



### **Interesting Times**

You will have read in the newspapers and heard in the news bulletins information about the restructure and amalgamations within the State Government Public Service. In these articles the Premier Mr Mark McGowan outlined the Labor Government key priorities as health, education, law and order.

In Western Australia the 41 current departments will be reduced to 25, some will be amalgamated and others abolished. It is intended there will be a reduction in the number of public servants, with some estimates up to 3,000 positions across the public service, primarily through natural attrition and retirements with no forced redundancies.

Premier McGowan stated that there is currently the duplication of functions, as the actions of one department may flow directly into the operations of another. There is a need for fewer silos, better co-ordination and more collaboration to positively impact job creation and service delivery within the state.

Many of the proposed changes were expected, are reasonable as for example the amalgamation of the departments of Treasury and Finance, and reflect the philosophies and direction of previous Labor Governments.

The change to the human services sector will take effect by 1 July 2017 and will see the Disability Services Commission combine with the Departments of Child Protection and Family Support; Housing; along with Local Government and Communities (with functions of Seniors, Volunteers, Women, Youth and Multicultural Interests).

The McGowan Labor Government indicated the change is intended to achieve financial savings while encouraging holistic and coordinated delivery of services to families and communities in need, particularly those located in regional and remote areas.

Speaking on ABC radio on 3 May 2017, Mr. McGowan stated that a decision on the future NDIS model will be made within the next month. The Premier stated that people living with disabilities will continue to have access to the highest standards of care. Given the amount of turbulence in the sector, time will tell as to whether there will be better services and improved outcomes for people with disabilities, their families and carers.

So what does this mean specifically for Nulsen Disability Services? Probably not a great deal in the short to medium term. The Disability Services Commission was established by the Disability Services Act (1993) and so its functions will continue until the legislation is amended or superseded by new legislation proclaimed in state parliament. There will be minimal changes to the services provided to your family member during this period of time.

The Premier did flag that there may be additional changes to the structure of the public service in the future. As the enacted changes pass through and impact the disability sector we will keep you informed and will advise if it appears there will be any significant changes to services in quantum or quality.

I will reiterate and reinforce the message I provided in the last Chair Chat of my confidence in the Board members, senior management and staff to meet the myriad challenges of the years ahead. We will never abandon our values, our principles and especially our most important stakeholders, the residents and your families.

