



Annual Report 2021/2022

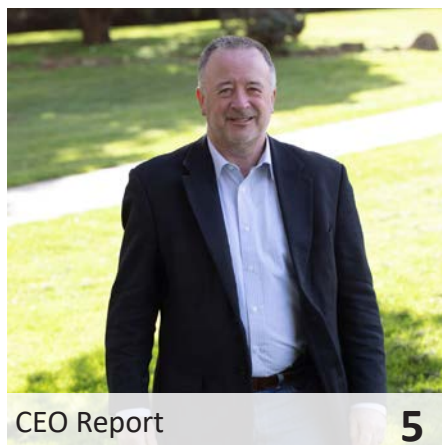


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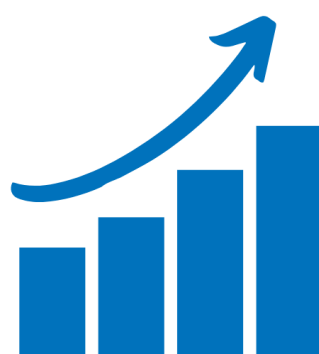
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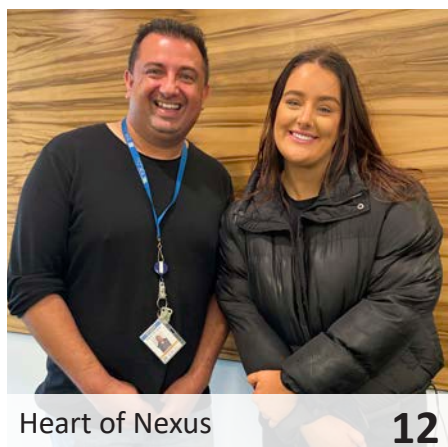
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Chair Report

The Board has had both a challenging and fruitful 2021-2022 Year.

The year commenced with news that our IT systems had been infiltrated by a ransom-ware attack. The quick action of our IT staff, and the range of security protocols in place, ensured that the attack had a limited impact and only locked some historical files.

Fortunately, the attack did not access any client data or our main working file area, and our cyber insurance meant we were not out of pocket for the costs of analysis and data recovery. Our business was disrupted for about three weeks, but much of our client work was on cloud-based servers so we were able to continue supporting our clients.

As part of our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, the Board endorsed the growth of our Children and Youth services. We now support clients from the age of seven, which complements the already flourishing youth cohort of ages 14 and over. The profile of risks, service design and staffing have all been considered thoroughly, and we are thrilled to soon be launching a new planned respite centre.



“Nexus has a proud history of advocating for the rights of people with a disability.”

Following the investments made by the Board in developing the SEED social enterprise and Customised Employment program, both programs continue to grow. The orchard in Franklin and the commercial cleaning and gardening businesses are all flourishing. The Huonville kitchen has also been refurbished to provide clients with an expanded range of training and employment opportunities.

Nexus has a proud history of advocating for the rights of people with a disability. While we are an apolitical organisation, we joined two important advocacy campaigns during the 2022 Federal Election. These were Teamwork Works by the NDS, and Down to 10 Days by the Summer Foundation. Both were focused on the original vision of the NDIS as a strong rights-based entitlement for Australians with a disability.

I would like to make special mention of Jo Hall who has now served the maximum possible time on the Nexus Board and will be leaving at the 2022 AGM. Jo has been passionate in her support of the rights of our clients and she helped Nexus navigate the complex transition to the NDIS.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their skills, patience, and hard work in what was a very crucial year for the organisation.

Marcus Pringle Jones
Nexus Chair

Client Breakdown



54% Community Services

- Capacity Building
- Children and Youth
- Community Access
- Customised Employment



27% Supported Living

- Multi-person Houses
- Independent Units
- In-house Support
- Short Term Accommodation



19% Complex Support

200+

Current Clients



15%

Growth Rate

“

Our Vision

A community where everyone is safe, valued and respected.

”



Dedicated staff

12

New roles this year

including our new
Intake Manager

CEO Report

It's been a year of operational challenges for Nexus, but staff have continued to provide innovative and quality services to clients.

Ongoing organisational restructuring saw a new client onboarding role created, which has already proven successful in supporting new and existing clients to access support from Nexus. A key area of success for the role so far has been filling our Supported Independent Living (SIL) vacancies.

