

# Annual Report

2019





## We enable people living with disability to optimise their quality of life.

Therapy Focus is Western Australia's leading provider of professional therapy services for people living with disability. Since establishment as a not-for-profit organisation in 1998, Therapy Focus has grown to employ around 350 staff including qualified speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers, dietitians and continence clinicians.

Our teams of experienced therapists and support staff deliver evidence-based therapy to people of all ages and abilities throughout the state from our 20 office locations. Our comprehensive services are tailored to meet the needs of each individual and are delivered when and where people need them most.

To learn more about us and the services we offer, visit **[www.therapyfocus.org.au](http://www.therapyfocus.org.au)**.







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# Chair and CEO Report

## REPORT

**What a year it has been. A year full of celebrations, opportunities, challenges, new arrivals and fond farewells.**

We began the 2018-19 financial year celebrating our 20th Anniversary, with more than 500 guests attending a Gala Dinner at Crown Towers. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our journey to becoming the organisation we are today, and we particularly enjoyed catching up with Therapy Focus Alumni, including several of our past Chairs and Directors.

We saw a significant change in our senior leadership team over the year, beginning with the departure of our Executive Manager of Corporate Services, Brian Chapman, who had been with Therapy Focus since the very beginning. In January 2019 we farewelled Matt Burrows, our CEO of seven years, as he returned to his spiritual home in the Kimberley with his family. He will be greatly missed. Following Matt's departure, our Executive Manager of Clinical Services, Ruth Lee, took up the role of Acting CEO and was supported

by a new executive structure that comprised five Executive Managers. This helped ensure that it was business as usual while we recruited a new CEO. In April 2019, Angelena Fixter took up the reigns as the fourth Therapy Focus CEO after a successful transition and induction. There is great excitement about the potential for this new leadership team to take Therapy Focus to new heights.

Therapy Focus continues to go from strength to strength, powered by the professionalism, dedication and extraordinary ability of our staff. We finished the 2018-2019 year with a surplus that we will invest in building an even stronger organisation. This result is a remarkable achievement at a time when block funding transitions to individualised funding, service providers and people living with disability are coming to grips with the National Disability Insurance





Pictured: Past and present Therapy Focus Board Chairs at the 20th Anniversary Gala Dinner (L-R: Peter Mildenhall, Freda Crucitti, Ray Glickman, Fiona Payne and Dr Ann Zubrick).

**“We have bold ambitions and we are excited about creating our future, together.”**

Scheme (NDIS), and there is great competition for allied health professionals.

We continue to grow in terms of the number of people we support, and the staff required to deliver services to these people, their families and carers. During the year our dedicated clinicians delivered 96,212 hours of professional therapy services to 3,960 people living with a disability throughout the state. Our clients tell us that the services we provide make a difference and our independently run biennial client survey indicated that 88% of clients believe we are delivering the quality of therapy they expect. We take all feedback seriously, whichever route it is delivered and are always seeking to do better.

Whilst our current 2017-2020 Strategic Plan has a year remaining, we are actively planning for the future. The entire organisation, our clients, their families and carers will be involved in creating our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

This new plan will describe our unique value propositions to clients and staff, and will highlight the ways in which we are different from other therapy providers. We have bold ambitions and we are excited about creating our future, together.

On a personal note, Fiona and I would like to thank our colleagues, clients, families and Board Directors for their unwavering commitment. Together we can transform lives, one person at a time.



*Fiona Payne*

**Fiona Payne**  
Board Chair

*Angelena Fixter*

**Angelena Fixter**  
CEO



# Board Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

1. Fiona Payne - **Chair**
2. Tony Vis - **Deputy Chair**
3. Amanda Reed
4. Ann Dawson
5. Kane Blackman
6. Michael Banton
7. Rachel Cottier



# Parent Reference Group

PARENT REFERENCE GROUP



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Claire Parker - **Chair**
2. Evelyn McKay
3. Deborah De Geeter
4. Emma Chessell-Keevers
5. Amanda Reed
6. Frances Marsden

**Not pictured:** Elie Sassine,  
Samar Sassine & Kristen Ugle

**Our Parent Reference Group** provide valuable parent/carer perspectives with regard to planning, development and delivery of services.



