

## Member Employment Opportunities and the NDIS

In September, I discussed the issues and challenges involved with organisational growth and this month I will focus on employment opportunities within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), namely the development of the workforce and employment prospects for all staff.

Information from various sources advises Nulsen Disability Services that:

People living with disabilities receiving funding and services will increase from about 29,800 in June 2017 to 39,100 in 2020, possibly revised upwards to around 46,000 (West Australian, 26 October 2017).

Disability funding will increase from \$933 million in June 2017 to over \$1.7 billion by 2020 (Bilateral Agreement, January 2017; DSC Annual Report 2016-17).

Economic growth in WA related to disability services will virtually double – from \$1.4 billion in 2017 to \$2.7 billion by 2020.

Direct Employment will increase from 6,300 to over 12,000 FTE with all employment (both direct and indirect) to increase from 10,507 in 2016 to over 20,140.

The Productivity Commission estimates that one in five jobs in Australia will be created within the disability sector. The only other sector to demonstrate this potential for growth will be the renewable energy sector.

Last week Dr Guy Debelle, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank, stated that the national labour market still had “sizeable spare capacity”, despite decent jobs growth during the past year.

It will be evident from the above data that the disability sector is anticipated to almost double in size over the next few years. Such significant growth over a short period will place the sector and the service providers within it under considerable strain. Hence, the need to carefully consider our strategic directions during this challenging period, especially given the significant tasks in securing and retaining quality, well-trained personnel during an era of high growth.

There is an obvious need to build sector capacity and capability, as there are projected shortages in direct care support workers and all therapy and allied health staff. There will be a number of implications for employers who will operate in this extremely competitive labour market. Employers will need to recruit more widely and increase job flexibility to respond to the different needs and preferences of potential staff members.

So how can the disability sector respond to the increase in demand for high quality staff? Some people have suggested that immigration policies will need to modify to attract additional

qualified immigrants of working age into Australia. Others have suggested an information and awareness campaign amongst school leavers in order to outline the future opportunities and possibilities within the disability sector.

I can envisage a working environment where well-trained staff interact with universally designed housing, combined with appropriate fixed assistive technologies and mobile technologies in order to encourage the maximum amount of independence and participation for the people we intend to serve.

In the final Chair Chat for 2017, I will focus on the future employment prospects and opportunities for people living with disabilities, their families and carers.



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Professor David Gilchrist is a chartered accountant and a historian. He holds a PhD in economics from the University of Notre Dame Australia and is currently a professor of accounting at the University of Western Australia. Over his 25-year career, David has held many senior roles in the not-for-profit, commercial and public sectors. He has taught at several universities across the globe, sits as Chairman on multiple boards and has published several key national reports. A few of his achievements include; working as the Assistant Auditor General for Western Australia, and the Associate Dean of the School of Business, University of Notre Dame Australia. As a Chairman to Nulsen Disability Services, and the Kimberley Individual and Family Support Association. Also producing the "Australian Charities 2013" and the "Australian National Costing and Pricing Framework" issued jointly with National Disability Services. He is widely published as an academic and a journalist. [See David's full profile here.](#)