The SIL team itself has also seen the creation of a new role with a specialised team dedicated to traditional clients that have complex behaviour and supports needs. This new team is headed by a new Assistant Manager who works closely with the SIL General Manager.

Whilst some areas continue to grow, others have slowed. Changing models have made Support Coordination unviable, so we exited this service, and we consolidated roles in the finance team. Both resulted in the offering of redundancies.

"I thank our dedicated staff... the support they provide to clients, and the significant positive impact they have on their lives, is invaluable."

The sector's relationship with the NDIA has been challenging this year, as professional report findings from independent assessors were seemingly disregarded in the planning process. As a result, to ensure clients' safety, we have had to either fund supports ourselves or otherwise make the best of poor situations.

Significant cost cutting measures by the NDIS have also created extra work for Nexus managers. Managers have done an amazing job checking for sudden changes to plans, managing unexpected plan reviews, and pre-empting the impacts of funding changes on services provision.

Compliance issues have challenged the industry too with added costs coming from new rules and procedural requirements. Delays in gaining NDIS staff endorsement have also meant that qualified staff cannot be fully utilised.

Despite all of this, we remain hopeful that the change of Government in May 2022, and the appointment of Bill Shorten as NDIS Minister, will lead to a reset in the conversation with the NDIA.

As COVID19 continues to cause challenges, the issue of COVID-19 vaccinations has required careful management. Issues in adhering to the government vaccination mandates were worked through on a case-by-case basis. Ongoing internal communications and on-site vaccination clinics provided staff with the best information and opportunities for vaccination possible and we were overall pleased with the willingness of staff to be vaccinated.

As another year draws to a close, I thank our dedicated staff, many of whom are now working with complex clients. The support that all staff provide to clients, and the significant positive impact they have on their lives, is invaluable.

Mark Jessop
Nexus CEO

Supported Independent Living

Success lies in the subtleties

Learning to see the subtle nuances in behaviour and hear the communication made through non-verbal forms can make a huge impact in the lives of people living with disability.

For Nexus' client Selby, this has been crucial to helping him thrive in his new Supported Independent Living (SIL) home.

The 19 year old has recently moved out of home for the very first time into a SIL property.

Nexus staff have dedicated themselves to learning about Selby's support needs with complex Autism Spectrum Disorder, his sensory likes and dislikes, and how past experiences affect his behaviour.

This has allowed staff to create a harmonious home environment for Selby.

"It is really satisfying to keep him in that zone of regulation, where you can see him thriving," Team Leader Kellie said.

"You learn to pick up on those subtle nuances and ask, 'is it time to get out the body sock or sensory mat Selby?' to help regulate him."

Another proud accomplishment of Kellie and the SIL team was around the curtain furnishings, with Selby becoming distressed by them and pulling them down, then later requesting that they be put back up.

"We put up velcro curtains, which allowed him total control of when he wanted them up or down, and he was so happy," Kellie said.

Figuring out how to best meet Selby's needs has required some ingenuity as he does not communicate verbally.

SIL staff have learnt to interpret the gestures he uses to communicate, and to use an iPad communication app – which follows on from the great work of the Southern Support School who taught Selby to use the device to express his needs and wishes.

"You learn to notice even the extremely subtle movements in his face and body and what that means," Kellie said.

"When he is nodding he moves his head ever so slightly, which means he is talking to me."

Selby, spent 12 months transitioning into two nights of SIL accommodation, with a support staff ratio of 2:1.

"Selby can do everything independently but needs prompting and visual boards to remind him," Kellie said.

Finding the right SIL home for Selby took a while, but with a bit of imagination and hard work with Housing Tasmania the dedicated team were able to find a house that ticked all the boxes.

Selby's ideal environment is a quiet and private home, located off the street-front, and with fences tall enough to ensure his safety.

SIL staff did extensive training to prepare to onboard Selby and ensure he receives the support he needs.

This included liaising with Selby's occupational, behavioural and speech therapists to understand his needs and challenges, along with skills and techniques to keep Selby and those around him safe.

Today Selby is happily settled into the SIL home, enjoying his daily play with brightly coloured sensory toys and weekly trips to the beach which he relishes in.



COO Report

It can be tempting to innovate for the sake of innovating, but without clear direction it is all too easy to fall into the trap of doing too many new things without a tangible outcome in mind.

At Nexus we pride ourselves on innovation with intention. We only take on new systems and processes when there is a clearly identified benefit to clients, staff and stakeholders.

