



Annual Report 2020 – 2021

Front Cover:

A young man employed at Government House in Canberra

This page: Setting up a microenterprise is a way to explore options for future work and to develop employment skills.

Photo courtesy of Annie Lee and Kathryn Lee of Pa's Produce





Contents

Our Vision	4
A Message from the Chair	5
Governance Structure and Management.	7
The Board	8
Executive Director's Report	9
Staff	13
Financial Performance	14
Connecting with a global and national community of organisations	17
Future Challenges	18
Thank You	19



Our Vision

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



Achieved by

Empowering individuals, families and the community to become inspired, motivated and capable of ensuring people with autism and intellectual disability

- hold valued social roles
- develop meaningful relationships, and
- live typical lives in their communities.

A Message from the Chair



During 2020-21, Imagine More continued to uphold our stated vision, despite the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board has been steadfast in maintaining our vision of communities where everyone is included, valued and contributing in meaningful roles. Our ongoing adherence to Social Role Valorisation (SRV) principles helps us stay true to our vision.

We completed our eighth year in June 2021. The organisation began as a small operation with minimal experience, daring to run a small conference and the occasional workshop. It has grown into a larger and more impactful organisation. We now make sustained, meaningful and positive differences to individuals, families and the broader community.

This impact has been noted by

- families and individuals who continue to engage with and grow alongside Imagine More
- community members and services that attend our events
- like-minded Australian and international businesses and organisations
- local and federal government representatives
- funders who have supported Imagine More to achieve its objectives.

This year the Board consulted widely on completing Imagine More's 2021-24 Strategic Plan. In this updated plan we have refined our core values using the SRV framework. These values underline our strategic objectives concerning

- support networks
- genuine participation and valued contribution
- family leadership, and
- organisational stability and sustainability.

We believe that these principles are crucial to supporting the genuine and ongoing inclusion of people with disability in the community.

Imagine More has matured as a family leadership organisation since its inception. In 2020-21, the Board devoted significant resources and consulted external experts to consolidate our governance and management to:

- Support the ongoing development and sustainability of the organisation
- Ensure staffing requirements, purpose, and conditions are exemplary.
- Ensure people with disability and families who engage with Imagine More are treated in a manner that respects their dignity, privacy and wellbeing.

The Board is pleased with the financial position achieved at the end of the 2020-21 year. The organisation now has greater resilience to cope with the uncertain and short-term nature of grant funding arrangements.

We enjoy working with local people with developmental disability, their families, and their supporters. We are confident that we'll continue to provide high-quality family leadership and capacity-building well into the future.



“We are not alone, and the system is challenging for all and there is great organisation’s like Imagine More who encourage you to dream big and keep trying.” Peer Group Participant, 2020-21



Governance Structure and Management

Imagine More Ltd is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a registered charity with both income tax exemption and Deductible Gift Recipient status. It operates with a Constitution and is governed by the Directors who provide guidance and support to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director

- undertakes the day-to-day responsibilities and decisions,
- ensures achievement of the Objects of the Constitution, vision, mission, and strategies set by the Board

All of our Directors are parents of young people with disability.

This year our organisation experienced significant growth. In response, the Board conducted a major review of the constitution. It proposes to make some minor constitutional changes to reflect the organisation's current needs. In particular, the Board succession process needs clarity to ensure Imagine More's important role in the Canberra community continues.

The Board held seven General Meetings during the reporting period. Four additional Directors' meetings focussed on strengthening the governance of the Board. The Directors conducted a major review of governance and operational policies and procedures. The Board also

- reviewed the strategic direction
- monitored the organisation's financial performance and
- supervised the Executive Director and key staff.

The primary role of Board General Meetings is to consider:

- The financial position of the company, including expenditure and receipts
- Administrative matters
- Strategic and systemic matters
- Risks correspondence to the Board
- Complaints
- Outcomes of programs and contracts entered into
- Initiatives, grants, and other opportunities to ensure they align with Imagine More Ltd objectives, vision and mission

Ongoing development of the Board, governance, and strategic direction will ensure the organisation is robust and coherent in its roles and responsibilities.

