



Supporting our community

ASCENT GROUP 66th ANNUAL REPORT



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Ascent is a leading not for profit organisation with 66 years' experience in supporting people with disability in their daily life.

As a registered NDIS provider, we deliver specialised supports that ensure people with disability can safely live the life they choose under the NDIS.

Through our commitment to maintaining a pool of available trained staff who can meet the short and longer term needs of the people we support, we can deliver a flexible approach to support individual choice and we are able to provide quality support to meet changing circumstances.

We believe that everyone should be able to live a fulfilling and inclusive life as is possible, with reliable flexible supports available to ensure their choices can happen.

OUR MISSION

To provide quality support for people with disability, to enable the pursuit of their goals and aspirations.

OUR VISION

We aspire to be the leading provider of Disability Support Services and Community Support in the New England and Northwest NSW.

OUR PARTICIPANTS

We support people with a disability, their families and Carers.

Chairman's Report

It is my pleasure to present the Chairman's Report to this the 66th Annual General Meeting of The Ascent Group (TAG).

We believed the previous financial year 2019/2020 was a seriously difficult one, however, the last financial year 2020/2021 has proved just as difficult. I suppose one could say our coping during the previous year provided us with some experience and expertise in handling such difficult situations.

Again, we experienced loss of income from our business services due to reduced economic activity in the community caused by the Covid situation. Our disability service area also suffered as we were unable to provide, and consequently receive payment, for support we would normally have provided to our participants to enjoy community access activities. This latter situation also increased our costs through providing extra support to participants who would normally be carrying out activities away from Ascent.

I made mention last year of the inadequacies of the National Disability Insurance Scheme NDIS. Although some of these inadequacies have been rectified, we are still having great difficulty in finalising annual plan reviews. There continues to be long delays and it is clearly evident that the system is just not coping, in fact it is overwhelmed.

During the year we carried out major renovations and improvements not only to our accommodation facilities but also to our Acacia Park infrastructure. Our paper shredding and recycling areas have also been renovated and upgraded with brand new equipment being installed to shred, convey and compact paper and cardboard for recycling. The new machinery is working well and we are hoping that as business in town and at the University of New England gets back to normal our turnover and profit will improve.

I believe that the most significant achievement of the past year is that we have survived. I mean this not only in financial terms but also in our continuing to provide quality services to our participants. All this has been achieved due to the dedication, skill and effort by our senior management team to support and direct our operational and administration staff who have continued to provide quality support for our participants, under the most difficult circumstances.

I thank them most sincerely for this.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their devoted contribution during the year. In this regard I must finish on a sad note in that Rick Mills, a stalwart and long-time Director of our Board, has announced he is retiring. Rick has given twenty-one years of service to The Ascent Group, he will be sorely missed.

Thank you, Rick.

I commend this report to you.

Huntly Gordon
CHAIRMAN

Chief Executive Officer's Report

In reviewing the 2020/21 year it is not only remarkable, but also very pleasing to be able to report that we finished in good shape.

The year concluded as it began with an ever-present high level of anxiety and uncertainty around the imminent impact of the Covid pandemic. The daily highlight became one of interpreting and implementing the evolving restrictions imposed by NSW Department of Health.

Despite the impact that was being imposed on all participants and staff, due to Covid, we continued to work on achieving the many operational objectives we had set for the upgrading of our infrastructure to improve the quality of life and opportunities for the people we support.

I can report that the following major works were successfully completed during the year:

- Walker House fully repainted internally plus a new kitchen installed.
- Complete renovations to all four Beardy/ Niagara Units including new kitchens, bathrooms, internal painting and floor coverings.
- Ducted reverse cycle air conditioning and solar panels installed at Leone's Place.
- Upgrade of electrical system and lighting at Acacia Park to support the installation of the new shredding and baling machinery for the Paper and Cardboard recycling business. The addition of a new bale grab to the forklift has improved the safety and handling efficiency in handling of the compacted bales. The purchase cost of the new machinery was assisted with a Temporary Viability Grant of \$99,020.00 received from the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Additionally, in November 2020 we successfully underwent the comprehensive external audit for Re registration as an NDIS Registered Provider conducted by BSI. The audit process was the culmination of an extensive revision of our Policies, Procedures, and work Practices to align with the NDIS Practice Standards.

In January 2021 we completed the transition of The Ascent Community Care CHSP programs for older people living in their own homes, to Uralla Regional Council merging with their services provided by Tablelands Community Support. This transition has allowed Ascent to focus on our core activity of providing quality support for people with disability.