In late 2020 we identified a need to upgrade our systems for storing client and staff details, training records, client support plans and general communication across Nexus. New software was chosen for this purpose, which highlighted further opportunities to improve systems across Nexus. This sparked a business transformation process that will see us refine and redesign our service so we can continue to provide high-level support to clients and staff well into the future.



“At Nexus we pride ourselves on innovation with intention”

This year we embarked on the strategic implementation of three new systems: a CRM system MYP, a finance system Business Central, and an Incident and Risk Management system Noggin. This has truly been a team effort with ongoing consultation between all departments and across all levels of staff. This was an important step to sense-check the proposed changes, as there was no point management making changes that didn't make practical sense when implemented in the real world.

Already we are seeing great improvements. It is now easier to give staff up-to-date information on a client's support needs, key contacts and goals, and share this information with their individual team. This leads to greater consistency of support. This allows us to keep better informed and to respond faster if changes need to be made.

We will shortly be starting to use the integrated rostering system as well. Rostering is often a challenge for teams, one that is made more difficult with a manual system. The online system will make it easier to change rosters and match clients with suitable staff, which is a particular relief as we continue to see the effects of COVID on our workforce.

Going forward I am confident that these new systems will allow us to better track the goals of clients, celebrate their wins, make adjustments to their support as needed, and increase engagement with them and their families.

All of these innovations work together to achieve the ultimate goal of providing quality support to clients, families and staff.

Adrian Scott
Nexus COO

A Year of Streamlining and Consolidating

Maintaining an efficient financial system is an ongoing effort. As time goes on and an organisation grows and changes, the financial systems that support it must likewise change.

This year has been a year of reviewing and consolidating our existing processes to understand how we can continue providing the best financial support to clients and staff.

Key amongst the outcomes of this review was the development of an even more robust claiming process. Our Revenue Accountant, Candice, has worked tirelessly with managers across the organisation to check new processes and be the conduit between Nexus and the NDIS claims team. Already we are seeing a huge difference in the ease with which clients are able to have their funds accounted for throughout the year.



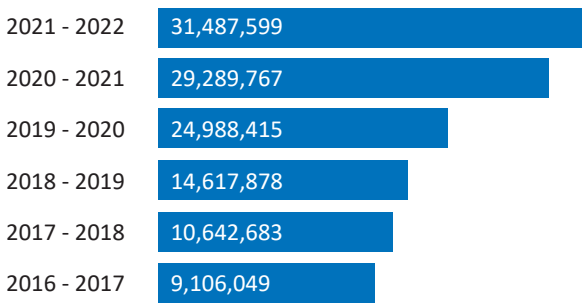
To support the new processes we welcomed our first two graduate accountants to the team this year. Cecilia and Kim have been great additions working in Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable respectively. We are pleased to be able to support them as they continue their Professional accounting qualifications whilst also gaining great practical experience with us.

We also created a new Assets Coordinator role to oversee insurances, properties, maintenance and vehicles. It has been an invaluable role with Team Leaders across all divisions benefiting from having one port of call for questions around this area.

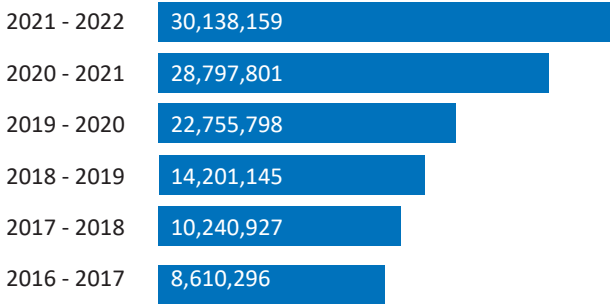


Financially, our NDIS income grew this year by \$1.66m (6.5%) up from \$25.6m the previous year. Given the pressures we faced in SIL funding this year, this is a great outcome. Our increase in expenses was also expected with ongoing increases in costs of salaries, compliance training and other employment costs. Our team are monitoring this closely and are confident that the new year will be another financially successful year for Nexus.

Total Revenue



Total Expenses



Café skills come in handy at home

Every evening, James lovingly prepares dinner for his wife Lauren, a task that seemed impossible until very recently.

After James suffered a stroke in 2017, his right arm and leg were paralysed, he had constant fatigue and extensive rehabilitation ahead. Lauren was there by his side through it all.

