstances in the first half of 2020 include:

Policy

QDN members continue to identify and influence the key policy areas that impact upon their lives, and in 2019-20 these areas have included COVID-19, the Disability Royal Commission, transport, housing, health, NDIS, and the power of peers.

Membership

Membership of QDN continues to grow, with 1,781 Members and supporters as at 30 June 2020, an increase of 67% in the year. An important aspect of membership of QDN is the opportunities for members to build capacity in influencing systems that impact their lives. Projects, consultations, policy submissions, QDN's consultancy QDeNgage, and Local Support Groups are all important vehicles for increased capacity and confidence for members.

At 30 June 2020, QDN has 1,781 Members – an increase of 67% in the year.

Local Support Groups (LSGs)

LSGs are key spaces for member connection and sharing of information and support. They are driven by the power of peers and will continue their expansion and development through the 3-year Power of Peers project, funding for which was awarded in 2019-20. Members demonstrated their agency and flexibility with a range of responses to COVID-19, including learning new skills in online meetings, to stay connected and informed throughout the emergency.

Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction meeting Brisbane

QDeNgage

QDeNgage connects businesses, government departments and organisations with people who have lived experience of disability, to provide their expertise, feedback, and advice. In its first year of operation, QDeNgage has successfully facilitated 20 engagements, and engaged 207 people with disability as QDeNgage Consultants in roles such as consumer representatives, guest speakers and co-designers.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland (ATSIDNQ)

ATSIDNQ continued its growth and expansion in 2019-20. Membership has increased and, prior to COVID-19, geographic reach had also increased, with staff visits to remote and regional communities. During COVID-19, online engagement increased, keeping the network connected. ATSIDNQ is also involved in projects that offer opportunities for influence and connection.

Projects

Everyday Practice

In 2019-20, QDN partnered with Amergin to deliver components of the Everyday Practice Project with the consortium with Community Resource Unit (CRU) and Richmond Fellowship Queensland. The project focused on providing user friendly information and service delivery to substantially increase the quality and safety of supports being delivered to NDIS participants. Everyday Practice is a free, national online education and community resource for all NDIS providers and all NDIS participants, and the website is now live. QDN staff and members contributed co-design, advice and resource development.

Halwyn

In 2019-20 QDN was contracted by Queensland Health to undertake work with residents and their families at Halwyn, a long stay health facility in Red Hill, Brisbane. QDN was successful in providing independent advocacy and support to the current residents and respite users of Halwyn and their families, including working with a variety of government and non-government stakeholders, to provide residents and families with key information to support their NDIS transition and work collaboratively to establish key engagement and communication mechanisms for families and residents to engage with the various stakeholders.

Community engagement panel Stuartholme School

Targeted Outreach

The Targeted Outreach Project aims to support more eligible Queenslanders with disability to join the NDIS and experience the benefits of the scheme. Project partners are working with people who experience complex barriers and challenges to accessing the scheme. The project commenced in April 2020 and the first phase is underway in Maryborough and North Coast and Moreton areas. This Project is a partnership with QDN, QCOSS and ADA Australia with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland.

Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

The award-winning 'Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland' project focuses on Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR), making sure that the needs and voices of people with disability are included in emergency management and disaster planning at all levels.

A DIDRR Framework and Toolkit for Queensland was developed, informed by inclusive community consultations with **190 participants, including 66 people with disability**, about the needs and challenges for people with disability in emergency situations. QDN's work in Phase Two is focused on supporting the individual preparedness of people with disability, and a peer to peer support approach to increasing emergency preparedness.

Queensland Community Support Services Linkages

In this project from July 2019-September 2019, QDN worked with Queensland Community Care (QCC) clients in their transition to Queensland Community Support Services (QCSS).

During the project, 449 individuals were supported to transition from QCC to QCSS supports including support around NDIS access.

Projects funded by National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)

The following projects were funded through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program.

Changing Lives Changing Communities

The Changing Lives, Changing Communities (CLCC) project was a partnership project with QCOSS and Queensland Human Rights Commission that delivered a series of two-day events

Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction meeting Rockhampton

across Queensland, held over two years July 2018-June 2020, in six locations across Queensland. The forums focused on the question "what will it take to create communities where everyone contributes, matters and belongs?". The forums combined participatory processes, theories of change and project development to ensure that people feel confident, capable and supported to move from issues to solutions.

Over **700 participants from across the community attended the 10 forums and generated 68 ideas for action** to contribute to real change and inclusion in communities across Queensland.

Self-Management

This project through the Disabled Person and Family Organisation targeted funding, supported the delivery of a new CRM System for QDN and a Peer Mentoring Program for Local Support Group (LSG) Convenors to mentor people around self-management of NDIS plans.

QDN worked with **23 LSG Convenors** to grow their skills as peer mentors and increase their knowledge about self-management. The group convenors co-designed, trialled and developed activities focused on self-management **with their local peer networks.**

Power of Peers

QDN received NDIA funding to continue and expand LSGs for the period February 2020 - December 2023. QDN will continue to support the existing 19 groups and establish 13 new peer led support groups including 2 virtual groups and develop and deliver capacity building and leadership training and digital technology training to peer leaders. The focus for 2020 is on developing and delivering training and establishing online groups.

In February 2020, **15 LSG Convenors from across the state participated in a two-day training and planning** session.

In April, most groups moved to Zoom meetings. During the COVID-19 emergency **272 people with disability have joined a virtual LSG meeting**.

Adapting to the COVID environment

COVID impact

QDN has had a significant focus on COVID-19 related activities since March 2020.

Changing Lives Changing Communities Mackay

Ministerial, Shadow Ministerial, Members of Parliament and Senior Departmental Engagement

QDN has engaged with a variety of Ministers, Shadow Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senior Departmental staff through formal Committees as well as individual meetings during COVID-19 to provide feedback, information and raise critical issues for Queenslanders with disability.

Committee Work

The CEO is a standing member of the Human and Social Recovery Committee, convened to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. There are a range of State and Commonwealth Committees and groups that have been established during this time that QDN is a member of to provide key feedback and inform decision and policy making.

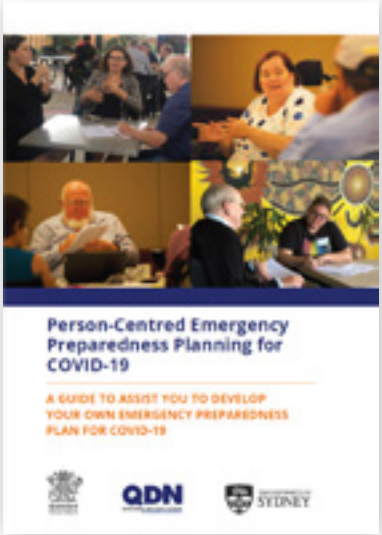
Systemic Policy Work

QDN has been working with state and national allies to lobby government to better respond to the needs of people with disability during COVID-19. Issues cut across all sectors and QDN's lobbying is focused on prioritising and centring people with disability in national and state COVID-19 responses.

Leading sector responses

COVID-19 planning resource for people with disability to make a plan for their own individual needs and situation during COVID-19

QDN worked in partnership with researchers at The University of Sydney who lead research on disability inclusive disaster risk reduction to develop this planning tool for people with disability during COVID-19. It was developed with funding from the Queensland Government Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. QDN has worked with the University to ensure people with disability are included in all decisions about emergency management and disaster risk. This resource was co-designed with people with disability and their representatives.



Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Planning for COVID-19 resources

We have also collaborated with the Australian Government Department of Health to make this guide nationally relevant – so that all Australians with disability can make a COVID-19 plan that is

Brisbane Hot Topic Local Support Group

tailored to their capabilities and support needs. The Australian Government Department of Health supported the translation of this planning guide into an Easy Read format.

This planning guide helps people with disability to get the facts about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and make a plan for how they will manage the impact of this situation. People with disability need a plan that is tailored to their unique support needs.

Other Impacts and Outputs:

- Three COVID-19 easy read factsheets
- Development of a 'COVID-19 person-centred emergency preparedness (PCEP) guide'
- Two COVID-19 informational videos
- QDN website 'COVID-19 Information Hub'
- QDN COVID-19 Advisory Group
- Multiple e-Blasts, media releases and collateral updates
- 7,000 people reached with the PCEP guide within only a few days through social media
- PCEP Planning Tool widely distributed across Australia and picked up by the World Health Organisation
- Large increase in traffic to QDN website, and social media pages
- Rapid Hospital Discharge project contract
- Work with GIVIT to support access to digital connectivity – 34 devices distributed to disadvantaged people with disability
- Receipt of additional funding for a range of COVID-19 related work in health and housing

OUR FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1 To promote and maintain active, vibrant local networks that inform our work and build local capacity.