Imagine More Ltd was excited to finalise our 2021-24 strategic plan in late 2021.

The Board



Adrienne Gault (Chair)

Adrienne trained initially as an architect. When her son Carl was diagnosed with autism in 2001, her personal and professional interests shifted. She sought to understand how best to help him. Adrienne attended the Belonging Matters conference in 2013, with the support of Imagine More. This experience was a pivotal moment for her. She heard stories of people with a disability attaining fulfilling lives, rich in relationships and valued roles. As a result, her understanding of what could be possible for Carl expanded significantly. Since then, she has continued to learn about the art of building good lives for people with a disability. Adrienne has been a Director since 2017.



Jan Kruger

Jan is the Executive Director of Imagine More. She has a Bachelor in Community Education and qualifications in Social Role Valorisation (SRV). Jan has been a strong advocate for people with disability to live valued and inclusive lives for many years. In 2013, Jan co-founded Imagine More in the ACT. She aimed to strengthen family leadership and advocacy for people with a disability to hold valued social roles, develop meaningful relationships, and live typical lives in their communities. Jan passionately believes that people with disability can

- thrive in an inclusive education setting
- find meaningful employment
- live in a place they call home, and
- find belonging with real friendships.

Jan believes in the power of sharing stories and using a roles-based approach to creating a vision for a good life. She works tirelessly to provide hope and a clear way forward so that families and the community can imagine what is possible for people with disability.



Paul Kruger

Paul Kruger is a founding Director of Imagine More. He has experience as a financial controller, a farmer, a teacher since 2007, a University lecturer, and as a Director, Company Secretary and Board Member of multiple community and business organisations. When his son was young, Paul attended workshops run by Family Advocacy in NSW. These events transformed his perspective of disability and helped him see why it was so important for his son to access the good things in life. When the family moved to the ACT, he recognised the need for a capacity-building organisation in Canberra. Alongside Jan and Jacki Kearslake, Paul co-founded Imagine More in 2013. He has been responsible for developing much of the structure of the organisation. Paul currently works part-time as the Finance and Business Manager.

Executive Director's Report



Activities and Projects 2020/21

Throughout 2020-2021 Imagine More has provided stories, events and information to support people with disability to get the good things of life. We now have six staff working for the organisation. This larger team enables us to focus more intensely on school inclusion, employment, home, and relationships.

The pandemic initially slowed our delivery of regular peer group support and one-off or short series of workshops. Like many other organisations, we were able to run these events online. Participants zoomed in from the ACT, QLD, VIC, WA, NSW, SA, and other parts of the world, including NZ, Canada, and the USA.

Peer Groups

Throughout the year, we held 29 peer groups with 349 registrations. The themes of the peer groups were Inclusive Education, Employment, Imagining Home and Self-Managing NDIS. We invited several respected guest speakers to present to groups on various topics. Interesting follow-up discussions often followed the presentations. It was wonderful to see many families implement new ideas they learned in the peer groups.

Feedback from Peer Group participants



"Imagine More has done an amazing job in morphing the peer groups into online meetings so that they continued nonetheless (during the impact of COVID-19). Well done on a list of great speakers too!"

"It's given me valuable ideas on how to get my son more involved within his school community"



Workshops

We held eight online workshops and four face-to-face workshops on various topics with a reach of 924 registrations. Workshop topics explored

- Circles of support
- Building a context for relationships
- The essential ingredients of a place to call home
- Inclusive education, and
- Imagining, discovering and finding work.

Social Role Valorisation theory has continued to be a guiding framework we apply to all our work. Imagine More builds on this theory by running an annual Towards a Better Life workshop. Interestingly this event was primarily supported by service providers in our early days. It is now well attended by family members and non-paid supporters of people with a developmental disability.

We have recently invested in a comprehensive training program about best practice customised employment principles. These principles are helpful to families that support their family members to gain meaningful paid work. We're looking forward to sharing these insights and tactics in a series of workshops next year.

