

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

Chairperson's Report



This Annual Report includes material prepared by the Manager and Assistant Managers that highlights the organisation's achievements at the operational level during the 2011/12 year.

At the strategic level, the Board worked to consolidate its new governance model and introduced a new three-year Strategic Plan.

Governance

During the year, the Board continued its work to strengthen the governance of the organisation.

We reviewed each of the governance policies that we adopted the previous year and determined that they were operating well to meet our needs.

We also conducted a thorough review of our own performance against each of those policies. While the findings were overwhelmingly positive, we identified some areas where further work was required. Some of this was addressed through a one-day workshop with an external consultant. Other issues were resolved through ongoing discussion of and adjustments to the reporting framework we have in place to ensure that our Manager provides us with the assurance we need to strategically lead the organisation. This now operates to provide us with comprehensive data in respect of all risk management and quality improvement strategies.

Strategic Plan

We finalised our new three-year Strategic Plan early in the year. The Plan is a simple one-page document that we aimed to make as accessible as possible for all of our stakeholders.

It includes five broad goals that capture what we want to achieve over the next three years and into the future. These are:

- residents who lead meaningful lives;
- residents who lead healthy lives;
- residents who lead safe lives;
- staff who know and enjoy their job; and
- an organisation that promotes community inclusion.

In each of these areas we have identified one key project that we have asked our Manager to implement during the term of the Plan. These are:

- Active Support;
- Nutrition Project;
- Crash Free Nexus Project;
- Welcoming Workplaces Project; and
- Community Focus.

For each of the projects, we have set out some key indicators that will enable the Board to assess the success of each in contributing to our broad goals.

Strategic Partnership

We signed a Board-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with STAR Tasmania in 2008, establishing a strategic partnership of benefit to both organisations.

The MOU is reviewed annually and, again this year, we have seen key staff working together across the two organisations to share ideas and resources.

We were advised late in the year of the pending departure of STAR's CEO, Rhonda McLaughlin, who has been a major contributor to the success of the MOU since its inception. We look forward to the appointment of a new CEO and are confident that, once new working relationships are established, we will continue to see the benefits of this co-operative style of working.

Board Membership

Two Board members, Stephen Mole and Kate Young, retired from the Board at the end of the year. Both were very much part of our journey towards our new governance model and played a valuable role in helping us shape our future. We wish them well.

We are testing out how well our new Board Recruitment Policy will work for us and, with the selection process well advanced at year's end, hope to welcome new members early in the coming year.

Finances

Nexus Inc. has received a satisfactory audit opinion for the 2011/12 financial year. We completed the year with a reported surplus of \$14,121.

As last year, while we had more flexibility in budgetary planning in the context of a triennial funding agreement, the uncertainty about the impact of Unit Pricing again limited our capacity to commit funds to improvement strategies or contemplate any significant change process that entailed financial commitment beyond a very short time frame.

Unit Pricing

In my report last year I noted that Nexus welcomes the new funding approach and the transparency it will bring to the sector, and remains committed to working with the Department towards its introduction. A further twelve months of negotiations, while always cordial, have not brought the transition process to a conclusion for us.

We remain concerned about fundamental flaws in the transition process itself. Our Manager's Report sets out these concerns in detail and sounds a warning bell as to the future operation of this funding model.

We finish the year having reached agreement with Departmental officers that our

operations will be audited as the next step in the transition process. We trust that this audit will address issues of client support needs at Nexus.

Acknowledgements

We have appreciated the efforts of key Departmental staff in keeping abreast of issues impacting on Nexus residents during the year. While always being clear with us about prevailing financial constraints, they have worked to seek funds for improvements where they could. They have taken a genuine interest in the work we have done at the governance level, with quarterly meetings with our Manager having been particularly fruitful.

I thank my fellow Board members for their continued commitment over the past year. They are all busy people who make themselves available when there is work to be done and always maintain their focus on our core purpose.

Our Manager, Kate Durkin, has had a challenging year with extended absences to respond to pressing family circumstances. She showed a continuing level of commitment that saw her spend as much time as she could in the workplace, ensuring not only smooth operational functioning but also the implementation of many improvement measures. Adrian Scott has stepped into the breach on more than one occasion over the year and has been an effective leader in difficult times. All other office staff have experienced a number of short-term increases in workloads and have shown what solid team players they are at all times. I thank them for their ongoing commitment to our organisation as, despite all the challenges mentioned, the excellent provision of service to our clients that we are so proud of has continued without interruption.