Goal 2 To enhance the leadership and influencing capability of people with a disability.

Goal 3 To let people know about the lives of people with disability and how to best engage with us.

Goal 4 To influence governments and others to bring about full and equal participation, citizenship and protection of rights for all.

Goal 5 To grow an independently-sustainable, effective, accountable and rights-based organisation that reflects our vision, mission, values and principles.

GOAL 1 To promote and maintain active, vibrant local networks that inform our work and build local capacity

QDN continues to promote, grow, and maintain a strong, active, vibrant member network, embedded in place across Queensland. The network informs our projects, activities, and systemic policy work.

A key element of QDN's work is connecting people with disability to share information, connect, influence, and build local leadership. QDN supports members with disability to come together in different ways and locations across Queensland.

State-wide Member Network

QDN's state-wide network is a network of people with disability who live in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations across Queensland. It is a network and knowledge base by and for people with disability, exchanging information about important issues, and offering an opportunity for people to have a voice around key systemic policy issues and experiences to deliver better outcomes.

QDN members continue to identify the key policy areas that impact upon their lives, and in 2019-20 these areas have included COVID-19, digital connection and literacy, transport, housing, employment, health, NDIS, and the power of peers (leadership, support and networks).

QDN continues to actively strengthen the voice of people with disability and the diversity of lived experiences so we can ensure Queensland is inclusive for all its citizens, and that everyone can have a voice and be heard.

Local Support Groups

Deception Bay Local Support Group

For the past 18 months, QDN's Board has supported, from QDN's own resources, the operations of Local Support Groups across Queensland. These groups have a key role in connecting people with disability through delivering peer support and peer leadership and being a collective voice to assist people in having the life they want in their local community. QDN was delighted to receive the news that an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building funding application for a Power of Peers project

to expand the reach and work of the LSGs was approved by the NDIA in 2020. The project will run for 3 years and will support growth and capacity building in existing and new groups and individuals. More detail about the project can be found later in this report.

Local Support Groups have thrived in 2019-20. Group members share information and tips about accessible and affordable mainstream and community services, products and resources. Groups have also focused on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, supporting each other through NDIS processes.

In addition, groups have engaged with person-centred disaster preparedness, invited special interest guest speakers, engaged with their communities and promoted, initiated and attended community events.

QDN has continued to work collaboratively with the other national peer led organisations to continue to demonstrate the value and positive outcomes of peer support and the importance of this work in the broader disability landscape and sector.

The following provides a summary of some of the highlights and key activities of the groups.

Brisbane Local Support Group focused on some interesting topics this year including finding out more about avoiding scams, better understanding transport, and helping each other get ready for an emergency by talking about person-centred emergency preparedness.

Brisbane Hot Topics Local Support Group for people with an intellectual disability had a big year inviting guests to help group members be informed, including a barrister talking about end-of-life decision-making, and Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia working with the group around making sure their voice is heard. They invited these speakers, and more, to join them for their annual Christmas party which is always lots of fun. The group also quickly learnt how to use Zoom so they could continue their meetings online during COVID-19.

"Meet new people"

Cairns Local Support Group highlights for this year included hosting a public event with a panel to help local people with disability to better understand how to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme and what support is available in their community.

Caboolture Local Support Group members came together this year to talk about important topics like making renting fair in Queensland, and how to access what is in the local community. Guest speakers were part of meetings, giving the group information on accessible recreation activities so members can enjoy more activities in their local community.

Brisbane Hot Topics Local Support Group

"Consistently being educated about tools that will benefit me"

The **Deception Bay Local Support Group** have had an active year supporting people with disability to get out and about in their community. The group have moved to a new meeting venue, hosted a community expo for Disability Action Week and even created a digital story showing people with disability the accessible areas they can enjoy in their local area.

"I know how to choose my support workers that work with me"

The **Fitzgibbon Local Support Group** invited several guest speakers to share information around assistive technology, NDIS self-management, staying healthy during COVID-19, as well as tips to choose a good support worker, to name a few.

The **Gold Coast Local Support Group** this year worked with the City of Gold Coast Council to provide input into their Accessible and Inclusive City Action Plan. Making Gold Coast an accessible city so that people with disability can be part of the community has been an important priority for this group. They have been instrumental in providing feedback into new transport projects helping the Gold Coast be a more inclusive city.

"Shared stories, support from peers. I love it. Information sharing about what is going on in the community. I get a lot out of local support group meetings."

The last year saw the **Ipswich Local Support Group** build skills to better access the community and digital technology as well as keeping up to date with what has been happening in their local area. The group has worked together to increase their understanding of topics such as NDIS plan management, person-centred emergency preparedness, and how to join online meetings.

Mackay Local Support Group members have been meeting at the local coffee shop having a coffee while learning about topics like disaster management, sharing stories about their latest experiences including how they are using their NDIS plans and supporting each other to access activities in their community.

"Able to ask questions about the NDIS and get some answers"

The **Sunnybank Local Support Group** had a busy year hearing from a variety of speakers including Metro South Hospital and Health Service on how to stay safe during COVID-19, and the Department of Fair Trading on 'scams' and how to avoid them. The group also talked about topics around the National Disability Insurance Scheme including plan management and self-management options.

"Being able to talk for myself in a group"

The **Sunshine Coast Local Support Group** is always keen to discuss the latest community developments at their meetings. This year the group talked with the Department of Housing to better understand the role of this department, allied health professionals around what services they provide, as well as finding out more about sharing their lived experiences by being part of QDeNgage.

Sunshine Coast Hot Topics Local Support Group

Toowoomba Local Support Group hosted a range of activities and topics during their meetings including exploring sensory tools like rock painting. They learnt more about local election candidates, person-centred emergency preparedness and held QDN's first Facebook Live group meeting with 34 people with disability being part of this online discussion.

> ***"Feeling a sense of connection to community."***

Following on from recent flood events, the **Townsville Local Support Group** focused on building emergency preparedness skills of local people with disability. Since completing disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction training, the group convenors have supported members at meetings to work together with local emergency services from their Local Disaster Management Group to develop their own emergency preparedness plans.

> ***"Networking with people who have disabilities like me"***

The **Women's Virtual Local Support Group** is an online space for women with disability to share information, resources and discuss topics that are of interest to them. With 46 members this vibrant online Facebook group have explored topics including Human Rights Toolkit for Employment and Economic Empowerment, keeping safe during COVID and accessing the NDIS.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AUSTRALIA (WWDA)

WWDA
HUMAN RIGHTS TOOLKIT
EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Deception Bay Disability Expo

Local Group Convenors leadership workshop

Local support groups go online during COVID-19

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland (ATSIDNQ)

ATSIDNQ
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland

2019-20 highlights:

- 1,216 members (an 18.75 percent increase)
- 76 posts on the ATSIDNQ closed group
- 47 posts on the ATSIDNQ public page
- 8 x 'vision 6' emails sent to members
- Involvement in two new projects – Targeted Outreach and Power of Peers
- Involvement in 6 NAIDOC events across Queensland
- Engagement with an estimated 3,000 people across Queensland
- 9 yarning circles across 3 regions
- 6 policy responses/consultations
- 3 Network Champions
- 100 Service providers engaged
- Membership of 2 consultative committees

Significant rural, remote and regional engagement in the first half of the year gave a snapshot of the barriers to receiving quality support, and some wonderful successes in connecting support and providing a pathway to services. Profound cultural knowledge and guidance was provided by Elders.

Since COVID-19, ATSIDNQ has adjusted its work by connecting through social media, skype, zoom and telephone calls. Due to the restrictions in place for remote communities, ATSIDNQ is still unable to visit regions.

ATSIDNQ has had an increase in new online members during the COVID-19 period. This reflects its community engagement strategy, via virtual promotion of the ATSIDNQ Project. ATSIDNQ has also been actively involved in virtual network meetings to continue the growth of disability sector connections.

ATSIDNQ is committed to accessible and culturally appropriate activities, supported by the following strategies:

- Acknowledgement of Country at all ATSIDNQ events.
- Media release forms ensure culturally acceptable practices when collecting and using images of members.
- Accessibility and wheelchair access is always the primary consideration for venues used for yarning groups and events.
- The closed Facebook group offers a culturally safe space for discussion. Only members are added upon request.
- Members continued access to culturally appropriate support and information from Indigenous staff.
- Engagement of cultural advisors and key Elders for regional/remote visits.

