



Imagine**MORE**
ANNUAL REPORT
2018



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OUR VISION

A community where everyone is included, valued and contributing in meaningful roles.

OUR MISSION

To empower individuals, families and the community to become inspired, motivated and capable of ensuring people with disability hold valued social roles, develop meaningful relationships and live typical lives in their communities.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY AND THEIR FAMILIES

- Raised expectations of what can be possible in the lives of people with disability
- Meaningful roles that help people attain the good things of life: being a friend, school student, team member, employee, business owner, home maker, lifelong learner
- Increased motivation and confidence to strive for a typical and valued life for people with disability
- Broader networks leading to healthy interconnectedness that we all rely on in order to thrive
- Leadership in their own lives and in their community

OUR VALUES, AND HOW WE WORK

1 IMAGINATION

We believe in the value of developing a clear and optimistic vision, being open to and seeking opportunities, having high expectations, and being positive and hopeful about the future.

5 CONFIDENCE

We promote building the confidence of individuals, families, services and the community to take the steps required to fulfil an individual's vision for a good life in their community.

INCLUSION 6

Inclusion is found when there is a focus on the unique gifts, strengths and increasing competence of a person. Inclusion is realised when a person is supported to participate and contribute in regular and typical communities in our society.

We promote inclusive practices that are not confused by models where people are segregated from community or congregated with other people with disability.

We call for the creation of welcoming environments where people are committed to identifying how everyone can contribute in meaningful roles.

2 SELF-DIRECTION AND AGENCY

We encourage individuals and families to maintain control of their lives and not be subject to passive supports. We encourage people with disability and their families to be the authors of their own lives.

3 CONNECTION

We recognise the power of connection, the strength of building networks and investing in a wide variety of relationships. It is typical to rely on freely-given relationships in our lives. We encourage individuals and families to reach out for and nurture freely given relationships rather than rely solely on paid supports, as freely-given relationships tend to be longer lasting and can broaden a persons' social capital.

COURAGE AND 7 RESILIENCE

We believe in the importance of pushing boundaries rather than accepting the status quo. We encourage individuals and families to take measured risks, step outside comfort zones and develop strategies when others are not able to see the possibilities and opportunities.

4 CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS

We recognise the importance of reflecting and celebrating successes, no matter how small, in working towards the vision that is made up of the good things in life.

SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING 8

We recognise that we all need support in making decisions and people with disability are no different. However some people may need a deeper level of support to understand choices and consequences of decisions and have agency in their own lives.



BOARD AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT



Imagine More is pleased to present the annual report for 2017/2018.

This has been a very successful year for Imagine More who hosted a large number of events, strengthened family leadership, connected individuals with disability and families to networks to support and provided individual consultations. Imagine More has also contributed to the development of policy and worked in collaboration with local organisations and the broader community to strengthen the inclusion of people with disability.

Over the period, 550 people participated in workshops and our 2018 conference. This has resulted in people's increased awareness, knowledge and confidence to seek out the good things of life. More than 100 families have been supported to attend conferences and workshops, both in the ACT and in other jurisdictions. 25 families have been provided with personal consultations and support. 15 people with disability, siblings and family members have been supported to share their stories and present at workshops. A range of digital resources have been developed, and Imagine More has participated in policy development and systemic advocacy.

Participants in our events and activities report high levels of satisfaction with the work we undertake. As outlined in an independent evaluation of our work, they report that as a result of being connected with Imagine More they feel *"...more motivated, more confident, more connected and more hopeful about the achievement of valued social roles for people with disability in the future"*.

All of this has been made possible due to the dedication and drive of the volunteer Board of Directors, paid staff and volunteers. The organisation was successful in receiving 2017/18 funding through the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Grant that enabled our work to deepen. Imagine More this year worked closely with the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO), made up of like-minded, and values-driven organisations who came together to deliver a National Disability Services (NDS) funded project on workforce innovation.

