2019/2020

Annual Report

NATIONAL ETHNIC DISABILITY ALLIANCE

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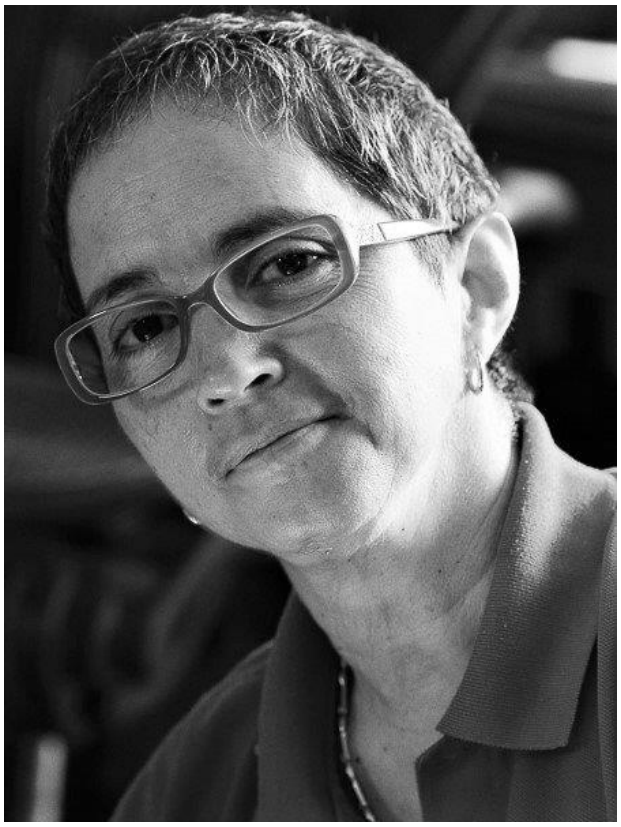
PRESIDENT'S REPORT



What an extraordinary year for NEDA!

I would like to start my report by acknowledging the traditional owners of the country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to the land, sea and community.

I pay my respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders both past and present future.

Growth at NEDA

The first half of 2019-20 was a very busy period for NEDA and our members.

As of January 2021, NEDA has grown from a team of two to a team of almost eleven, due to successful grants and funding.

On a governance level, our council welcomed Feroz Ibrahim from the Northern Territory this financial year. We said goodbye to our Tasmanian member, the Multicultural Council of Australia and are in the process of recruiting a new member for Tasmania.

There were no changes to the NEDA Council Executive Officers positions at the 2019 AGM as elections of office bearers now occur every two years.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (END)

Our focus areas

In such tiring times, mental health was a huge priority for our board members and staff members. Our core work was replaced by COVID issues that impacted our members and our community. Yet, NEDA and all our members were able to continue core business and take on new projects.

We collaborated with the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) on the National Community Connector Program which saw some of our member organisations working with NEDA to deliver this big scale project.

The Disability Royal Commission created extra workload. Both a NEDA team member and I did personal submissions. Only one other Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Person with a disability was mentioned in the Commission's interim report, which is troubling, to say the least.
This year, we will work with our member organisations to boost up the number of submissions made to the Royal Commission.

The Radio Project was delivered and completed. We hope that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will provide additional funds to enable NEDA to roll it out nationally in the coming months.

In Closing

2019-2020 will be a year that no one will forget in a very long time, due to the global pandemic.

I am very proud of our team members, CEO and council members for the great work they do and the support they have given me in my role as president in a year of international turmoil and uncertainty.

Best Regards,

Margherita Coppolino.

CEO'S REPORT

This year, we changed the way we work!

Hello and welcome to the end of another financial year and another Annual Report.

This period, the year of 2019 -2020, has been the most extraordinary year for NEDA to date!

This year we, as a community were hit with the bushfires that devastated massive parts of our country, wiping out communities and taking away people's home, livelihoods, and in some cases, loved ones as well.

And if that was not enough, we entered a new paradigm where we are now living through a global pandemic. For NEDA, COVID-19 was a real game changer as it dictated most of our engagement since early 2020: it hampered our engagement processes and the way we work.

Due to COVID-19, the focus of our work moved general Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) disability advocacy to safety messaging. At NEDA we found ourselves sitting on many committees that reported directly to Ministers responsible for health, disability, and social services, as well as to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We worked with the government to get COVID safety messages out to the people and communities we represent, ensuring that the government messaging was on point and inclusive of all Australians.