Memberships were transferred to the ADAA new database, providing improved quality and security. Brisbane has the largest Network membership, reflecting the location of the Project Officer. Regional uptake of membership is a strategic goal and will be the focus for post-COVID activities.

QDN looks forward to continuing to work with ADAA to increase member communications and engagement and in project work for a stronger voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability in Queensland.

GOAL 2 To enhance the leadership and influencing capability of people with a disability

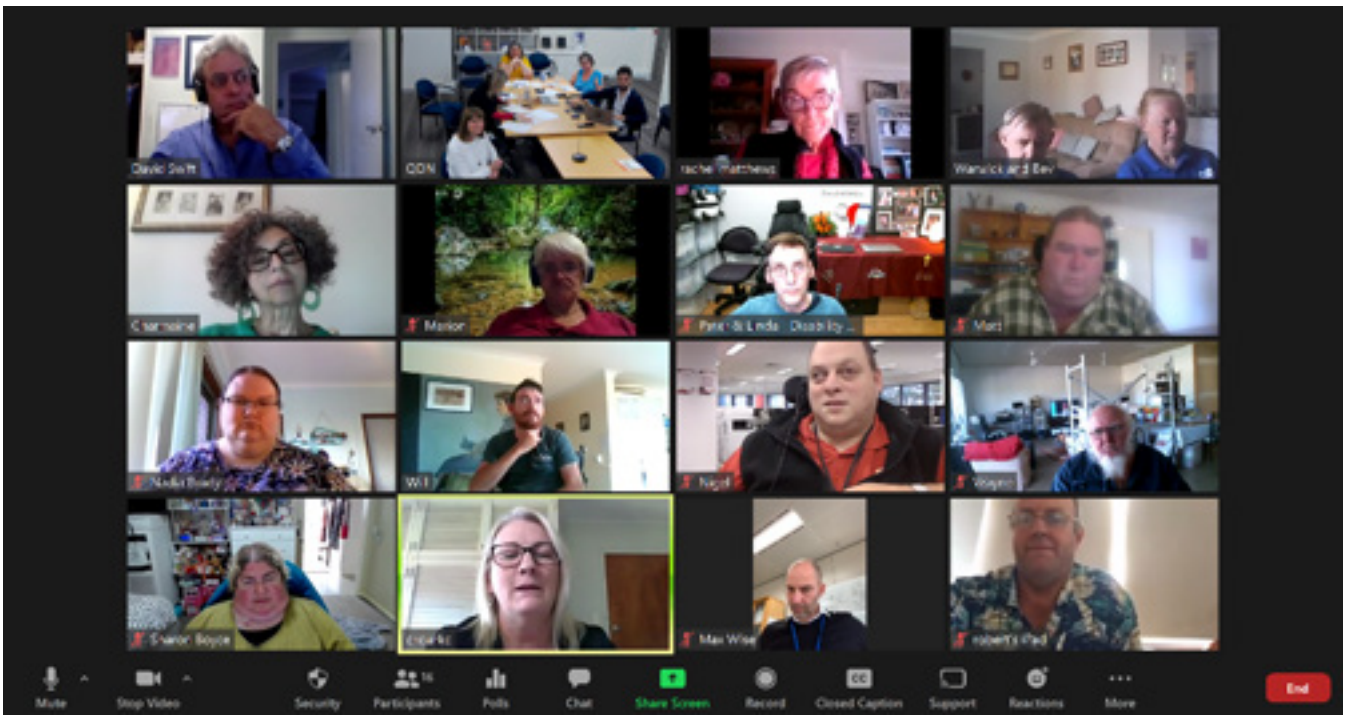
With this strategic goal, QDN focuses on people with disability and their individual and collective capability. This capacity-building focus has been expressed in a variety of activities.

Building Capacity of QDN Members and Leaders

Local Support Group Convenors Community of Practice

Group Convenors of the Local Support Groups met monthly this year to share information and resources to support each other in running peer support groups. Group Convenors also shared information with QDN about what was happening in their communities.

As part of this community of practice, this year Group Convenors rose to the challenge of staying connected and shared their own and group member experiences about COVID-19 with the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors, the Honourable Coralee O'Rourke. On 29 May 2020, the Minister joined the Group Convenors' monthly meeting to hear firsthand how people with disability were managing the coronavirus situation. Providing feedback directly to the Minister was just one of the ways Local Support Groups showed the importance of people with disability sharing their lived experience to help inform decisions and planning.



Local support group Peer Leaders Community of Practice go online during COVID-19

Welcome to country at Brisbane Changing Lives Changing Communities

Changing Lives Changing Communities Local Champions Community of Practice

The Changing Lives Changing Communities (CLCC) Project had as a key focus the building of local capacity to promote thriving communities. Over the 2-year life of the project, Local Champions were identified and invited to build their skills in hosting conversations using participatory process and engaging their communities in imagining, developing and implementing local, needs-based projects. After two days of training in 2018-19, a virtual Community of Practice was formed. In 2019-20, experienced practitioners supported several Local Champions to design and host 3 Community of Practice gatherings to learn more, build relationships, share stories, and reflect on successes and learning. QDN also hosted a final deep-dive session with Local Champions which focused on understanding the individual and community impact of the CLCC forums, particularly on people with disability. More information can be found on our website.

QDeNgage

The success of QDeNgage has offered many opportunities for capacity-building for individual consultants and the program. Engagements provide a practice ground for consultants to further develop their skills and capacity to represent effectively and offer their unique perspective in an accessible and useful way, and in a variety of topics, forums and sectors.

The work of developing foundational materials for QDeNgage itself has been rich in learning and development opportunities. Consultants engaged in a co-design process for training and induction materials, developing the materials, holding a practice session, and receiving and incorporating feedback. This invaluable foundational work will be consolidated in the coming year.

Building Capacity through Information and Communication with Members

In these times of rapid change, across many projects and initiatives, QDN continues to make sense of complex policy issues affecting the lives of people with disability in a reciprocal way – providing clear and accessible information and being informed by member feedback and perspective. QDN supports people to understand the impact of policy on their lives, and provides a forum for them to be able to have a voice and influence in the system.

COVID-19

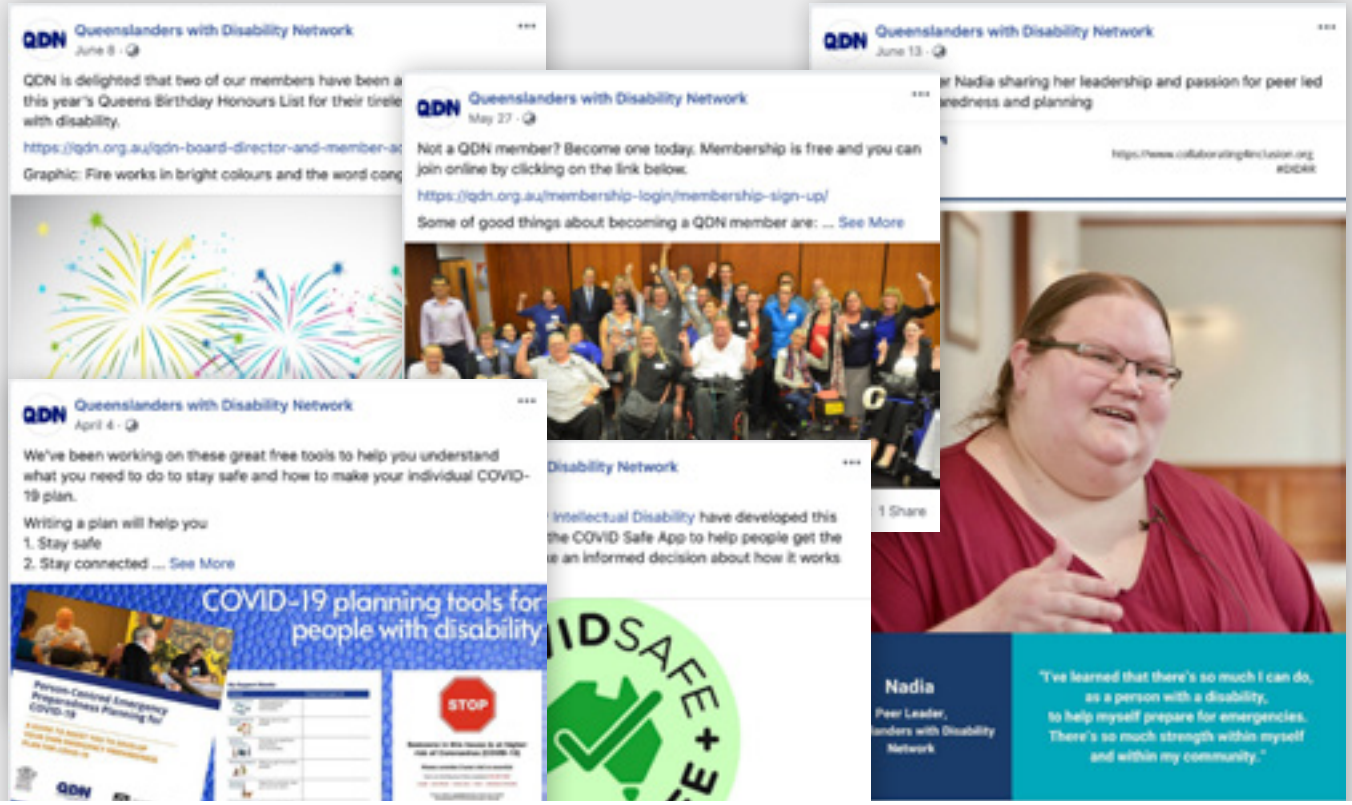
QDN has been recognised as a respected and trusted information source for people with disability through COVID-19. Our website is a trusted source of advice and information which is accessible to people with disability.