At the operational level, nothing we have achieved over the past year would have been possible without the dedicated efforts of our loyal staff. I thank each and every one of them for their day-to-day work and for the contribution they have made to quality improvement in so many areas over the year.

Again this year, a large number of compliments were brought to our attention whereby the efforts of staff in supporting residents in their communities were recognised by others. There can be no more heartening feedback for any Board member than to know that our staff are doing everything they can to support residents to be true citizens in their community. We welcome the forthcoming Equal Remuneration pay rise that will be another small step towards true recognition of the value of what our staff do.

Susie Winter
Chairperson

Manager's Report

This report should be read in conjunction with a viewing of our DVD, "Sharing Our Stories", a compilation of all the news about residents and their homes from the 2011/12 year.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

We have continued to provide timely reports to the funding body on quality and safety performance. We received positive feedback on each and were deemed to have met all applicable standards.

We made some significant changes to our internal Quality Assurance (QA) system during the year. This started with a highly successful one-day workshop where an external facilitator, Alex Jerrim, worked with our full Management Team to help us get working productively together. He wrote to us after the workshop, noting that he had "...never seen a group so in tune with their purpose and willing to move towards great outcomes."



On the day, one of the reforms we agreed on was to refine our QA system to ensure broader involvement in the process. QA checks were all previously done by an Assistant Manager. We set out to devise a new system that now sees House Managers do both weekly and monthly QA checks, with the Assistant Manager retaining responsibility for checks in areas where external scrutiny is required to reduce higher-level risks such as fraud. We spent a lot of time together working through the QA checklist to ensure that we had agreement on the required standard for each element, recognising that we can't expect people to meet a standard if they don't know what it is. This included two afternoons spent working in small groups to conduct trial checks, give ratings and discuss points of difference.

Data from both sets of checks is provided to our Board, producing an average

score of 83.38% over the year for compliance with standards.

This data is also shared with all staff, with outcomes discussed at every Staff Meeting. At their own initiative, a number of House Managers have also included other staff in house QA checks, anticipating the next step in ensuring even broader ownership of the system.

Policies and Systems

Our Management Team continues to exercise a strong leadership role in all operational areas and has welcomed the challenges of the Board's new Strategic Plan.

I spoke last year of the learning curve some of us faced in responding to the Board's new reporting requirements and our plan to get wider Management Team involvement in respect of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - both in data collection and in identifying further meaningful indicators. Our work on the QA system was a significant first step in this area.

Another significant reform focussed on the quality of our residents' own meetings. We worked to develop measurable standards for these meetings, including the role of each resident in setting the agenda and the degree to which they are supported to implement their decisions. This data is now sufficiently well tested to allow us to start quarterly reporting to our Board in the coming year.

Two years ago we revised the performance appraisal system for our House Managers. The new system focussed on best practice and required House Managers to identify measurable improvement goals in each performance area. This year, we revised the appraisal system for permanent part-time staff along similar lines. Over time, this will give us reportable data on goal achievement by all staff across the organisation.

As we work with the Board to develop new KPIs that test quality in all areas, we can see the day approaching when we will be in a position to present data in this Report that will speak to our progress over time.

Unit Pricing

Our Chairperson's Report refers to our ongoing concerns about the process for transition to this funding model.

The lengthy nature of that process has continued to impede our capacity to take a long-term budgetary view, particularly limiting opportunities to make changes to allocation of monies to direct funds towards identified reforms that have the potential to deliver service improvements. We do not take the view that all reforms require additional funds. We have, as since our inception, continued to identify and implement many significant reforms with no or minimal budgetary impact. What we do need is a degree of certainty about our budget that allows us to set the right balance as to how funds are allocated without risk that a significant funding cut will upset that balance. Our hands are tied in too many areas while ever the transition process remains incomplete.

Our other significant concern relates to the transition process itself. We believe the

process to be fundamentally flawed. An agreed needs assessment tool is fundamental to any pricing structure that includes provision for additional funding for clients with complex care needs. The arbitrary use of existing roster structures as the basis for transition does not constitute Unit Pricing and thus we are embarking on this new funding path having built in a flaw that will inevitably be exposed in future years.