In 2017 James became a Capacity Building client with Nexus' Community Services division. After achieving some amazing physical accomplishments with their support, he has recently turned his focus to learning cooking and café skills.

James has recently been supported by Nexus to complete two 10-week courses in Kitchen Skills, and Café Skills + Customer Service at social enterprise Hamlet café in Hobart.

Learning to cook has been life-changing for James who now loves whipping up an Italian or Mexican feast for his wife so she can enjoy a good meal after a hard day at work.

James writes out his grocery list of a morning, then purchases the groceries at the supermarket with the assistance of his Nexus support worker, before cooking the meal independently at home.

"Lauren has been an amazing support for me, she was there when something terrible happened to me and now I want to give back to her," James said.

"She is a full-time hairdresser and runs her own business so I want to help her out as much as I can."

While completing the short courses James realised he had a passion for coffee, so his next goal is to become a barista.

"I love coffee and I am a people person who can talk to anyone, so I think this would be a chance to give a little something back," he said.

Nexus works with Capacity Building clients to improve their skills and support them to achieve their goals in areas such as reading, writing, money management, driving, using public transport, cooking, shopping, self-care, volunteering and finding a job.

Initially James sought assistance from Nexus with getting to appointments, but as his energy levels and strength increased he began to take on fitness goals.

Before the stroke, James was an accomplished footballer with the Richmond Football Club in Tasmania and an F45 gym devotee.

James' support worker Kylie has been with him "since day dot". She has supported him in his goals of getting back to the gym, which he now does five days a week, and taking up swimming, which he now does daily, among other fitness goals.

Kylie has even helped him achieve his dream of getting back into his much-loved pastime of kayaking, with a creative solution.

"I squished his kayak into my car and took him to the hydrotherapy pool, so he was able to kayak with people around in a safe environment," Kylie said.

James loved the experience and has since built up his strength to make it out onto the open water a couple of times.

"I love being out on the water."



Supported Independent Living



Staff are the heart of Nexus

Over 24 years of growth and evolution, one thing has remained at the core of Nexus Inc – its dedicated and highly valued staff. In Supported Independent Living, one of the youngest Support Worker trainees, Charli, compares her experiences with Daren, who has been with Nexus since its inception in 1998.

Q: How does Nexus value different experience levels?

Daren: The older people are recognised as those who have made things what they are. They have paved the stones on the pathway for people to walk along now.

Charli: I really love that they don't just look at you as a trainee, they treat you the same as any other worker no matter your age. This makes you really feel like part of the team.

Q: How have you achieved a work-life balance at Nexus?

Daren: Over time I worked my way up to become a Team Leader, but now, as a father of four, I want to spend more time with my family so I have moved back into a Support Worker role. Nexus understood and were really supportive. I've always felt that Nexus were more of a family environment and always had my interests at heart.

Q: What do you love the most about working for Nexus?

Charli: I love forming connections with the clients, we brighten their day as much as they do ours.

Daren: Seeing smiles on clients faces, helping them to live their lives and try different things – just like everybody else.

Nexus Complex and Individualised Support

Climbing the career ladder at Nexus

With a friendly personality and the bravery to take “a shot in the dark”, Nexus NCIS Team Leader Leah has quickly climbed the ranks in her career trajectory.

The single mother was seeking a change, with hospitality work not providing the best hours for family life. Joining the Nexus Complex and Individualised Support (NCIS) team four years ago, Leah has progressed from Support Worker to Key Worker and recently took on the role of Team Leader.

“I have found it both challenging and rewarding, and I love that no day is the same,” Leah said.

The NCIS team provide daily support to clients who have high level or complex support needs, to engage in their everyday lives, access the community and gain new skills.

“An average day could be taking a client to Zoodoo, home to help them complete some tasks and then going out for a walk,” Leah said.

The NCIS team are trained to provide trauma informed support and work with clients and psychologists to implement a Positive Behaviour Support plan.

“It’s a big thing to build rapport with them, to let them know they are safe and secure,” Leah said.

Nexus are known for placing a strong emphasis on training staff and recognise the skills, energy and right attitude of staff by promoting within.

“Initially I hadn’t applied for the position of Team Leader, but both managers said ‘why not keep going, keep learning, keep achieving’.”

SEED





Apples offer world of opportunity

The humble apple has opened up a whole new world for Clayton.