Our capability in delivering accessible communications has grown and we continue to be a sector leader in this area. QDN has been engaged to produce a range of easy-read accessible resources across many policy areas, including COVID-19.

Interest in the Person Centred Emergency Planning (PCEP) Tool generated a 200% increase in QDN website traffic and social media channel engagement for the month of April.

Local Support Groups went digital in 2020

At the start of 2020, Local Support Group members quickly learnt how to use digital technology to join their monthly peer support groups online. QDN developed resources on accessing zoom and provided training to members so they could learn how to use this technology during COVID-19. Group members quickly started to connect online, with 272 people with disability joining the conversation from their homes between March and June 2020.



Media Engagement

In 2019-20 QDN:

- Produced seven media releases across policy areas including COVID-19, housing, inclusion and transport.
- Provided 5 press and radio interviews or comments across issues including COVID-19, NDIS, Person Centred Emergency Planning and disability employment.

Social Media

QDN's primary social media channel is Facebook. In 2019-20:

- 2,300 followers.
- 223 items posted.
- Most engaged posts were on topics of tenancy reforms, NDIS, COVID-19 information and easy-read resources, person-centred emergency planning tool, targeted outreach project and local support groups.

Member Publications

e-Bulletin

The e-Bulletin is an external publication distributed by email to over 2,000 members, supporters and allies. QDN e-Bulletin is a known and trusted source of the latest system policy information, member news and QDN project work updates.

e-Blasts

QDN emails and posts frequent e-Blasts on a range of policy and special interest topics. In 2019-20, QDN published 79 e-Blasts to members, supporters and allies, an increase of 43% on the previous year.

Video

QDN has produced a range of accessible short videos across the policy areas of NDIS, capacity building, rental reforms, inclusion.

GOAL 3 To let people know about the lives of people with disability and how best to talk with us

QDN's work continues to focus on building the capacity of systems, communities and businesses to engage with people with disability. Influencing systemic change is dependent on the system and the end user being able to work together. QDN has worked over the years to build capacity in health, housing, emergency services, transport and other systems to consider, invite, listen to and respond to impacts on the lives of people with disability. Examples include:

- Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland project: work across the past two years in the disaster management/emergency services sector culminated this year in the 'Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland' project. Disaster management systems have built understanding of how to engage with people with disability in a meaningful way and what the issues are that affect their lives, worked with them to co-design responses, developed, tested and promoted successful tools and trained people with disability in disaster planning so they can support others in the community to build preparedness.
- QDeNgage: this QDN consultancy is a direct outcome of the external capacity building work of QDN. It connects businesses, government and organisations to people with lived experience of disability who provide their expertise, feedback, and advice. The value added by the voices of people with disability is exhibited in every consultation, building client willingness and capacity to consider, listen and work with people with disability in meaningful ways.

Visibility and participation in events across multiple sectors is another mechanism for building capacity in systems, communities and business to work with people with disability. QDN was involved in the following events in 2019-20:

QDN led and partnership activities

- Official launch of Deception Bay Local Support Group Digital Story by the Honourable Coralee O'Rourke, Minister for Disability Services and Seniors, CLCC Caboolture meeting, 3 December 2019.
- Official launch of the COVID-19 person-centred emergency preparedness (PCEP) guide by the Honourable Coralee O'Rourke, Minister for Disability Services and Seniors, 2 April 2020.
- Changing Lives, Changing Communities forums and Momentum meetings, in partnership with Queensland Council of Social Services and Queensland Human Rights Commission - Normanton, Toowoomba, Townsville, Mackay, Brisbane, Caboolture and Gold Coast Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) consultations - Brisbane, Townsville, Ipswich, Rockhampton, May – June 2019. Consultation led by QDN with Local Support Group Hot Topics Brisbane, 26 July 2019. Further consultation led by QDN with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ Myalgic Encephalomyelitis advocates, 20 August 2019.

- Meetings, forums and information sessions with key stakeholders at Halwyn Centre 2019-20.
- Collaboration meeting with Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education regarding submission to the Disability Royal Commission Education and Learning Discussion paper. Collaboration meeting with Summer Housing, QDN, QShelter and Department of Housing and Public Works regarding Jobs and Market Fund SDA project in Queensland.
- Australasian Society of Intellectual Disability (ASID) National Conference, Adelaide, 6-8 November, "The Long and Winding Road" the journey for self-advocates in Queensland.
- Presentations to the Board and key senior leaders of the National Disability Insurance Agency including acting CEO, Deputy CEOs and State Managers.
- Health Consumer Council Collaborative –Taxi Subsidy Scheme and NDIS interface issues.

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

- Homelessness Investment Project Briefing, Community Services Industry Alliance
- Chester and Ella Community Information Session, Summer Housing
- CEO and Senior Leaders Network Forum, QShelter
- The Hopkins Centre Meet & Mingle - Housing Research
- NDIA Briefing
- Metro North Hospital and Health Services Board Community Forum
- National Disability Services CEO Meeting
- Leading Reforms 2019 Mental Health, Alcohol and other drugs Suicide Prevention Leaders Forum
- Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability National Conference, Adelaide
- Hospital Discharge Forum
- Queensland Transition Advisory Forum
- Disability Royal Commission workshop for Disability Advocates
- Launch of The Deck in the Lady Bowen Precinct Garden, QShelter
- QShelter interview for Research Project on Human Rights
- Disability Royal Commission - First Public Sitting, Brisbane
- NDIS Participant Service Guarantee - Community Workshops (Brisbane and Townsville)
- Navigating the Aged Care System (webinar)
- TDSA Big Think Symposium - NDIS Reviews
- Make Renting Fair in Queensland Tenancy Law Forum
- Human rights in Queensland – awareness raising forum for human services NGOs
- Get Ready Queensland Launch

Projects

Everyday Practice

In 2019-20, QDN partnered with Amergin to deliver components of the Everyday Practice Project. The project was delivered as part of the Support for NDIS Providers Program, overseen by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

The objective of the project was to bridge the gap between compliance and service delivery to substantially increase the quality and safety of supports being delivered to NDIS participants on a day-to-day basis. Everyday Practice is a free, national on-line education and community resource for all NDIS providers and all NDIS participants.

Louise Abson, Lisa Mahoney and Jonathon Thurston at Get Ready Queensland launch

The purpose of the Project was to:

- help NDIS providers comply with their day-to-day NDIS obligations (Everyday Practice) through the lens of NDIS participants' experience.
- break down barriers between providers and participants and promote positive, collaborative information sharing and knowledge building, to improve the NDIS experience for all stakeholders.

The project delivered the following three elements:

- Educational resources for NDIS participants and providers;
- Moderated Provider-Participant Forum; and
- On-line NDIS Helpdesk where both providers and participants can seek answers from NDIS experts.

Topic areas for resources included:

- NDIS Provider Registration and NDIS Participant Safety and Well-being
- The Core Practice Standards and the NDIS Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Incidents Management
- Privacy, Consent and Record Keeping
- Person-Centred Compliance: What a 'Best Practice Compliance' Provider Looks Like

QDN's role in the project was:

- Membership of consortium steering committee
- Establishment of Participant and Provider Advisory Groups for the Project
- Co-design process for the development of a range of resources with a diverse number of QDeNgage consultants
- Development of resources including videos, factsheets and checklists for the Everyday Practice website

On 8 January 2020, the Everyday Practice website went live. The final resources were uploaded onto the Everyday Practice website in April 2020. QDN continued to participate in consortium steering committee meetings for the duration of the project to 30 June 2020.