# Executive Team

EXECUTIVE TEAM



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

1. **Angelena Fixter,**  
CEO

2. **Theresa Pastor,**  
Executive Manager;  
Clinical Services

3. **Kelly Byleveld,**  
Executive Manager;  
Workforce

4. **Russell Dronfield,**  
Executive Manager;  
Finance

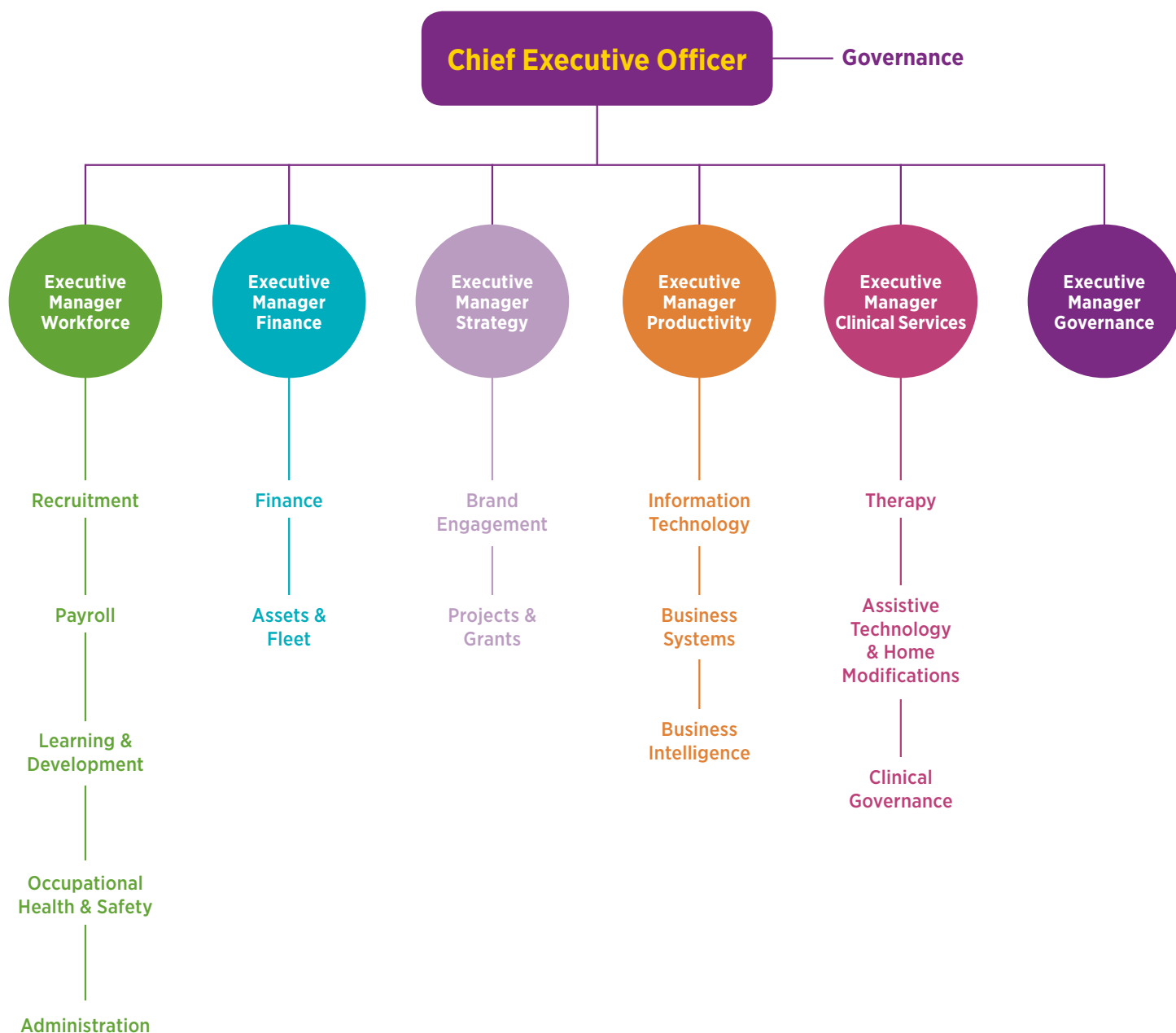
5. **Samantha Berglin,**  
Executive Manager;  
Strategy