The achievements mentioned above have placed Ascent in a strong position to respond to the expectations that the people we support are now having as we begin to emerge from the Covid restrictions that have been experienced over the last two years. We have been working with families and our staff to build supports into what will hopefully be the "new normal" where choice around lifestyle activities will once again be possible.

The "good shape" in which we have emerged from the last year also places us in a great position to be able to respond to new opportunity as it presents and to build capacity into the next era. To support our journey we will be, during this year, developing a new Strategic Plan. Our last plan was initiated in 2016 to guide us through the NDIS transition to 2018 and then carry on through the open market NDIS roll out concluding in 2021.

My heartfelt thanks to the Management team and all our staff for their dedication to our mission and their achievements, during the year and ongoing.

Peter Westbrook
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

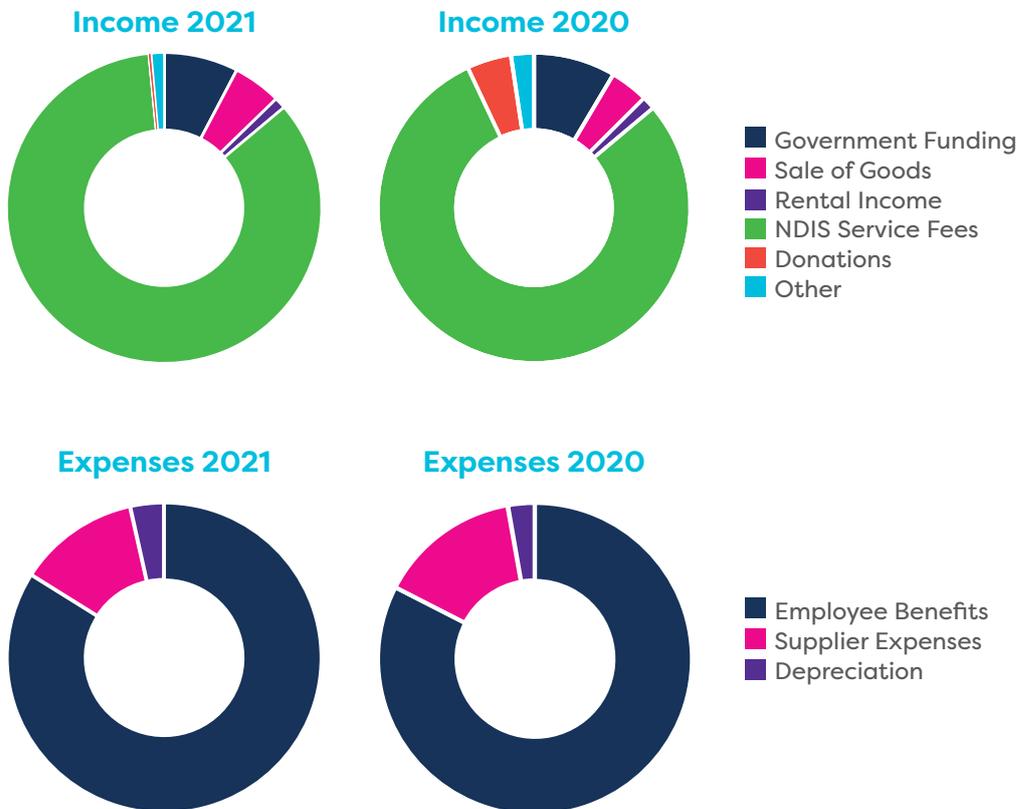
Financial Overview for the Year Ending 30 June 2020

The organisation improved its financial position during 2020-21 although we did see an impact of COVID-19 across a number of areas of the business with a decrease in demand for some services. During 2020-21 services and activities continued as planned, however not all services returned to full capacity.

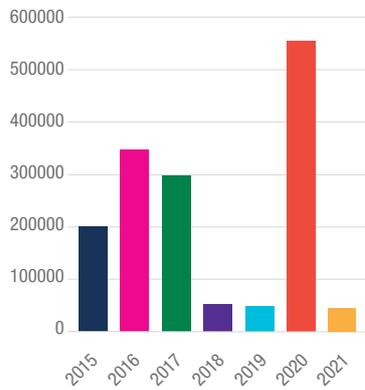
As the COVID-19 pandemic continues we expect that lessons we learnt in 2020-21 can be utilised. However, COVID-19 also brings with it a range of uncertainty, particularly in measuring the demand for support that will be required and then the additional training and precautions that are required to be put in place.