CEO'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

The national disability peaks all worked together sharing resources, working with the government to ensure that the system left no gaps. This was difficult as no one was prepared for a pandemic.

Many hours have been spent going over the messaging, looking at the data to determine the languages for translation, the people who are at the greatest risk, who are most vulnerable, which communities should we target, given our very limited resources and the urgency we faced.

How do we engage communities that are fearful of government or that are cloistered by faith, doctrine, and culture? How do we best include those with a disability, and those people living with an intellectual disability?

Many of these issues continue to concern us. COVID-19 related work will continue as an ongoing body of work for NEDA for many years to come.

While navigating through COVID, we were also required to continue with our core work, our general disability systemic advocacy work. And with this, I believe we, as team were exceptional. We were awarded with projects and grants to represent people that often fall through the cracks, within areas like the NDIS and with CALD people living with disability.

NEDA, working with the NDIA, developed the National Community Connectors Program (NCCP). This is an 11-month project developed to engage and support people from CALD communities living with a disability that are eligible to access the NDIS. We have worked with our members in the ACT, WA, and NSW and recruited between 35 and 40 advocacy staff that work in community, informing the community about the NDIS and its services.

We continued Royal Commission work, supporting our community with regards to violence and abuse of people with a disability.We helped ensure that CALD voices could be heard over the white noise of the sector, by developing resources in language as well as animated information to help get the message out.

CEO'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

We continued our core belief in collaborative partnerships, working with FECCA, our DPOA members; First People's Disability Network, Women with Disability Australia, People with Disability Australia, Children with Disability Australia, and the Australian Federation of Disability Organizations, to name a few.

We also enhanced our close relationship with Mental Health Australia on the Embrace project, a collaboration between MHA, NEDA and FECCA.

All this work has resulted in an ever-expanding team at the NEDA office. Some of our closest collaborators will remember that when I started at NEDA in 2012, there was only one team member (myself as the CEO) and the NEDA Council.

We now have a team of 10 staff members and in the coming weeks, we will expand to a team of 11. All our team members are in various positions supporting many diverse projects, ensuring that the rights of CALD people living with a disability are considered and listened to. Unfortunately, some of these positions are reliant on funding and will therefore, not last.

One area that continues to grow at NEDA is our data work led by our statistician, Brian Cooper. We are now valued as one of the leaders in CALD and disability data: we now supply data sets to various governmental organisations, such as the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and the Department of Social Services (DSS).

This is a significant accomplishment, and cements NEDA's importance to Government and the sector.

For me as CEO it has been the most difficult year of my professional life. Having to work from home and seeing our team stretched, having meetings via Zoom instead of face-to-face interactions were very hard for me. I missed those informal chats, building and maintaining relationships.

CEO'S REPORT (END)

With a drastic change in travel routines for NEDA this year, our travel spending also changed significantly, resulting in a surplus in our budget.

I personally could not have survived without the support of my fantastic team, a team of people that continue to amaze me with their ability to cope and adapt.

They are some of the most resourceful people one could wish to work with.

I would like to thank the NEDA team and the NEDA council, who continue to support our work.

A special shout out to the executive team: Margherita Coppolino, NEDA President, Victor Marillanca, Vice President and Michael Maguire, our Treasurer.

Best Regards,

Dwayne Cranfield

TREASURER'S REPORT

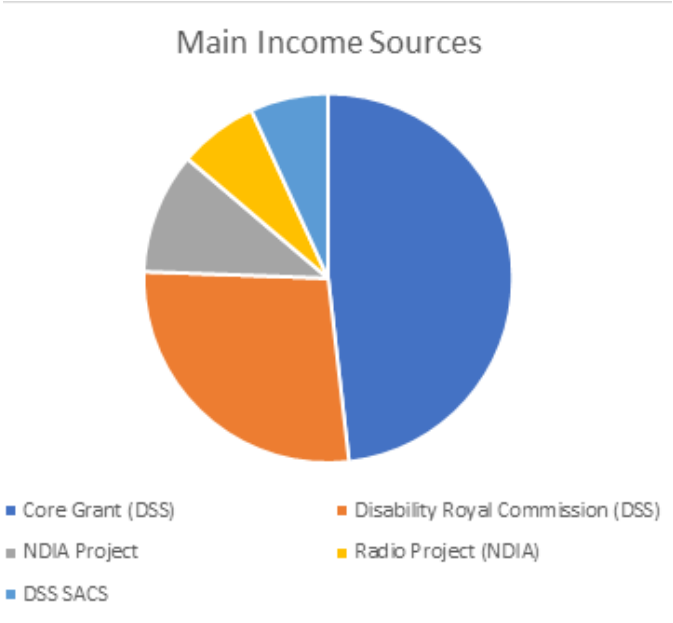
I am pleased to present the audited accounts for the 2019/ 2020 financial year.