Feedback from Workshop participants



"I am so grateful for the calibre of presenters you have invited to encourage us on this often difficult journey"

"Excellent presentation and as always could go another two hours. Keep up the good work. Greatly appreciate your time and expertise and hard work. So many thanks"

"Thank you for organising these webinars. They are truly valuable."

Developing Quality Resources through the Sharing of Stories

We know that stories help people imagine more for their family members with disability. That's why we make it a priority to invite people with disability and their families to share their stories at our events.

We have created, curated, and shared many video-based stories in our growing library of digital resources. Some highlight the shared wisdom of family members on the topics of Circles of Support and a Bunch of Mates. We plan to share these stories in many different formats next year.

Collaborations



Imagine More is a member of the [National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations \(NACBO\)](#). NACBO consists of several like-minded and values-driven organisations. The Alliance is currently running projects on Home and Employment. Working together has strengthened our knowledge in these areas. We also have access to a larger library of stories that we can share.



Imagine More is also working closely with the [Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education \(ACIE\)](#) to progress genuine inclusive education across Australia.

Through ACIE, Imagine More has employed Annie Lee, a young person with disability, to represent the ACT at the National Youth Working Group meetings about Inclusive Education. Through this opportunity, Annie has gained and developed skills in attending and contributing to meetings, presenting, and advocacy work.

Our strong relationships with NACBO and ACIE have enabled us to advocate at various government and community levels. This type of advocacy is critical. Local and federal governments in particular must be reminded of the importance of developing opportunities for a good life for people with disability.



Strategic Plan

As Imagine More completes its eighth year of operation, the Board has completed the 2021/2024 strategic plan. The Plan has a focus on education, employment, home and relationships. Some areas of focus include:



Education

- COVID-19 lockdowns and resultant remote learning have only highlighted how much work we need to do to improve inclusive education in the ACT.
- The ACT Government's ongoing refusal to define 'inclusion' continues to be very frustrating.



Employment

- "Customised employment" has become quite the buzzword and is enthusiastically promoted by disability employment services. However, these services cannot implement genuine customised employment due to their funding model. As a result, too many young people spend time in congregated SLES programs that do not lead to work experience or paid work.
- Congregation of people with disability is also a feature of work (ADE) or day programs. These also don't lead to valued work roles or a typical life in communities.
- Underemployment of people with disability, especially intellectual disability and autism, is also a concern.



Housing

- We are concerned about the ongoing investment in models that group people with a disability together under the guise of "inclusion and innovation". This model limits individual choices. It is more likely to isolate people from a genuine connection to people without a disability in their neighbourhood and community.
- Individualised Living Options (ILO) funding is intended to support a person to live in a place they call home. It's disappointing that the ILO application process is confusing, overwhelming, and challenging to navigate.



Relationships

- A good life is filled with genuine and enduring relationships. We all need people to spend time with, share our interests, and be sounding board. People with disability are no different. This is an area that is often overlooked by services and institutions like education.

In response to these barriers, we are:

- Advocating for the [ACIE roadmap for inclusive education](#) to be adopted and implemented in the ACT. We are also advocating for the term "Inclusion" to be defined by the ACT Government in line with the definition adopted by the United Nations.
- Learning about and continuing to share effective customised employment strategies to give people with developmental disabilities a better chance of finding meaningful employment.
- Learning to support people with developmental disabilities to think about home. We're keen to make it easier for people to seek out funding to live in a place to call home with complementary informal support.
- Providing ideas and strategies to help individuals use their NDIS funding to build a context for freely-given relationships to flourish. Some of our most popular events have introduced ideas and strategies to create opportunities for relationships to grow.

Our ongoing focus

We will continue to work with families committed to ensuring that the people in their lives with disability are fully included in the community. We know that when people take up valued roles, and their contributions are recognised, expectations of the broader community are raised. Community members can see for themselves what can be possible in the life of a person with a disability and what real inclusion looks like. Our focus is to promote tried and tested solutions that are cost-effective and provide positive outcomes for people with disability.

I want to thank the Board and all those external to Imagine More who continue to support us over the years. More importantly, I offer my thanks to our fantastic team of staff who rally behind the vision of Imagine More to get the good things of life for people with disability.