Even with all the challenges faced during 2020-21 we end the year in a good financial position, with an operating surplus of \$43,506 and a range of improvements to assets completed, strengthening our balance sheet.

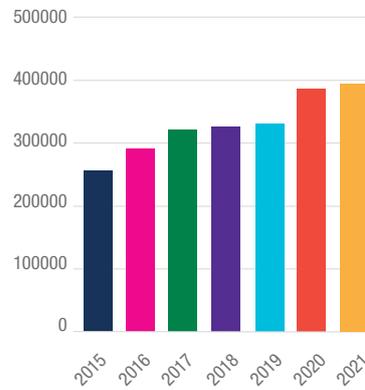
The NDIS market is still evolving and ongoing developments and variations within the NDIS environment continue bring with it a range of uncertainty, particularly around changes in the pricing and structure of Supported Independent Living, Employment Support and Group Activities.



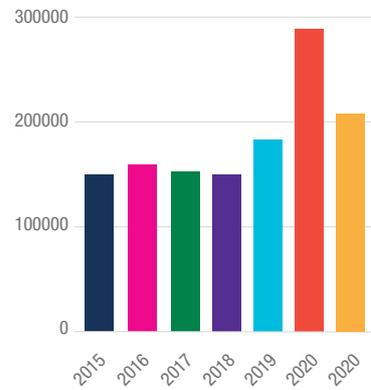
Operating Results



Net Assets



Cash In Bank



Statement Of Profit Or Loss And Other Comprehensive Income

INCOME	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Revenue from Government	663,687	794,897
Rendering of Services	7,801,347	7,784,473
Interest	7,181	16,324
Other Revenue	240,874	755,037
Gain on Disposal of Assets	-	10,088
Total Income	8,713,089	9,360,819

EXPENSES	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Employee Benefits	7,279,686	6,901,620
Supplier Expenses	1,087,819	1,266,517
Depreciation Expense	302,078	225,784
Total Expense	8,669,583	8,393,921

Surplus before income tax expense	43,506	554,977
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income attributed to the members of The Ascent Group Australia	43,506	554,977

Statement of Cash Flows

	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Cash flows from operating activities		
Cash receipts from customers	8,455,168	9,959,952
Interest received	8,641	17,229
Member's Subscriptions	-	427
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	(8,598,670)	(8,481,950)
Cash generated from operating activities	(134,861)	1,495,658
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds from Sale of Property, Plant & Equipment	-	27,777
Purchase of Property, Plant & Equipment	(695,540)	(346,911)
Net cash used in investing activities	(695,540)	(319,134)
Cash Flows from financing activities		
Repayment of Borrowings	-	(125,605)
Net Cash used in financing activities	-	(125,605)
Net increase (decrease) in cash	(830,401)	1,050,919
Cash at beginning of the period	2,880,622	1,829,703
Cash at the end of the period	2,050,221	2,880,622

Board of Directors and Senior Management Team



Huntly Gordon
Chairman



Rick Mills
Vice Chairman



Will Warrick
Treasurer



Brian McRae



Jennifer Bailey



Hugh Beattie



Bob Locke



Theresa McGuren



Anthony Fox



Peter Westbrook
Chief Executive
Officer



Michelle Cooper
Finance and
Corporate Services

Statement of Financial Position

	\$ 2020	\$ 2019
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,050,222	2,880,622
Trade Receivables	702,026	483,292
Other Assets	2,504	8,368
Total Current Assets	2,754,752	3,372,282
Non Current Assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment	2,676,711	2,199,668
Total Non Current Assets	2,676,711	2,199,668
Total Assets	5,431,463	5,655,532
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	490,081	602,368
Provisions	683,301	604,666
Other Current Liabilities	257,651	427,069
Total Current Liabilities	1,431,033	1,634,103
Non Current Liabilities	100,973	
Provisions	100,973	165,479
Total Non Current Liabilities	100,973	165,479
Total Liabilities	1,532,006	1,799,582
Net Assets	3,899,457	3,855,950
Equity		
Members Equity	3,121,914	3,078,407
Capital Reserve – Funding Body Contribution	777,543	777,543
Total Equity	3,899,457	3,855,950

NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding for supports and services for Australians under 65 years of age, who have permanent and significant disability. Introduced in 2013, the scheme is overseen by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and is now fully rolled out across Australia.

AAscent is a registered NDIS provider delivering Quality support to over 230 people with disability to meet specific individual needs and progress goals.

During the year we continued to assist all the people we support and their families to undergo the annual review their NDIS plan.