We understood that, in the future, growth services would be funded on a Unit Price and tenders would focus on the quality of service that could be provided with the funds to be made available. No existing roster will be in place at that point. Available funds will presumably be determined on the basis of client need. An agreed assessment tool will be crucial.

In our view, the same principle should apply now. The price and the assessment tool that allows allocation of price are the two essential elements of the system. To seek to implement the system without the assessment tool is effectively to say, "We're giving you this because it looks like a reasonable kind of way to fund you given how you use your current funding".

Further, to proceed as is planned runs the risk of entrenching funding inequities. If services are to be given a price based on existing rosters, they are being given a price that reflects what they do now. Those with "fat" in their rosters will keep that "fat". Those with inadequate rosters will remain with inadequate rosters.

Surely a person-centred approach to Unit Pricing starts with the question: "does this client require hours at the low or high level?", not with the question: "what hours do you currently provide for this client?" Nexus supports 13 residents with complex care needs and current funding offers fall well short of recognition of this.

Nexus is doubly disadvantaged in this flawed process as salary costs for client outings, client illness and client holidays have never been included in our base rosters. We have always treated these costs as separate line items in our budget. This not only ensures budget transparency but also acts as a tool to ensure that quality individualised outings and holidays are planned and submitted for prior approval. We struggle to have these costs recognised as "roster costs". We will continue to argue for this recognition as we work with those Departmental officers who will undertake an audit of our organisation as our next step in the transition process.

Leave Roster and Workplace Mentor

This was the first full year of operation for our new Leave Roster arrangements. A staff survey that tested the success of the new system after twelve months gave very favourable results. The Leave Roster team - Kirsty Barwick (who works across all nine houses over the year covering House Managers on leave), Dean McIntosh, Danni Smith and Cheryl Roach (each of whom works across three houses covering permanent part-time staff on leave) have met the challenges of their new roles with great professionalism and their efforts were acknowledged at the staff Christmas function.



Cheryl Roach Danni Smith Craig Vernon Dean McIntosh Kirsty Barwick
Kate Durkin

Our Workplace Mentor, Craig Vernon, supports the team and manages their monthly rotations through workplaces. His central role, however, is to provide on-the-job support for all staff. A staff survey that tested the effectiveness of this new position at the end of the first full year of it being in place showed that it is both welcomed and valued across the board.

Industrial Relations

We have had a very settled year on the Industrial Relations front. We continued to work with HACSU, the industry union, to resolve issues as they arose and have agreed on a general framework for a new Industrial Agreement to be negotiated over the coming year.

We smoothly finalised a reclassification process for all staff in readiness for translation under the Modern Award on 1 July 2012.

Staff Training

We continued our productive working relationship with State Enterprise Training (SET) during the year, ensuring the delivery of core competency training to all staff and other tailored training programs to address specific needs.

We supported 15 staff to attend the annual Support Workers Conference and many others in their studies for industry qualifications.

Six staff completed their Certificate IV in Disability Studies in November 2011 - Danni Smith, Cheryl Roach, Pauline Dillon, David Green, Christy Cobb and Maria Smith. Their achievement was acknowledged at the staff Christmas function. Ten new Certificate IV enrolments were made in August 2011 and a further four in June 2012.



Danni Smith Maria Smith Pauline Dillon Kate Durkin Cheryl Roach
One staff member - Karen Hickey - completed her Diploma of Disability during the year and a further ten staff were enrolled for this qualification in June 2012.

Occupational Health and Safety

We took a number of steps during the year to improve the safety of work practices and environments.

The most significant of these was the development of an OH&S checklist to be used by those residents able to understand the process. A number of residents now conduct their own checks of their bedrooms and are developing a good nose for spotting a hazard. Having had many failures over the years with incentive programs and the like for residents with a tendency to hoard, we have been delighted to see the success of this approach in encouraging them to keep their rooms uncluttered.

In addition to our core OH&S staff training, we supported most of our House Managers to attend a number of the sessions run by Worksafe Tasmania in October 2011. We also arranged staff training in the safe use of kitchen knives after analysis of our staff injury data showed a high number of cuts during food preparation over the previous year.