Warmly



Staff

During 2020-21, the organisation continued in its moderate growth as the number of paid employees grew to

- Seven staff members on a permanent contract basis
- Two casual employees
- 15 volunteers.

We have devoted considerable time to understanding our staff and their needs and hopes. We are pleased with and proud of the enthusiasm and contribution of our paid and voluntary staff members.

7
staff
members

2
casual staff
members

15
volunteers

Financial Performance

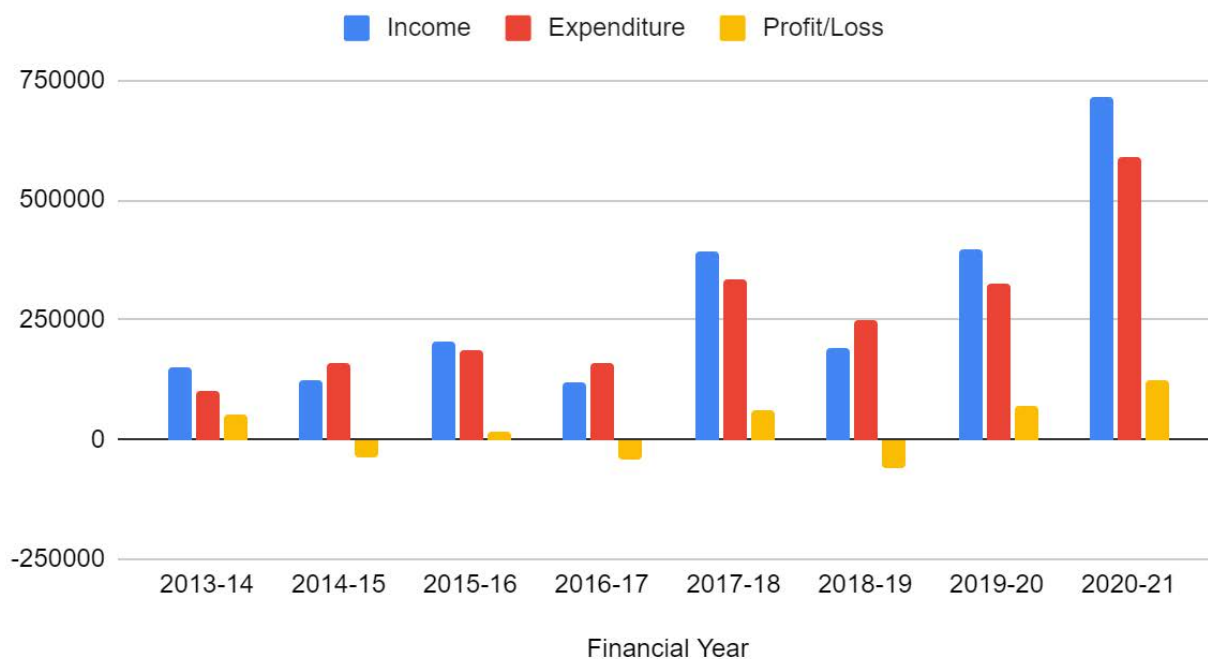
Imagine More ended 2020/21 in a positive financial position, with an audited profit of \$125,984 being generated by 30 June 2021. The equity of the organisation was \$182,325 on 30 June 2021.

The organisation's audited financial reports complement this annual report and are available on the [ACNC website](#).

The following information provides a summary of the financial performance of the organisation over time.

Imagine More has been able to improve its financial position over time. We remain mindful that, as a not for profit organisation, we have an underlying philosophy of not accumulating funds. While the organisation posted a deficit in the previous year, this has been reversed during the period.

INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND PROFIT



Revenue and Expenditure

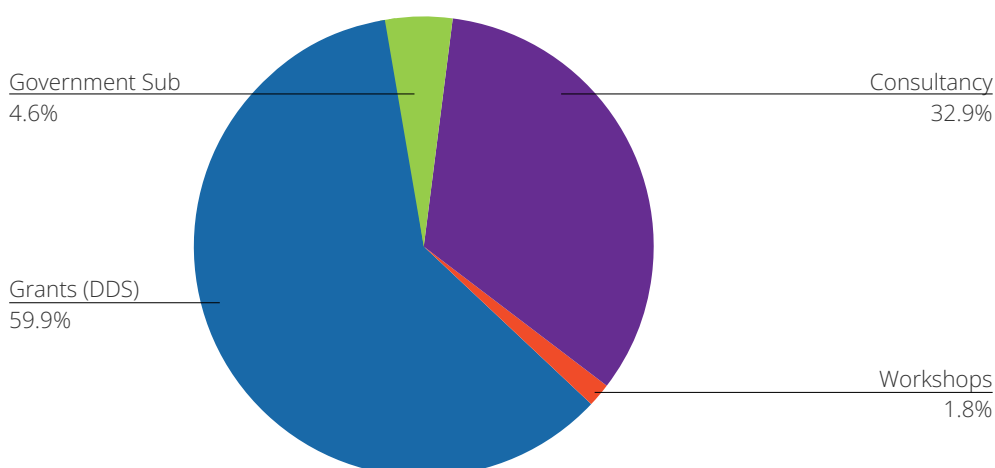
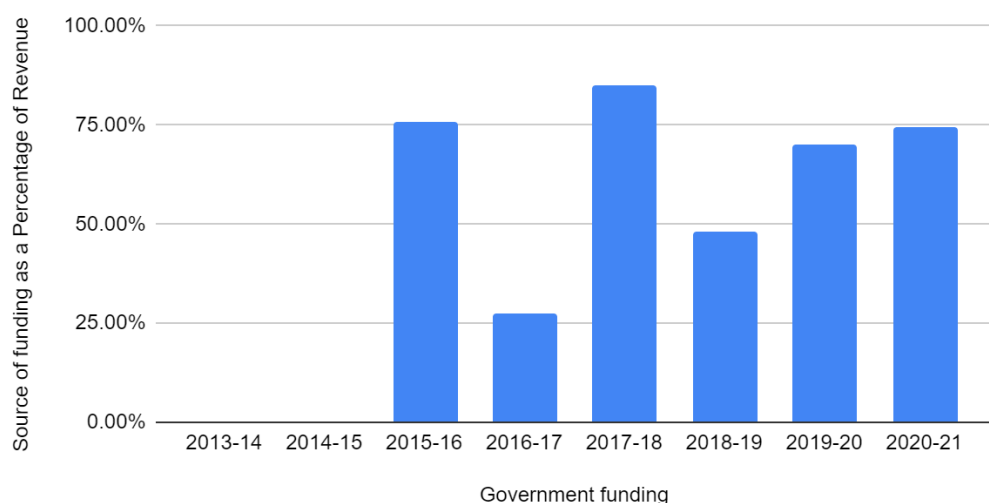
In 2020-21, revenue was derived from a range of sources. Our primary source of funding was the Typical Pathways Initiative grant. This is funded by the Department of Social Services (previously administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency) as part of the Information Linkages and Capacity Building Program.

Other sources included

- three contracts with our partners in the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations
- other government funding
- workshop registrations, and
- consultancy work.