Our Auditor, Peter Bayless, has audited our accounts and found that our reported financial position as of June 2020 provides a true and fair account, with no outstanding issues.

The financial statement indicated that at the end of June 2020, NEDA had a total income of $854,027.

This was inclusive of $300,000 core funding received from the Australian Government's Department of Social Services.

NEDA received additional funds via contracted work with several stakeholders, utilising the NEDA data cube.



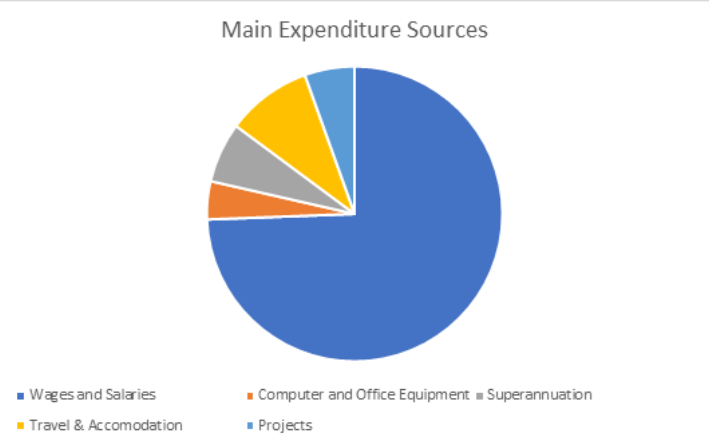
The extra funds also came from
1. A special, short term project with the National Disability Insurance Agency - the National Community Connectors Project (NCCP); and
2. A project with Australian Electoral Commission.

TREASURER'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

NEDA's net assets at the end of the financial year were $394,697 with our total liabilities amounting to $72,882.

NEDA is working on a tight budget to maximise outcomes from limited resources.

The total expenses at the end of June 2019 were $723,900, which produced an operational surplus of $130,126.



Please note that this surplus is a reflection of a year impacted by COVID-19, which meant less domestic and international (to the UN) for all our staff members.

In addition, our yearly NEDA council meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19. The council meeting is a big expense item within the NEDA budget.

The lack of travel and accommodation expenses related to the meeting meant we had a bigger than expected surplus at the end of the financial year.

TREASURER'S REPORT (END)

Again, it is obvious that our CEO has been expanding our resources base, widening our remit with regards to external projects designed to bring in extra funds and resources, to future proof our base in accordance with the outcomes of the NEDA strategic planning day, held almost three years ago.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend both the NEDA CEO and our valued team for their efforts, both within their very specialised work and their conscientious efforts to maintain fiscal responsibility.

Thank you.

Michael Maguire
Treasurer

FOCUS ON THE NCCP

In 2020, a big part of our work was driven by the the National Community Connectors Project (NCCP). NEDA is working with 10 subcontracted organisations and a team of 40 Community Contractors to deliver this program.

Project background

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds experience unique challenges such as lack of access to social supports, migration stress, recovery from past trauma and a sense of displacement. This is especially true and more exacerbated for CALD people with a disability.

The role of Community Connectors and what they have achieved so far

Through community engagement and individualised support, the Community Connectors (CC) have been able to build on protective factors such as cultural needs, trust and hopefulness to support CALD People with Disabilities (PwD), their carers and family members access the NDIS. So far, we've seen a significant increase in the number of people who've benefited from CC support.

Community Connectors have facilitated multiple information sessions, established working relationships with Partners in The Community (PiTC), created disability awareness, and assisted clients with filling Access Request Forms (ARF) and gathering evidence.