Our Workers Compensation record again reflects our positive OH&S culture. Two of three claims outstanding at the end of 2010/11 were resolved in July 2011, with the third resolved in October 2011. Seven claims were submitted in 2011/12. Of these, two were resolved within two weeks, one within three weeks, one within five weeks and one within ten weeks. One was finalised after a Tribunal finding of genuine grounds for dispute. The final claim was lodged in late May 2012 and remains outstanding at the end of the year.

Nexus Ink

Nexus Ink has continued to report throughout the year on all the major happenings and events at Nexus. The annual quiz night and the annual staff and resident Christmas parties were covered as well the achievements of residents and staff across the organisation. Outstanding staff achievements were acknowledged with awards at their Christmas function.



Johnston Quiz Night team - best theme



Granton Quiz Night team - a close second



Pauline Dillon

Cheryl Roach

Staff Christmas
Kate Young

Maria Smith

Kirsty Neil



Staff Christmas
 Alison Hodges
 Adele Bleathman Sheryl Harris



Residents' Christmas
 Who is that mysterious man with
 Vicki Seymour?



Residents' Christmas
 Roy Tabor – a very
 scary costume



Staff Recognition
 Jacky Lockley Lynne Triffitt Kate Durkin
 Cathy Murtagh Kathy Taylor



Staff Recognition
 Carol Boxall Kate Durkin



Staff Recognition
 Daren Richards Kate Durkin

Some of the residents' achievements covered in the newsletter in the last year included:

- o Janine Bonnitcha's celebration of 30 years at Tastex;
- o Mark McPherson, Graham Davies and Michael Ransley enjoying a ride in a helicopter;
- o Allan Seymour's work experiences through Ability; and
- o Gerard Dixon's performance in the Guardianship and Administration Board's online video.



Janine Bonnitcha celebrates with her parents



Is that chopper ready?
Mark McPherson Michael Ransley
Graham Davies



Out and about with Ability
Allan Seymour



Is the camera rolling?
Gerard Dixon Adrian Scott

The Leisure Team

Leisure Team events are now organised through our Management Team, with many staff lending a hand with planning through the year.

In the lead-up to the 2011 AFL Grand Final, the Leisure Team organised a football celebration at Granton. Residents and staff dressed up in their favourite team colours for the party. We also had some special guests - players from the Glenorchy District Football Club! The Glenorchy players had a kick of the footy with the residents and were a great hit.



Our annual cricket match “the Nexus Ashes” was held at Tynwald Park again in January, followed a week or so later by our first ever “Nexus Olympics”.



Nexus Ashes
Sean Clark Stephen Nancarrow



Nexus Ashes
Fred Webb Todd Faulkner



Nexus Olympics
Mark Robson Malcolm Strong



Nexus Olympics
Roy Tabor Paul Smith



Nexus Olympics
Graham Davies Mandy McKenzie



Nexus Olympics
Jane Brown Stephen Nancarrow

Over the Easter break we held an Easter egg hunt and party, again at Granton. Residents searched for eggs that had been hidden around the sensory garden and, as always, there was an appearance by the Easter Bunny.



Lindley Hull



Adam Harrison

The last Leisure Team event for the financial year was another of our famous nights out for the boys. The 'fellas' gathered at Cooley's Hotel for a meal, a game of 8-ball and to watch the footy on TV.



Gerard Dixon Mark Robson



Paul Jackson



Michael Ransley Anthony Briggs Secret Men's Business Local Roy Tabor Mark McPherson



Mark Robson Malcolm Strong

Gardens

Our new Strategic Plan includes a Nutrition Project and we know that eating fresh vegetables out of your own garden is a good place to start with this. Two houses had major garden overhauls this year and the first crops are already in. For both groups of residents, they have the added benefit of outdoor spaces that offer greatly improved amenity and safety. We plan to do similar work at the other seven houses over the coming years.



Sunshine - BEFORE



Sunshine - AFTER



Johnston - BEFORE



Johnston - AFTER



Johnston - AFTER

Sharing our Stories

As in the past, we have again developed a DVD record of our year. It tells the story of each house over the year and we hope you enjoy sharing that with us.

To the Board of Nexus

Thank you for your patience over what has been a challenging year. And, as ever, thank you for your leadership and for being the strong moral compass of a fine organisation.

Kate Durkin
Manager