Halwyn

In 2019-20 QDN was contracted by Queensland Health to undertake work with residents and their families at Halwyn, a long stay health facility in Red Hill, Brisbane. QDN's work was to provide independent advocacy and support to the current residents and respite users of Halwyn and their families, including working with a variety of government and non-government stakeholders, to the end of June 2020.

Halwyn has been in operation for 40 years and provides services to long-term residents and respite service users with complex needs. QDN provided support and linkage to key information to assist residents and families with their transition to the NDIS that included:

1. NDIS quality and safeguards commission and practice standards
2. Positive Behaviour Support & Restrictive Practices
3. NDIS first plan reviews
4. Evidence based practice of successful community living for people with complex support needs
5. Exploring alternative models of respite support

A virtual forum for all key stakeholders was held at the end of June, including key international researchers Professor Christine Bigby and Professor Nicolas Lennox to share information and research, and the group worked together to reflect on key learnings and identify a plan for going forward to build upon the successful outcomes of this work.

Targeted Outreach

QDN and project partners Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) and Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia (through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network Queensland, ATSIDNQ) along with the Queensland Government, supported more eligible Queenslanders with disability to join the NDIS and experience the benefits of the scheme through the Targeted Outreach Project.

Targeted Outreach Project Launch, Mark Henley, Paige Armstrong, Minister O'Rourke and Geoff Rowe

There are many eligible Queenslanders who have not yet applied for the NDIS, particularly those in regional, rural and remote regions in Queensland. Additionally, there are numerous people experiencing extra complex challenges and barriers to gaining access to the

Peer leaders training Person Centred Emergency Preparedness

NDIS such as homelessness and release from correctional facilities and juvenile justice. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from Culturally and Linguistically diverse backgrounds and children in Special Schools are not accessing the NDIS for a variety of reasons. The Targeted Outreach Program, led by QDN, is specifically targeting people with disability who traditionally fall through the gaps in the service system to build more informed understanding about the NDIS, and connect with those who may be eligible to apply for support.

Beginning in April 2020, the project delivers targeted individual and community engagement in local communities to identify and support people with disability who are most likely eligible for the NDIS to connect with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors' Assessment and Referral teams (ART) to progress access requests for the NDIS. The Targeted Outreach Project also recruits Local Champions to assist in this process and bring their lived experience to help more eligible Queenslanders with disability join the NDIS.

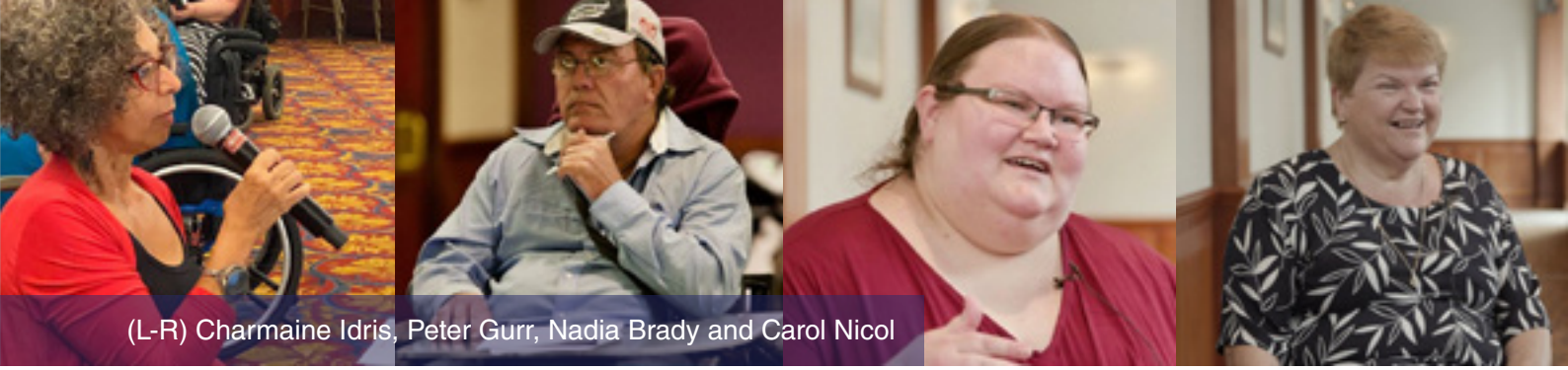
Over the next two years, the work is being rolled out across the state in phases. The first phase is underway in Maryborough and North Coast and Moreton areas.

"I just found out I have been approved for the NDIS. Without you I wouldn't have ever got here, and I cannot thank you enough" (Targeted Outreach Project participant).

Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Advisory Committee

The 'Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland' project is a partnership between QDN, the University of Sydney, Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) and Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.



(L-R) Charmaine Idris, Peter Gurr, Nadia Brady and Carol Nicol

Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) means making sure that the needs and voices of people with disability are included in emergency management and disaster planning at all levels.

In **Phase One** (April 2019 – September 2019) we developed a DIDRR Framework and Toolkit for Queensland. This resource was informed by inclusive community consultations held in four Local Government Areas – Brisbane, Townsville, Ipswich and Rockhampton. At these consultations we spoke with **190 participants, including 66 people with disability**, about the needs and challenges for people with disability in emergency situations.

QDN and project partners were recognised for this work as proud recipients of the Inspector-General Emergency Management 'Champion of Change' Award on International Women's Day.

This work has also received international recognition, including promotion from the United Nations Agency for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Phase Two (October 2019 – June 2021) is about working together to take the learnings from Phase One of the project, to implement, evaluate and showcase Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) in action at all levels – individual, disability and community service provider, and government and emergency services.

QDN's work in Phase Two is focused on supporting the individual preparedness of people with disability, and a peer to peer support approach to increasing emergency preparedness.

The DIDRR Peer Leaders

In February QDN and the University of Sydney facilitated an **emergency preparedness training for 25 peer leaders** in Brisbane from across Queensland. In early 2020 QDN peer leaders spoke with members of their peer support groups about their emergency plans, supporting each other by sharing tips and local knowledge. DIDRR peer leaders are supporting and championing disability inclusive disaster risk reduction (DIDRR) in their local communities, sharing information on emergency preparedness, connecting and learning from their local emergency services, and supporting their peers in developing their own individual emergency preparedness plans.

"My role as a peer leader is to open the door to person-centred emergency preparedness conversations to assist others in planning for disasters"
Peter Gurr, Townsville

Harvest documents Changing Lives Changing Communities conversations

Queensland Community Support Services Linkages

In the second half of 2019, the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors contracted QDN to undertake 3 months of work from July 2019 to September 2019 with Queensland Community Care (QCC) clients in their transition to Queensland Community Support Services (QCSS).

QDN's role was to provide:

- Targeted pre-access support with QCC clients deemed potentially eligible for the NDIS who needed to make an access request to test their eligibility to trigger Continuity of Support arrangements with the Department or to move into NDIS supports, and
- Information and support to QCC clients who needed to transition to new providers under the new QCSS as their current provider was no longer providing services.

During the project, 449 individuals were supported to transition from QCC to QCSS supports including support around NDIS access.

Changing Lives Changing Communities

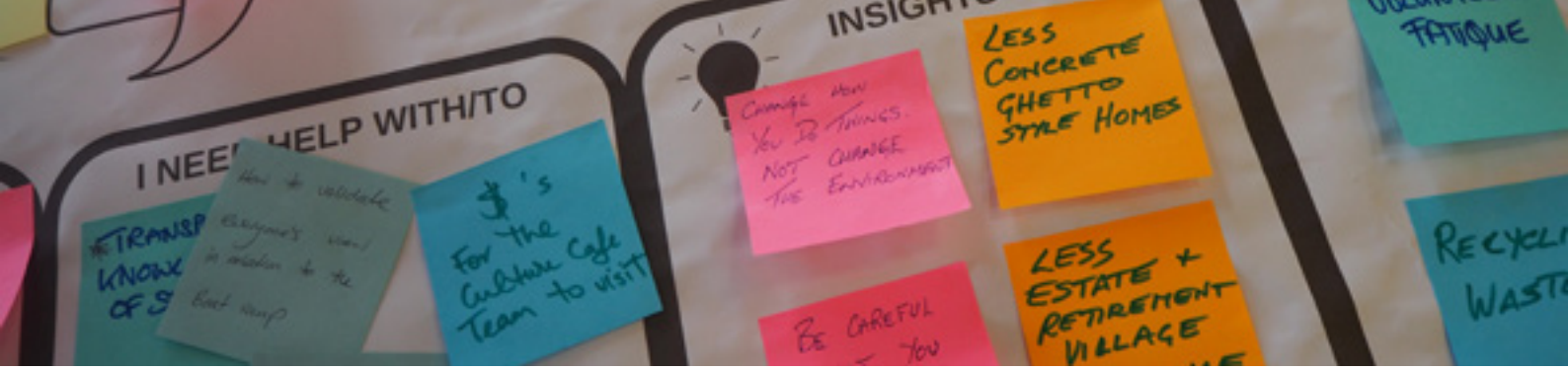
The Changing Lives, Changing Communities (CLCC) project has been delivered through a successful partnership between QDN, QCOSS and the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHCR), local councils, the individuals who have supported this work in communities across Queensland, and the QDN members who have worked alongside us and contributed their time and leadership.