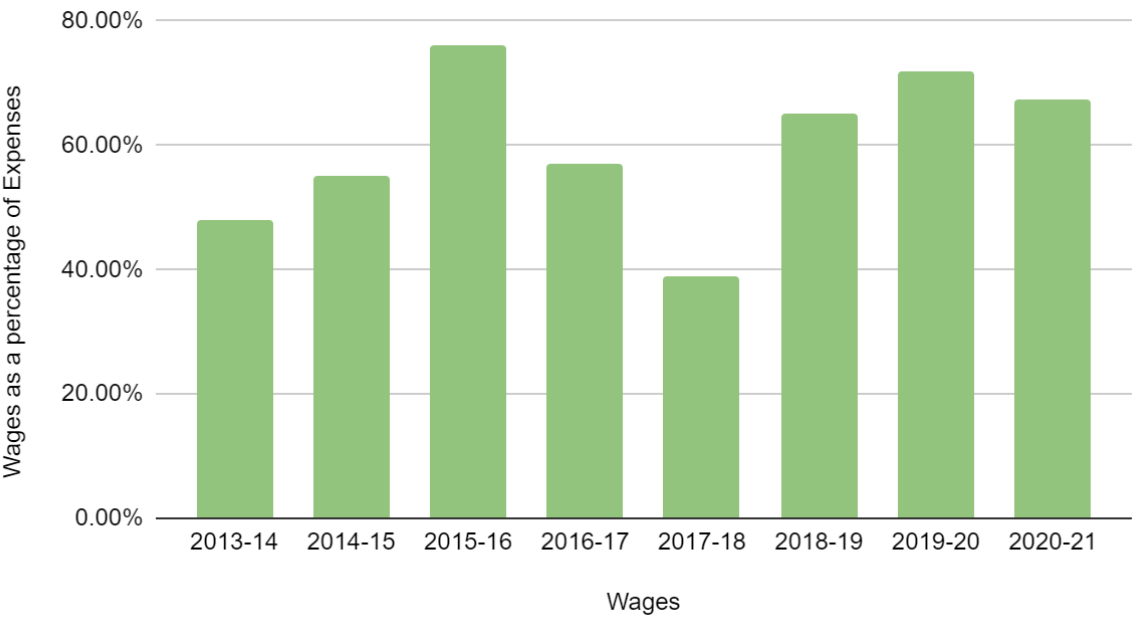
These sources significantly increased the organisation's funding over this period. This funding remains in place until early 2023.

SOURCE OF FUNDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE VS GOVERNMENT FUNDING



Our work's effectiveness relies on our team members' strong interpersonal and facilitation skills. We, therefore, invest significantly on employee costs as our revenue and expenditure increase. We have also increased our investment in governance and organisational support for employees.

WAGES AS A PERCENTAGE OF EXPENSES VS WAGES



A team member presenting at one of our School to Work workshops.



Connecting with a global and national community of organisations

Before the establishment of Imagine More, the Executive Director was, and remains, a regular participant in the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL). These valuable international connections have led to global leaders in the field presenting at some of our conferences and workshops.

Our organisational confidence has grown through our membership of the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO). The Alliance shares information, knowledge, and resources and provides mentorship. We have also worked with several other Australian state-based organisations.

As much as possible, the organisations we choose to work with

- share our values and
- use Social Role Valorisation theory to guide their work.

Feedback from Janet Klees' workshop, Building a Context for Relationship



"Easy to follow and understand practical guide to help people get more of life into their lives."

"Practical, informative full of great ideas to help people with disability engage in community."



Future Challenges

Imagine More is a relatively young organisation with few ongoing infrastructure costs. This allows us to be agile in a very changeable environment. This agility is vital since current funding sources are evolving and there is a high level of funding uncertainty.

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme led to an injection of funds into capacity-building organisations. However, beyond 2023 this source of funding remains uncertain.

A vital element of our new strategic plan will be our investment in 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
- Developing a robust succession plan to carry the vision and mission of Imagine More with integrity
- 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 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 many individuals with disability and families who have engaged with us this year.

We also recognise the significant support from various organisations including

- [National Alliance for Capacity Building Organisations \(NACBO\)](#)
 - Belonging Matters (VIC)
 - CRU (QLD)
 - Family Advocacy (NSW)
 - Imagine More (ACT)
 - JFA Purple Orange (SA)
 - Valued Lives (WA)
- Advocacy for Inclusion
- ACTCOSS
- All Means All
- Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education
- Down Syndrome ACT
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Office for Disability, ACT Government
- Rights and Inclusion Australia
- Rights and Inclusion Australia



The main domains for our work are inclusive education, employment, and home.



A young man working in his own local microenterprise, Isaac Delivers. Thanks to Isaac and Sheree Henley for allowing us to use this photo.



Imagine More Ltd
ABN 70 164 220 204
490 Northbourne Avenue, Dickson ACT 2602

imaginemore.org.au