NCCP SUCCESS STORIES

Success Stories

Through community engagements, existing relationships with community leaders and partnership connections, the CCs have been able to identify community members who may benefit from NDIS support, build trust and rapport, and offer person-centric support to access and navigate the NDIS. As most of our CCs are CALD members and have considerable experience in the CALD-disability space, the level of support and the culturally appropriate service they provide have been crucial in building protective factors and minimising barriers.

In addition to this, it has helped create a safe space for CALD people with disability to seek better outcomes and access the NDIS on an equal basis with non-CALD members.

Here are some stories of people who have benefited from the program.

Story 1

A person with a disability from CALD background was referred to the Community Connector by their partner organisation for housing support. Prior to meeting the CC, the client didn't know how to access the NDIS and wasn't aware of the supports he could receive.

The CC assisted the client in submitting the ARF and was approved to access the NDIS just before the holidays. The client expressed his gratitude to the CC :*"I feel like I won the lotto…..I knew I needed NDIS, but I didn't know how to get started."*

NCCP SUCCESS STORIES

Story 2

A woman from a refugee background with complex medical issues, psychosocial disability and physical disability was identified through a partnership with a Refugee Health Clinic. As she didn't understand why the Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment was required nor have the means to pay for OT assessment which would've helped with evidence, her ARF remained incomplete.

The CC was able to utilise an OT through her organisation's networks and source funding for the same. The CC spent time learning about the client's experience with the access process, helped the client understand the steps involved in the application process and provided advice on the timeline.

In addition to this, the CC worked with the Health case officer to help complete the application, and its outcome is pending.

Story 3

A person that the CC was supporting had a Support Coordinator funded in his plan but didn't understand what he was funded for or how to utilise it. The Support Coordinator had issues supporting the client due to language and cultural barriers as well as issues related to his psychosocial disability – The CC worked with both the client and the support coordinator to understand the client's needs, explained what he'd received funding for and advised the Support Coordinator on effective ways to engage with the client in the future.

2019-2020 IN IMAGES

Last year, sadly many community events, conferences, workshops, etc. were cancelled as COVID 19 safety precautions were put in place.

Most of NEDA's engagement activities happened at the start of 2020, before those precautions came into effect. Here is a snapshot of some key events we attended this year.

We did Community Consultations in Melbourne for our Radio Project

Our Projects and Policy Officer, Dominic Golding gave a powerful speech at the Refugee Council Conference, on his experience coming to Australia as a 2-year old refugee.

Dominic Golding also attended a Disability Royal Commission hearing and shared his feedback on the session, as a person from a multicultural background and with lived experience of disability.

2019-2020 IN IMAGES

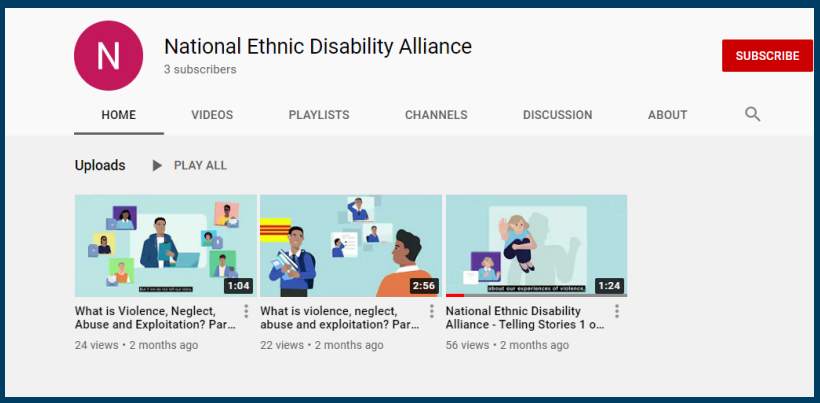
We launched the National Community Connectors Program, in partnership with the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia (FECCA.)

This big scale project is helping to connect people from multicultural backgrounds, with disability to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and its services.

Resources on the NCCP are available on our website in over 25 languages.

We talked to the media, along with other key advocacy organisations, to talk about the Federal Budget and what it means for people with disability from multicultural backgrounds.

2019-2020 IN IMAGES



We published fact sheets and explainer videos on the Royal Commission, to help our community know more about the Disability Royal Commission. Information is available in different languages.

To view the resources, visit neda.org.au/disability-royal-commission-information

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