CLCC was a series of two-day events across Queensland, held over two years, in six locations across Queensland – Brisbane, Gold Coast, Caboolture, Toowoomba, Mackay and Normanton. The forums created a space for people with disability, community organisations, the private sector and government representatives to come together to ask the question "what will it take to create communities where everyone contributes, matters and belongs?"

The design of the two-day forum followed an arc from inspiration through ideas to action. A combination of story-telling, appreciative inquiry, participatory process, theories of change and project development to ensure that people feel confident, capable and supported to move from issues to solutions.

In each location, a Hosting Team was formed that was unique and drawn from within the local community, with a range of key stakeholders and leadership by people with a disability. The Hosting Team worked alongside QDN and other partner organisations to plan the event, and over time, step into roles of leadership and hosting.

During the two years, over **700 participants from across the community have attended the 10 forums and generated 68 ideas for action**. The impacts of this project are wide reaching and will continue to contribute to the momentum for real change and inclusion in communities across Queensland.



I believe that CLCC is a great event and incentive as it brings together likeminded thinkers and community champions to create change and assist in identifying opportunities. For some participants I spoke to during the event, they were unaware of some of the opportunities and resources already developed and available. As for the online space, centralisation of information is the key and I believe that the structure of the CLCC event provides just this in a face to face environment.
(Community Participant, Caboolture)

Self-Management

QDN received funding from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) through the Disabled Peoples and Families Organisations - Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Readiness Grant Round in 2019. The funding enabled QDN to improve our:

- CRM System to deliver improved efficiencies; and
- Peer Mentoring Program for Local Support Group (LSG) Convenors – to mentor people around self-management of NDIS plans

QDN worked with **23 LSG Convenors**, all people with disability, to grow their skills as peer mentors, and increase their knowledge about self-management. The group convenors co-designed, trialled and developed activities focused on self-management to work with people with disability in their local communities, **in 18 geographic locations - metropolitan, regional, rural and remote**.

The project utilised a co-design approach to workshop resource content, co-learn about peer mentoring, test resources and delivery with LSGs and other participants and supporters, and refine resources and delivery (including further co-learning around good practice mentoring) based on feedback.

The project delivered:

- Co-design workshops with QDN local support group convenors to obtain their ideas, thoughts and feedback on content and to support co-learning about peer mentoring.
- User-friendly tools and resources regarding self-management.
- Implementation of Microsoft Dynamics CRM system.

Resources developed will be further utilised in the Power of Peers project.

Power of Peers

QDN received funding under the NDIA's Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grants to continue and expand Local Support Groups for the period February 2020 - December 2023. Th project is called Power of Peers.

QDN will establish 13 new peer led support groups including 2 virtual groups and develop and deliver capacity building and leadership training and digital technology training to peer leaders. In the COVID-19 environment the order of delivery of project elements

has shifted, with the focus for 2020 being on developing and delivering training and establishing online groups.

Project progress

In February 2020, **15 Local Support Group (LSG) Convenors from across the state participated in a two-day training and planning** in Brisbane to plan The Power of Peers project and meeting topics and activities for 2020.

In March 2020, LSG Convenors worked with QDN to identify new ways that members could stay connected and continue meetings during the COVID-19 emergency. 2 groups trialled new ways to connect online with Zoom meetings being the preferred option.

In April, most groups moved to Zoom meetings. During the COVID-19 emergency **272 people with disability joined a virtual LSG meeting**.

QDN worked with LSG Convenors and members to provide training in Zoom.

QDN established closed Facebook groups for all LSGs except Brisbane Hot Topics so members can stay connected.

QDN and LSG Convenors have identified succession planning as imperative to ensure that potential new/back-up Convenors have the same access to training as current Convenors.

Planning is underway for 2 new virtual LSGs. Connecting online has given some people with disability, who would not normally be able to go to a meeting, the opportunity to do so. In response, QDN will be starting a Zoom Room for people who want to be part of a face to face meeting but are not able to get there.

QDN is working with some young QDN members on an under 30s virtual LSG, facilitated by people with disability who are under 30.

Normanton Changing Lives Changing Communities

Toowoomba Changing Lives Changing Communities

GOAL 4 To influence governments and others to bring about full and equal participation, citizenship, and protection of rights for all

Policy Leadership by and for people with disability

QDN's members, supporters and allies play an essential role in the ecosystem of systemic and issue-based policy influence in Queensland. They provide valuable information from their own lived experience and from the experience of their networks to inform decision makers about the direct impacts of policy decisions in the day to day lives of people with disability.

During 2019-20, QDN:

- made contributions at 52 policy submissions, consultations and forums
- Submitted 17 formal policy submissions

QDN also engaged regularly and often with members of parliament, departmental representatives and key decision makers about issues important to our members and the lives of people with disability. The following detail gives a sense of the breadth and depth of the reach of QDN across policy work in Queensland and nationally.

Policy Submissions and Consultations

QDN policy focus is driven by its members and the issues that most impact them. In 2019-20, health, transport, housing, NDIS, Disability Royal Commission and digital access featured until March 2020, when the COVID-19 emergency interrupted the work of bodies such as the Disability Royal Commission and temporarily halted face to face consultation. QDN members and staff have done an excellent job of staying abreast of and responding to continuing and new policy issues and challenges in this environment. The focus is always impact – the impact on people's lives, and the impact of the voices of people with disability on policy development and implementation.

QDN delivered submissions and responses and contributed to consultation and forums on the following policy issues in 2019-20:

COVID-19

Submissions

- Emergency COVID-19 Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020
- Locked Doors, Gates and Windows feedback on Policy implementation to emergency changes to Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020
- Letter to the Federal Minister for the NDIS, Stuart Robert, in relation to the COVID Safe app and issues arising for people with disability

Committees/Consultations

- National Roundtable, Commonwealth Department of Health – COVID-19 Disability and Health

- Human and Social Recovery Committee – COVID-19
- COVID-19 and health system reform and planning – Queensland Clinical Senate
- People with disability and older persons COVID-19 working group - Health Consumers Queensland, Council on the Ageing Queensland, Health Issues Centre Victoria and Queensland Clinical Senate Chairperson
- COVID-19 IT Coordination Working Group – Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Women and Children Health and Safety Working Party – COVID-19 and Domestic and Family Violence
- Disability Sector Working Group COVID-19 – Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- COVID-19 Working Group – Disability Support in the Queensland Community, Queensland Health
- COVID-19 Working Group – Department of Housing and Public Works
- COVID-19 and Locked Doors, Gates and Windows discussion with Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Long Stay Patient Discharge Project – COVID-19

NDIS

Submissions

- National Disability Insurance Act Amendment (Streamlined Governance)
- Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into NDIS Planning
- Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into Supported Independent Living (SIL)
- Review of the NDIS Act and the new NDIS Participant Service Guarantee
- NDIA Annual Pricing Review Issues Paper
- Letter to the Queensland Premier and Minister for Disability urging them to reject the Federal Government's request to change NDIS rules to prevent people with disability using their NDIS supports to access specialist sexual services

Committees/Consultations

- Queensland Transition Advisory Implementation Group (QTAG)
- NDIA Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) Intellectual Disability Reference Group
- Resident Support Providers, NDIA and Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors strategic working group
- National meeting with key invited representatives from each state to discuss NDIS and Health Interface issues, principles and work going forward, NDIA

Disability Royal Commission

Submissions

- Disability Royal Commission Draft Accessibility Standards
- Education Issues Paper, Disability Royal Commission
- Disability Royal Commission on Group Homes

Transport

Submissions

- Motorised Mobility Devices Discussion Paper
- Disability Parking Permit Review
- Transport Legislation (Disability Parking and Other Matters) Amendment Bill

Committees/Consultations

- Public Hearing, *Legislation (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill 2019*
- Smart Ticketing customer feedback
- Transport and Main Roads Co-Design Activities
- Cross River Rail Accessibility Engagement
- Brisbane Metro - Accessibility Working Group
- Queensland Rail Accessibility Reference Group