As Imagine More enters its sixth year of operation, the Board has taken stock. It has undertaken a strategic planning process, driven by feedback from those engaging with our organisation, to guide our future work. This process has highlighted the significant difference we are making to the lives of people with disability and their families. Families who engage with our organisation have reported there is no other organisation that is working in *'quite the same way'* in the ACT. They report Imagine More has supported individuals with disability and their families to create a vision for a good life and to take steps to realise their vision.

It has also highlighted the significant work that still needs to occur in key stages of a persons' life. While there is more awareness of the importance of creating inclusive communities, there is still a low level of understanding of what inclusion truly means; that all members of our community, including people with disability, hold valued social roles, develop meaningful relationships, and live typical lives in their communities.

Disturbingly, families are telling Imagine More of a trend of greater exclusion for many people with disability. This includes:



EDUCATION

More support units being built, resulting in less students being supported in regular classrooms and playgrounds. People report being trapped in a life of transition where they are always training for or preparing for the next stage of life but never realising it.



HOUSING

Ongoing investment in models that group people with a disability together under the guise of inclusion and innovation, when we know that this model limits individual choices and is more likely to isolate people from genuine connection to people without a disability in their neighbourhood and community.



EMPLOYMENT

Less people moving into open employment that leads to full time work and more people are spending time in congregated work or day programs that don't lead to valued roles or a typical life in their communities.



The culmination of this reflection has contributed to the development of a new strategic plan. This has renewed our resolve to continue to work with the community of families who are committed to ensuring that the people in their lives with disability are fully included in our community. We know that when people take up roles and their competencies are recognised, this raises the expectations of the broader community about what can be possible in the life of a person with a disability and what real inclusion looks like. Our focus is to promote innovative solutions that are cost effective and provide positive outcomes for people with disability.

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

During the reporting period an independent consultant was engaged to support the development of a user led strategic plan in line with our vision and mission. Key activities included the distribution of a stakeholder survey, interviews with families and organisational partners, focus groups, a review of organisational documentation and a brief environmental scan.



“There isn’t any other organisation in Canberra that does this kind of stuff. I can’t imagine Canberra without them” SURVEY PARTICIPANT 2018

Key findings of the review process included:

- Imagine More is strongly supported and highly valued by individuals and families that are engaged with the organisation. Most families report that this engagement has been transformational. It has changed the expectations and the lives of their family member with disability. They report that Imagine More provides support not received anywhere else;
- Imagine More communicates a clear vision and demonstrates unwavering commitment to its values. It has a strong connection to families it is supporting and this comes from the fact that people involved in the organisation have a deep understanding and lived experience of creating inclusive lives for people with disability;
- Stakeholders deeply value the high quality events provided by Imagine More. The organisation’s connection to a national network of like-minded organisations enables it to access experience and expertise from interstate and overseas, as well as from the Canberra community;
- Imagine More has been able, both individually and working alongside like-minded interstate organisations, to successfully engage with the NDIA, local government and other decision makers. This has engendered positive changes to policy and decision making as well as provided information and guidance to families;
- Imagine More has developed meaningful and lasting connections with the people that they engage with, this has enabled Imagine More to highlight the leadership taken by people with disability and families in the Canberra community.



“You bring warmth, light, support and comfort...You make it easier to cope with difficulties by providing expertise, the sharing of information, empathy and humanity” SURVEY PARTICIPANT 2018

The feedback indicates that many of the activities that Imagine More leads continue to be highly valued and should be sustained. This includes provision of information, biannual conference and workshops, peer support groups and family leadership opportunities. There is a need to consider how to respond to the differing needs of families who are at different points on the journey of imagining and creating a different future; support when they are starting to envision a life of genuine inclusion; support while they are working to create more inclusive lives and support through times when people face resistance or need to refocus.

The process has resulted in a new strategic plan. In the next section we present our work against the strategic objectives identified in the plan.



OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1 A community in which people with disability and their families are confident and empowered to build supports and networks needed to live a valued and included life

Imagine More is committed to supporting people with disability and their families to have access to knowledge and information and know how to translate this knowledge into action.

The organisation works to link people with disability, their families and supporters with information, resources and expertise on issues of importance in formats that are most relevant for them.

Imagine More has done this through:

- Providing information and resources on our website.
- Working with families to build their capacity on a one-on-one basis as well as in group settings. Over the 2017/2018 period, 25 families were supported with one-on-one personal consultations. In addition, the organisation hosted 14 workshops and information sessions and a conference involving over 200 people.
- Facilitating inter-family connections including peer networks that are intentional, purposeful and action oriented around themes that are identified by the community. Over the period, five peer groups were supported on issues including employment, inclusive education, university life- inclusive higher education, self-managing and circles of support.
- Developing strong family leadership, with a clear understanding of the potential conflict between what is in the best interest the family member with disability in contrast to that of the family. Over this period, Imagine More supported 68 individuals to attend the Imagine More Conference, 21 families to attend family leadership events and workshops interstate and 16 families to attend a family leadership weekend. As part of this, 15 people with disability, their parents or siblings presented at forums, sharing their stories to inspire others.



"I just wanted to quickly say a big 'thank you' for the workshop tonight. I have been in a dark place for a long time. The knowledge that there are people out there that care, that will support me to facilitate the kind of life I envisage for my son, is incredibly uplifting. I am feeling optimistic again." INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT 2018

2 A community which welcomes and values the participation and contribution of people with disability in social and economic life

Imagine More is committed to creating a connection between the lived experience of accessing supports and the people who are designing systems and support programs. Over the period, the Executive Director, staff and participants have engaged with ACT Government agencies, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), National Disability Services (NDS) and others to provide feedback and advice around the design of systems and programs. This has included contribution to the design and implementation of the Senior Practitioner for Restrictive Practice, contribution to the Disability Education Reference Group, Supported Employment Strategy, feedback to the NDIS on how self-management of NDIS funding is operating on the ground, and as a panel member on NDIS webinar on Self managing.

Imagine More is working to identify practical ways in which we can create more inclusive education, higher education, health, housing and employment solutions. Examples of ways in which we have done this includes:

- Supporting people to share their stories of the importance of a Vision, inclusive education, employment, creating a place to call home, University life for people with intellectual disability, self-managing NDIS;
- Sharing practical tips for inclusive education for families from families;
- Facilitating peer groups on topics of interest;
- Developing videos and tips sheets on workforce innovation and inclusion; and
- Producing videos on a range of topics - Self managing, employment, a place to call home, circles of support, relationships, inclusive education, communication.

As well as working with government, Imagine More has worked with institutions, services and organisations to respond to the needs of the individuals with disability and families we are working with. The organisation has developed information collaborations with Playgroups ACT and Carers ACT. These collaborations have enabled us to expand our reach to resource and support a larger number through their networks.

Imagine More's conference and workshops have also provided an important resource for the disability sector. There is a growing number of direct support workers and disability organisation staff also participating in these events. Participants report these are particularly useful.



"I learnt how to better advocate and support my clients. The conference has provided me with many valuable ideas to appropriately support families and children. I found both the society and education perspectives most helpful..." CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT 2018

As part of the National Alliance for Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO), Imagine More interviewed 12 people, including people with disability, families and support workers, to capture how innovative workforce recruitment can lead to people with disability being well supported to achieve their goals embedded in community in valued social roles. From the 12 stories, we produced two videos, one from a family's perspective and one from a support workers perspective.

Imagine More has worked directly with, and supported families to build the knowledge and imagination of business, community and political leaders about the potential contribution of people with disability to the life of our community. The organisation will continue to work to progress the community's understanding of the steps we need to undertake to create inclusive communities.