A client of the Nexus Customised Employment team, Clayton has undertaken paid work for a variety of apple-centred pursuits.

Throughout the year Clayton has picked apples at Huon Valley orchards, learned orcharding skills, and worked at the Salamanca Market stall where he learnt to display, weigh and sell apples and other fruits. Now he is taking all of that experience and channeling into his new entrepreneurial venture.

The savvy businessman can be found every Saturday at the New Norfolk Market, and the first Sunday of each month at the South Arm market, selling fresh apples and juice from the Huon.

Clayton purchases the apples at wholesale price, which are picked by Customised Employment clients like himself, then sells the fresh fruit to hungry market-goers.

"I enjoy it, I like meeting different people and helping them," Clayton said.

The opportunity to earn some extra money has been a huge source of pride for Clayton, who recently put his hard-earned cash towards a holiday to Melbourne.

The Nexus Customised Employment team work closely with Social Enterprise, Employment and Diversity (SEED), a social enterprise created by Nexus in 2021 to provide real employment opportunities that pay award-wages. SEED currently offers domestic and commercial cleaning and gardening services, as well as fruit picking and orchard operations. The SEED team also run a Salamanca Market stall which sells apples picked by SEED workers.

As well as his apple-based pursuits, Clayton also works with the SEED Cleaning Crew. This was his first role with SEED, starting in 2020 when the Cleaning Crew was formed to do the additional COVID cleaning at the Nexus office. He has since completed his Certificate II in Cleaning Operations and continues to be provided opportunities through SEED.



Staff training in trauma-informed support

In a crystal-clear moment a new service to focus on an emerging youth cohort in the NDIS was created by Nexus and has since grown exponentially.

This cohort are predominantly young people who have all experienced trauma in their lives, and have psychosocial disabilities.

With this identification, the Nexus Complex and Individualised Support (NCIS) division was born in 2017, working with this cohort of youth and other clients with high level and complex support needs. NCIS has seen a rapid growth rate from 7 clients in 2017 to 47 clients today.

With many years of experience working with young people from complex backgrounds, CEO Mark Jessop, NCIS manager Beck Bewley and NDIS registered clinical psychologist Kereth West agreed that trauma informed support was the best way to support these clients.

With this consensus, the Toolbox Training workshops were initiated 18 months ago for staff.

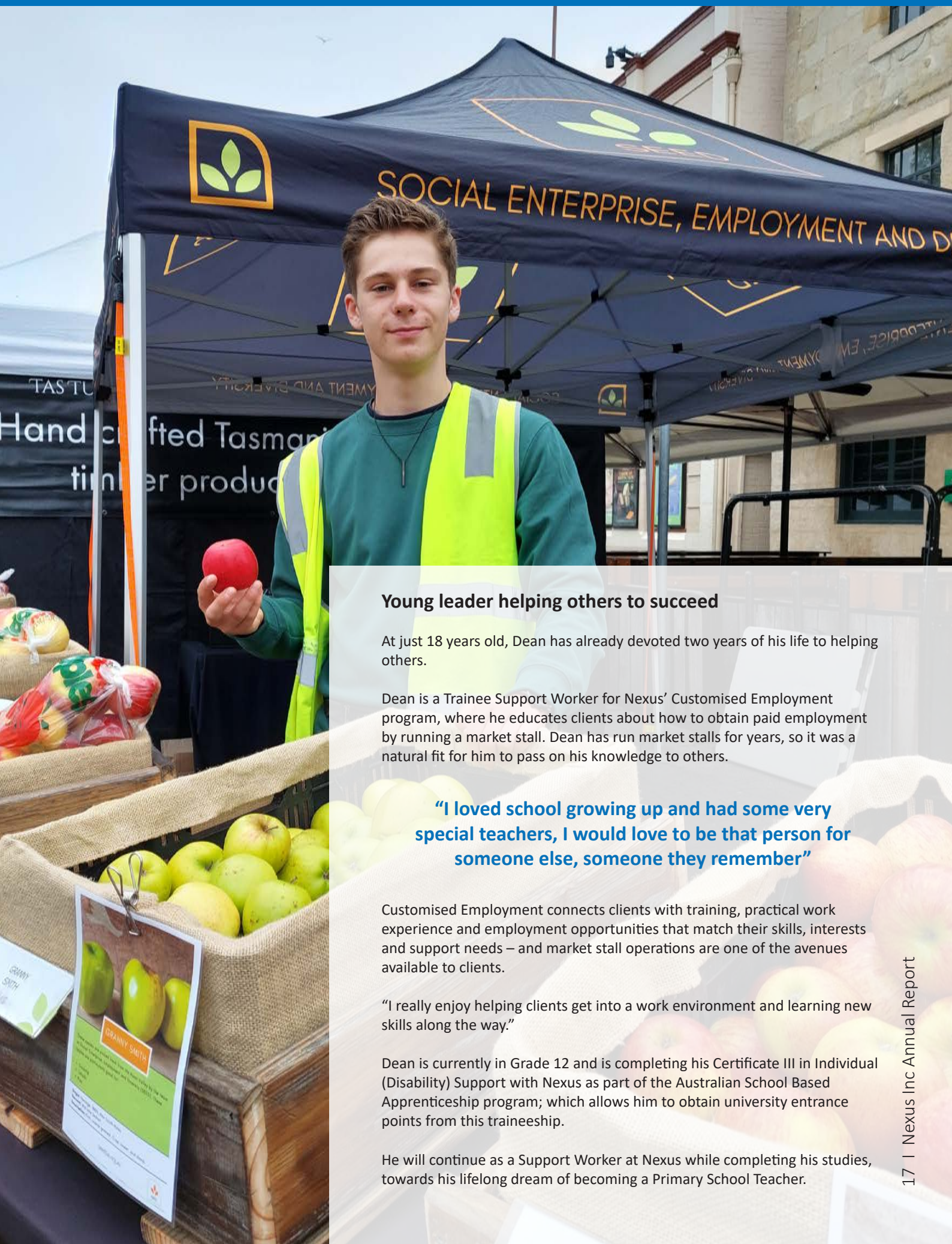
“The training begins with the neurology of what is happening, as the brain develops differently in response to trauma,” Nexus Learning and Development Consultant Greg said.