Justice

Submissions

- Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Housing

Submissions

- Renting in Queensland Regulatory Impact Statement

Committees/Consultations

- Ministerial Housing Council
- Ministerial Housing Council - Disability Sub Committee
- Make Renting Fair Queensland Alliance
- Community Housing Operating Model workshop, Department of Housing and Public Works
- Disability Housing Supply Review, Market Sounding Interview, Queensland Treasury
- SDA Quality & Safeguards Reference Group, Summer Foundation

Disability Policy

Committees/Consultations

- Queensland Disability Advisory Council
- Thriving Communities Leadership Group – Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- State Advocacy Framework review

Health

Submissions

- Productivity Commission Report on Mental Health

Committees/Consultations

- Metro South Hospital and Health Service Disability Advisory Committee
- Queensland Hospital Discharge and Housing Project Governance
- Logan Hospital accessibility redesign (letter of support)

Discrimination

Submissions

- Second exposure draft Religious Discrimination Bill 2019

Energy

Committees/Consultations

- Energy Queensland Community Advisory Group

Engagement with Government

Connection and effective engagement with key figures in government and politics is an important part of maintaining and developing QDN's policy influence. In 2019-20, QDN engaged with the following Government, Departmental and political representatives:

Ministers

In 2019-20, QDN has on multiple occasions met with Queensland Government Ministers, including:

- The Hon Coralee O'Rourke, Minister for Disability Services and Seniors
- The Hon Mick De Brenni, Minister for Housing and Public Works
- The Hon Steven Miles MP, Minister for Health
- The Hon Di Farmer, Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- The Hon Sterling Hinchliffe, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

At the Commonwealth level, QDN has met with The Hon Stuart Robert MP, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services.

These meetings and events have provided QDN with the opportunity to raise issues important to our members and ensure that the voice of people with disability is heard at the highest level of Government.

Departmental Staff

QDN meets regularly with Departmental Director-Generals, Deputy and Assistant Director-Generals, Executive Directors and other public servants to advocate on key issues.

In Queensland, QDN has met with:

- the Office of the Premier and Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Queensland Treasury
- Director-General and Assistant Director-General, Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Deputy-Director General, Department of Health
- Deputy-Director General, Department of Housing and Public Works
- Executive Director, Strategic Policy, Queensland Health
- Executive Director Metro North Hospital and Health Service
- Commissioner and Principal Conciliator, Human Rights Commission
- Chairperson, Queensland Clinical Senate

Meetings with representatives from other jurisdictions included the Executive Director, New Zealand Ministry of Health, the Disability Royal Commission Legal Service Helpline/National Legal Aid and the First Assistant Secretary, Commonwealth Department of Health.

Minister O'Rourke, Minister Ryan, Director General Clare O'Connor and participants from Moreton Bay region

National Disability Insurance Agency

QDN nurtures positive relationships with the NDIA and this year has met with the Board, Chief Executive Officer, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officers, Queensland State Manager, National General Manager and State Manager Governmental Relations.

Other political representatives

QDN met with three MPs from Katter's Australian Party to discuss rental reforms.

Queensland Local Government Council Elections

In the lead up to the 2020 Queensland Local Government Elections on 28 March, QDN did extensive consultation with members to develop our election platform. This helped facilitate some important discussions at Local Support Group meetings around local government elections and a platform for members to contact candidates in their local area.

GOAL 5 To grow an independently sustainable, effective, accountable, and rights-based organisation that reflects our vision, mission, values and principles

QDN Board

Board

QDN's Board of Directors have led the organisation during 2019-2020 to ensure the work of the organisation continues to be driven by the mission, vision and values and a commitment to QDN members and Queenslanders with disability. The Board's stewardship and leadership has enabled QDN to continue to operate as an effective, sustainable and accountable organisation. COVID-19 environment has impacted, and QDN has a comprehensive business continuity plan in place which enabled the organisation to continue to deliver on QDN's contracts, as well as maintain connection with members, provide a strong voice and representation to State and Commonwealth Governments to inform planning and response to COVID-19 as well as deliver a range of resources and responses to the emerging policy environment. During 2019-2020, QDN's Board of Directors have undertaken the role of corporate governance with rigor and commitment, contributing each of their skills and expertise to position QDN now and into the future.

Strategic Plan

QDN's Board of Directors held their strategic planning day on 23 January 2020. Directors worked intensely to develop goals that accounted for all the new and continuing work of QDN, and to align these goals strategically and purposefully with QDN's vision, mission, values and principles. The Directors took careful consideration of the ever more competitive and changeable environment and the need to ensure QDN's strategic positioning into the future in order to stay sustainable, and agile. Following review of the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, Board Directors reviewed QDN's vision, mission, values and goals and made decisions about changes and additions to the plan and added a new goal to guide and inform QDN's work going forward.

Quality Management

QDN undertakes certification as a human service organisation in order to support meeting requirements for Quality Management, continuous quality improvement, and registration as an NDIS provider. This certification provides assurance to QDN's stakeholders that we operate safely and reliably. During this year we passed an external quality audit conducted by IHCA, amended policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), and began the verification process for renewal of QDN's NDIS registration.

Customer Relationship Management

Following QDN's successful grant in 2019 through funding from the NDIA - ILC, QDN undertook a range of work to implement a new customer relationship management (CRM) platform. QDN selected Microsoft Dynamics 365 delivered by DataCom, a proven Brisbane-based supplier, as the product that represented best value for money and met all requirements for system integration, capability, current and projected needs.

Board Development

QDN's Board continued to meet regularly during the year, both as a full Board and as sub-committees responsible for Audit and Compliance, and Nominations and Performance.

At the 2019 Annual General Meeting, Stacy Miller joined the Board of Directors as an Appointed Director.

Board Members

Name	Position	Location	Director since
Nigel Webb	Chairperson	Brisbane	2012
John McPherson	Vice Chairperson	Brisbane	2012
Sharon Boyce	Director Elected	Toowoomba	2013
Peter Gurr	Director Elected	Townsville	2015

Colleen Papadopoulos	Company Secretary	Brisbane	2015
Gary Matthews	Director Elected	Mackay	2018
Des Ryan	Director Elected	Rockhampton	2018
Hayley Wesbro	Director Elected	Brisbane	2018 to Nov 2019
Stacy Miller	Director Appointed	Gold Coast	2019

Staff

QDN's staffing remained consistent during 2019-2020, however we did see some transition of staff joining the team as well as some that we had to farewell.

Name	Position	Category	Status
Louise Abson	Project Officer	Employee	Current
Paige Armstrong	Chief Executive Officer	Employee	Current
Michelle Birrell	Projects Manager	Employee	Current
Angela Boyd	Projects Manager	Employee	To Apr 2020
Kate Burton	Project Officer	Employee	Current
Natalia Costa E Freitas	Finance and Administration Support Officer	Employee	Current
Elly Desmarchelier	Projects Lead – Policy, Advocacy & Engagement	Employee	Current
Jeremy Farley	Project Officer	Employee	Current
Sian Finn	Project Officer	Employee	To Jun 2020
Michael Fisher	Peer Advocate	Casual	To Aug 2019
Joanne Galvin	Finance and Quality Officer	Casual	Current
Cindy Hannam	Administration Support Officer	Casual	Current
Helen Higgins	Project Officer	Employee	To Feb 2020
Mark McKeon	Finance & Admin Coordinator	Employee	Current
Sharyn McManus	Communications and Marketing Officer	Employee	Current
Margaret Micale	Member Services Administration Support Officer	Employee	Current
Michelle Moss	Director Policy and Strategic Engagement	Employee	Current
Louise Pollard	Project Officer	Employee	Current

Olivia Spadina	Engagements Lead – Peer Leaders and Peer Support Groups	Employee	Current
Mischelle Surawski	Project Officer	Casual	To Sep 2019
Karin Swift	Policy Officer	Employee	To June 2020
Michael Timbrell	Operations Manager	Employee	To Jun 2020
Rebecca Wesson	Project Officer	Employee	To Nov 2019

Consultants/contractors

A number of consultants worked alongside QDN staff during 2019 to 2020 and we thank them for their valuable contribution, and for their dedication and commitment to QDN, our members and producing quality work.