3 A community where people with disability, their families and supporters are able to be leaders in their own lives, their families and their communities

Imagine More recognises the vital role of individuals with disability, their families and supporters in driving the implementation of their vision of an inclusive life. As such, nurturing the leadership potential of individuals with disability and their families is a key focus of the organisation.

A key initiative undertaken by Imagine More in 2018 was the hosting of a family leadership weekend. This weekend provided a focused opportunity for families to learn, stretch and hone their thinking, share their experiences, reflect on their strengths and identify ways in which they could take on leadership roles beyond their family setting. The weekend reached the maximum attendance of nineteen people, however we had an extensive expression of interest from families who wished to attend. This event was for families led by families.

Fifteen individuals, siblings and family members have also been supported to present at a variety of conferences and workshops. In these settings they have shared their experiences and inspired others to imagine more. Locally, 68 people with disability and families were sponsored to attend the 2018 Imagine More conference.



“Having been impressed and drawn encouraged, just by being present for both days, I am now supremely confident that I can finally MAKE IT HAPPEN” CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT 2018

The Inclusive Education Campaign is another key project that Imagine More has supported to nurture family leadership and build capacity. Individuals and families who participated in this campaign report having greater knowledge about the barriers to inclusive education. They are trying new strategies and are working together to enable more people with disability to be fully included in mainstream schools. As they are doing this work, families are supporting and leading other families while being leaders in their communities. The campaign was further supported by both a workshop for fathers run by fathers and a peer led playgroups initiative. Family leadership opportunities were also harnessed by capturing insights from families to produce a digital resource ‘Inclusive Education: Tips for families from families’.

4 An organisation that is professional, sustainable and embedded in the community it works with

Governance

Imagine More is committed to strong governance and a strategic approach to its work. Over the period, (a board of) two volunteer Directors and the Executive Director served on the board of the organisation. The current Board Directors are Jan Kruger (Executive Director), Paul Kruger and Adrienne Gault. All the directors are parents of a young person with a disability.

The Board of Directors met six times during the period, and undertook roles including setting the strategic direction, developing and endorsing organisation policy and procedures, monitoring the financial performance of the organisation and supervising the Executive Director and key staff.

Ongoing development of the board, governance and strategic direction will continue to ensure the organisation is robust and coherent in their roles and responsibilities.

Staff

Over the period, the organisation has employed two staff members on a permanent basis. The organisation has contracted 15 people with disability and family members to present at workshops and conference.

Financial Performance

Imagine More ended the 2017/2018 in a positive financial position, with a surplus of \$52,389 being generated by 30 June 2018. The equity of the organisation was \$42,024 on 30 June 2018.

The organisation's audited financial reports are available via our website and complement this annual report. The following information provides a summary of the financial performance of the organisation.

Financial performance over time

Imagine More has been able to improve its financial position over time, and while the organisation posted a small deficit in the previous year, this has been reversed during the 2017/2018 period.