Ascent provides a broad range of support including:

- Assistance with daily life
- Accessing the community
- Providing social and recreational support
- Finding and keeping a job
- Behaviour management

Additionally

Ascent can provide you with Support Coordination to help you understand your NDIS Plan and decide the best way to spend your funds so that you can achieve your goals

Ascent can provide you with Plan Management as a great option to maximize the flexibility of your NDIS plan without the administrative burden of self-management.



Care for Children

Ascent is providing quality support to children with disability and their families. Assistance is provided with personal activities and support to develop life skills or to participate inclusively in the community.

Ascent can offer families a comprehensive choice of supports designed to suit individual requirements.

We can also offer a choice of professional support staff who can work with you, in your home and in the community.

Individual support can be available to you daily, in the evening or on weekends. We will work with you to plan your regular support requirements and respond to your shorter-term needs

At Ascent, we believe that family involvement is essential for the wellbeing and happiness of the children we support and is at heart of what we do.

We encourage young people to plan for an exciting future, by supporting them to build valuable skills for life, work, and community involvement.

Activities may include art, music, sport or social activities and are offered on an individual or group basis.



ACACIA PARK ENTERPRISES

Finding & Keeping a Job

Ascent specialises in providing Supported Employment opportunities for people with disability at Acacia Park Enterprises.

Acacia Park Enterprises provides supported employment for around 40 employees who live with disability. We are committed to providing ongoing quality employment and training opportunities for our employees. A diverse range of job opportunities are available to match a wide array of career aspirations.

Our business activities include Digital Printing, Car Detailing, Grounds maintenance, cleaning secure document destruction paper and cardboard recycling.



Housing and Supported Independent Living

Ascent provides general assistance with daily life and activities to enable people with disability to live inclusively within their local community. Our support is designed to meet individual needs and maximise independence.

Ascent can provide support with daily life and activities to enable you to live inclusively within your local community. Support is designed around your NDIS plan to meet your individual needs and achieve outcomes.

Support can be provided on an outreach basis, where staff can assist you in your own home with specific tasks, such as budgeting, cooking, domestic chores and managing appointments.

Formal support may only be for a small part of everyday life, with other activities being managed independently or with assistance from networks of your family, friends and community. Formal support could be for as little as 1-2 hours per week.

Higher intensity accommodation support can be provided for up to 24 hours per day within single or shared group home residences, where residents may require medium to high levels of assistance to complete basic self-care and domestic routines. Staff may provide one-on-one support with all daily household activities, as well as facilitating social and leisure opportunities in the community. They may also assist with tasks like banking, shopping, and attending appointments, or with accessing daily activities such as supported employment and community access.



LifeSkills & Community Participation

Ascent specialises in providing support to adults living with disability, injury, or social disadvantage to achieve their goals, increase their independence, and participate as a valued member of their community.

We can offer you a range of services that will support you in learning everyday skills including:

- Improved daily living skills in the community
- Improved relationships
- Increased social and community participation
- Improved life choices
- Transport to access daily activities

Support can be provided individually or in group activities both centre based or in the community.

Individual Skills Development

We can offer you centre-based skills development support to learn and participate in activities independently.

Group support or activities

Activities are designed to allow you to participate in a wide range of enjoyable activities such as cooking, gardening, music, art and craft, sport or fitness. You are supported to access the community and events.



We provide skill development for you to become more independent and improve your skills in:

- Cooking
- Budgeting
- Time Management
- Travel
- Social interaction
- Caring for health and wellbeing
- Being independent in everyday activities
- Communication with others

We work in partnerships with many local organisations such as NERAM (New England Regional Art Museum) and NECOM (New England Conservatorium of Music) to deliver a wide range of activities and programs.

We have a specialist Clinical Team comprising a Registered Nurse, Behaviour Specialist and Psychologist who work with families and participants to develop personalised medical and behaviour plans, supports and strategies.





How can you help?

**There are many ways for you to be involved or to support our work including -
Providing us with Ideas and Feedback, Using our Services, Becoming a Member,
Volunteering, making Donations of money or goods and Bequests.
Your contribution, however large or small, is truly appreciated.**

If you would like to donate, your generous donation will ensure we are able to continue providing that “extra” support for people, who live with a disability, to lead a normal life.

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE TO

**Direct Deposit: National Australia Bank
BSB: 082-407 Account: 64111-8228**

Account Name: The Ascent Group Australia

Please use YOUR NAME and “DONATION” as reference.

Alternatively, please forward cheques to:
The Ascent Group, PO Box 18, ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Thank you for your kind consideration