- Elissa Farrow (About Your Transition)
- Rebecca McElroy (Bright Films Projections)
- Clare Locke (Clocke Design)
- Jane Geltch and Fiona Malcolm (Purpose Partners)
- Peter and Linda Tully (Australian Services and Distribution)
- Janette Manley

QDeNgage

QDeNgage connects businesses, government departments and organisations to people with lived experience of disability to provide their expertise, feedback, and advice. In the initiative's first year in operation, QDeNgage has successfully delivered on a range of work for customers including:

- Gold Coast City Council
- ARUP engineering
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Summer Foundation
- Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA)
- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Department of Housing and Public Works
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Rail

This year, QDeNgage has facilitated 20 engagements, and engaged 207 people with disability as QDeNgage Consultants to deliver on this work in varying capacities – as consumer representatives, guest speakers and co-designers.

"QDeNgage is so valuable not just for the disability community, but for those who are wanting to be more inclusive and accessible in their workplaces and organisations but are at a loss of where to start. As QDeNgage consultants and people with disabilities, we are able to utilise our own lifetime of experiences and take practical steps towards making local businesses and organisations inclusive, and therefore open up more opportunities for others living with disability"
Steph Dower, QDeNgage Consultant

The Power of Collaboration

QDN's value of collaborative action is evident in and critical to all its work. QDN takes every opportunity to work with others to influence outcomes for people with disability. Two key examples demonstrated the power of this collaborative approach in 2019-20:

Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland

The 'Disability Inclusive and Disaster Resilient Queensland' project is a partnership between QDN, the University of Sydney, Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) and Queensland Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) means ensuring the needs and voices of people with disability are included in emergency management and disaster planning.

In **Phase One** (April 2019 – September 2019) a DIDRR Framework and Toolkit for Queensland was developed, informed by inclusive community consultations held across Queensland. **Phase Two** (October 2019 – June 2021) is about working together to take the learnings from Phase One to implement, evaluate and showcase Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR) in action at all levels – individual, disability and community service provider, and government and emergency services.

This powerful collaboration paid dividends in the quality, usefulness and effectiveness of the framework and toolkit. This was recognised in Queensland through the awarding to the project team of the Inspector-General Emergency Management 'Champion of Change' Award on International Women's Day, and internationally by promotion from the United Nations Agency for Disaster Risk Reduction.

DIDRR Peer Leaders are now taking the collaboration to a deeper grass roots level, partnering with their peers to support individual disaster preparedness.

Changing Lives, Changing Communities

Another example of this multi-faceted, multi-level approach to collaboration is the Changing Lives Changing Communities (CLCC) project - a successful collaboration between QDN, QCOSS and the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHCR), local councils, individuals in communities across Queensland, and the QDN members who contributed their time and leadership.

CLCC was a series of two-day collaboration events, held over two years in six locations across Queensland. The forums focused on the question "what will it take to create communities where everyone contributes, matters and belongs?" and outcomes included increased connections and collaborative ideas for action in communities.

Collaboration also occurred at the level of event hosting - in each location, a Hosting Team was formed that was unique and drawn from within the local community, with a range of key stakeholders and leadership by people with a disability. The Hosting Team worked alongside QDN and other partner organisations to plan the event, and over time, step into roles of leadership and hosting.

From these teams, a group of Local Champions emerged. A collaborative training hosting team offered this group training in participatory process and the group formed a collaborative Community of Practice. The layers of collaboration, the capacity built as a result, and the power and reach of good collaboration were evident in the high levels of engagement and positive outcomes for communities and individuals from the CLCC project.

Power of Peaks

QDN is committed to and continues our work with the 14 peak bodies working across the community services sector in Queensland to progress our shared agenda. The purpose of this lasting, powerful and strong collaboration is to support communities and the services that serve them for a strong, thriving, connected Queensland.

An important focus in 2019-20 was the implementation of the new Human Rights Act. A peaks delegation met with the Minister and Director-General to discuss implementation. Implications for QDN's (and other peak body) members include the need for clear and accurate information about their rights, and for QDN as an organisation to ensure compliance with the new legislation.

Part 3 Financial overview

Income

QDN's total income for the 2019-2020 financial year was $2,327,560 (2018/19: $2,178,052). This was primarily comprised of:

$431,408	QDN core business
$256,540	*Changing Lives Changing Communities – ILC funded project*
$350,000	*QCSS Transition, Targeted Outreach & COVID-19 projects*
$151,044	*Queensland Department of Housing & Public Works projects*
$262,152	*Queensland Health projects*
$301,908	*NDIA CICD and Power of Peers projects*
$574,508	Other income from projects, QDeNgage and investments

Expenditure

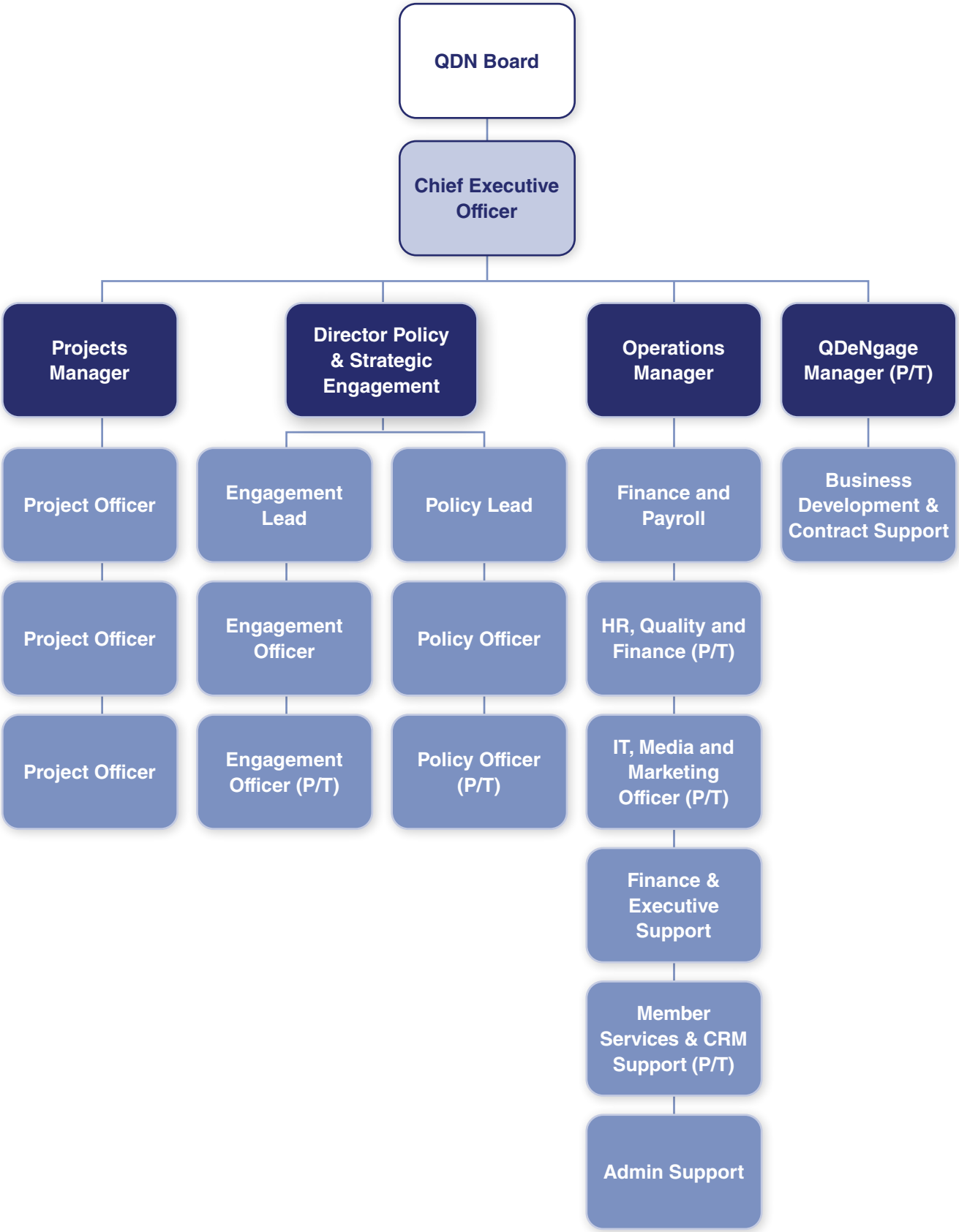
QDN's total expenditure for the 2019-2020 financial year was $2,254,709 (2018/19: $2,097,328).

Surplus

QDN generated an operating surplus of $72,851 for the 2019-2020 financial year (2018/19: $80,724), principally as a result of Commonwealth COVID-19 cash flow boost funding and successful QDeNgage activities.

Part 4 Appendix

Organisational Structure



Queenslanders with Disability Network is an organisation by and for people with disability.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

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