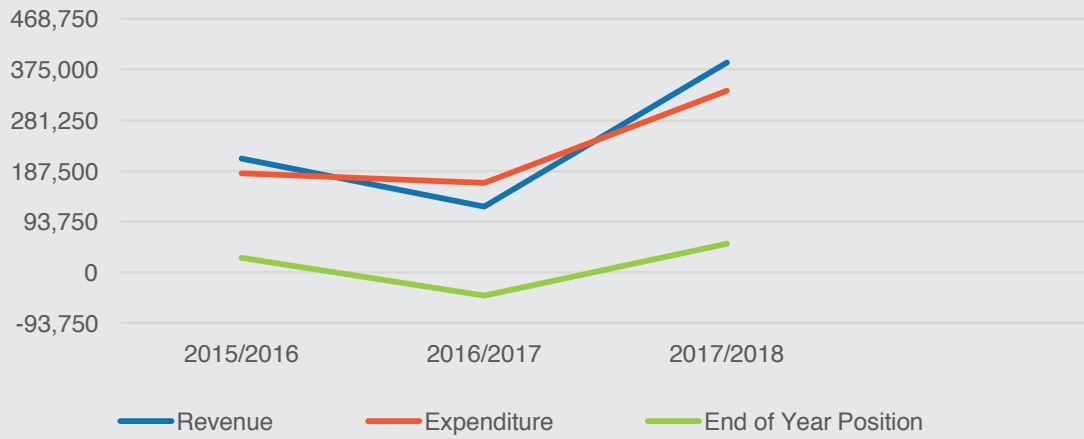
Revenue and Expenditure

In 2017/2018 revenue was derived from a range of sources, with the largest proportion being generated through a grant from the National Disability Insurance Agency as part of its Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grant program. This contributed to a significant increase in the funding for the organisation over this period.

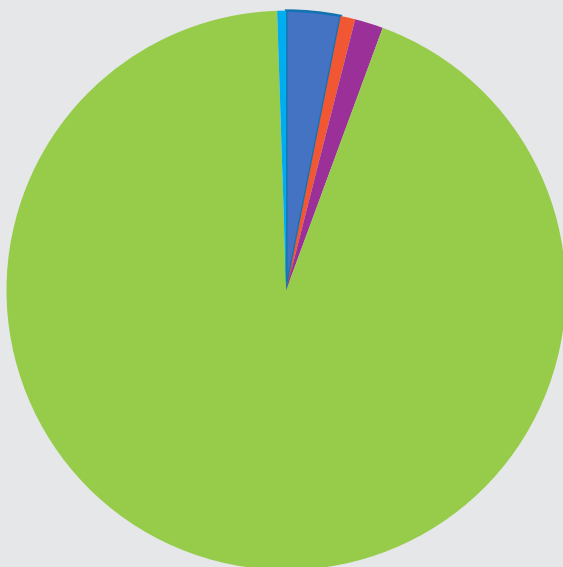
Unsurprisingly, the highest expenditure during the year was directed towards staff costs. However, conference and workshop expenses were also a significant proportion of expenditure.



Imagine More Financial Position Over Time



Where the money came from: Revenue 2017/2018



- Conference Fees
- Consulting
- Workshops
- Grants and donations
- Other

Where the money was spent Expenditure 2017/2018



- Conference Expenses
- Workshop Expenses
- Staff Expenses
- Other Expenses

Connecting with a global and national community of organisations

Prior to the establishment of the organisation the Executive Director was a regular participant in the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL). The Executive Director has maintained links with international connections that has led to international leaders in the field presenting at Imagine More conferences and workshops.

The confidence of Imagine More has grown through involvement in the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO) a number of other state-based organisations across Australia who work on similar issues, have shared values, share information, knowledge, resources and provide mentorship.

Future Challenges

As a relatively young organisation with few ongoing infrastructure costs, Imagine More is able to be agile in a very dynamic environment. This is vital at a time where funding sources are evolving and there is a high level of funding uncertainty. With the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the level of strategic investment in capacity building organisations in the sector is still evolving. Governments and other funders have invested in our work and therefore Imagine More is confident that there will be funding opportunities that will enable our work to continue.

A key element of the new strategic plan will be to invest in developing a stable and sustainable organisational structure. Some key priorities will be:

- Working to secure a stable and diverse financial basis, that includes ongoing funding to support core operations of the organisation;
- Securing a permanent office to provide a base for the organisation's operation;
- Developing a set of core outcomes, a methodology to measure these and robust data collection processes to report on them;
- Investing in governance and staffing of the organisation, to grow the pool of paid staff and governance volunteers involved in the organisation





THANK YOU

Imagine More is grateful for the support of the community of individuals with disability and their families who have engaged with the organisation. We also recognise the significant support from a range of organisations throughout the year. These include

National Alliance for Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO)

National Disability Insurance Agency

National Disability Services

Office for Disability, ACT Government



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