“This helps staff to realise why clients can go from nought to 100 in an instant; which is due to the way their brains have developed and how they process the world around them.”

Micro skills such as portraying the correct body language and tone, and how to read these in clients, is a key part of the training. Other topics include introduction to positive behaviour support, self care, and translating the impact of trauma into effective support.

Another point of difference for this unique training program is the return day held a month later, after the training has been put into practice, where staff can ask any follow up questions.

Toolbox Training is held every six weeks and has been extended to cover staff from the Supported Independent Living and Community Services divisions.



Young leader helping others to succeed

At just 18 years old, Dean has already devoted two years of his life to helping others.

Dean is a Trainee Support Worker for Nexus' Customised Employment program, where he educates clients about how to obtain paid employment by running a market stall. Dean has run market stalls for years, so it was a natural fit for him to pass on his knowledge to others.

"I loved school growing up and had some very special teachers, I would love to be that person for someone else, someone they remember"

Customised Employment connects clients with training, practical work experience and employment opportunities that match their skills, interests and support needs – and market stall operations are one of the avenues available to clients.

"I really enjoy helping clients get into a work environment and learning new skills along the way."

Dean is currently in Grade 12 and is completing his Certificate III in Individual (Disability) Support with Nexus as part of the Australian School Based Apprenticeship program; which allows him to obtain university entrance points from this traineeship.

He will continue as a Support Worker at Nexus while completing his studies, towards his lifelong dream of becoming a Primary School Teacher.

Training for career success

If Ashling could give one piece of advice to those wanting to fast-track their careers she knows exactly what it would be.

“Take every opportunity you can with training. I did and I love where I am.”

Ashling is the Assistant Team Leader for Nexus’ newly formed Children and Youth team that sits within the Community Services division. She is a passionate advocate for people undertaking diplomas, certificates and further training to broaden their skillsets and reach their career goals.

It is an ethos that has led to great success for Ashling, who was awarded 2021 Trainee of the Year in the Tasmanian Training Awards. Ashling has since been invited to be a mentor at the 2022 Australian Training Awards, which will allow her to represent Nexus at a national level.

Nexus is renowned for providing extensive and ongoing training opportunities. For Ashling, these are tailored to her work with Children and Youth.

“I have never been in a workplace that supports staff as much as Nexus does. It means the clients receive the best support and to the highest standards,” Ashling said.

Our Children and Youth team offers Community Access and Capacity Building services as well as after school support for clients aged seven years and older. We are looking forward to also launching a specialised children and youth respite service soon.





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