6. **Evan Williams,**  
Executive Manager;  
Productivity

7. **Ruth Lee,**  
Executive Manager;  
Quality



# Organisational Structure





# Snapshot

SNAPSHOT

83%

client survey  
respondents achieving  
expected therapy  
outcomes

3,960

total clients

\$33.9m

total  
income

96,212

hours of therapy  
delivered

\$39k

GIVE Program grant  
funding awarded  
to clients and  
families

33 hrs

average no.  
hours training per  
employee

3.8 years

average staff  
tenure

44%

employees aged  
30-40 years









96,212

hours of therapy  
delivered in  
2018-19



# Therapy

**Our comprehensive therapy services help people living with disability achieve their goals at all life stages. By taking a transdisciplinary approach to service delivery, our therapy teams ensure the best outcomes for the individuals and families we work with.**

In the 2018-19 financial year a key focus was the roll-out of clinical competencies across all disciplines, including occupational therapy, speech pathology, physiotherapy, psychology and dietetics. These competencies provide our clinicians with clear learning direction and ensure that our therapy services are of the highest quality. Additionally, we have introduced a new focus on developing clearer clinical pathways to support career progression from new graduate to experienced clinician. These pathways will ensure the clinical excellence that is our promise.

Another key focus was reviewing our clinical services and practices, to ensure that we offer streamlined and professional services for our clients. After a thorough review of our Support Coordination services, we made the difficult decision to cease the service. We want to be sure that we are focusing our energy where we can offer the best value for our clients, and ensure our sustainability into the future. We are now considering the possibilities of offering our full range of therapy services across a wider geographical spread. Therapy Focus already offers a visiting service to the Christmas and Cocos Islands, and our South West Team based in Margaret River is thriving. Our presence in the Hills has increased over the past year, with our team based at Walliston Primary School nearly doubling.

The demand for psychology services has increased significantly over the past 12 months, resulting in a drive to employ more psychologists across the teams. This development has been met with excitement and enthusiasm, as additional psychologists in our teams has

meant more available support for our clients. We also introduced positive behaviour support competencies and training across the organisation, ensuring that all clinicians have a good knowledge of positive behaviour approaches. Our previously separate behaviour support service is now integrated across all teams, meaning this service is within arm's length for all clients.

Our continence clinicians, including nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists with specific skills in managing continence, are also being integrated into therapy teams. Having specific knowledge of the management of continence issues across teams will enable us to offer continence management services to more clients and ensure that once our current contract with the Department of Communities ends, our clients will continue to benefit from access to this essential service.

Our Mealtime Eating Allied Health Liaison Service (MEAHLS) has gone from strength to strength, with more clients recognising the value of a comprehensive transdisciplinary approach when





# Therapy

addressing mealtime issues. As a result, a larger number of clinicians are now delivering the service.

Over the course of 2018, all clinicians were introduced to five-level Assistive Technology credentialing across the core disciplines, and supported to develop their skills and clinical expertise in assistive technology prescription. Our Home Modifications Team has also been busy with Therapy Focus now registered with the Insurance Commission of WA to provide both project management and occupational therapy consultation for home modifications. Specialist disability accommodation is currently being looked at as an area where our skilled team could contribute to best outcomes for our clients.

A key achievement this year was being accredited as communication accessible organisation by Scope, with four of our offices were awarded the Communication Access Symbol.

The accreditation was the result of a project spanning two years, which was spearheaded by our Total Communication Portfolio Group and enthusiastically supported by administration staff across the organisation. Another highlight included two nominations for the 2019 WA Disability Support Awards, with our Communication Matters Clinic Team nominated for an Innovation Award and Executive Manager, Ruth Lee, selected as a finalist for the Leadership Award.

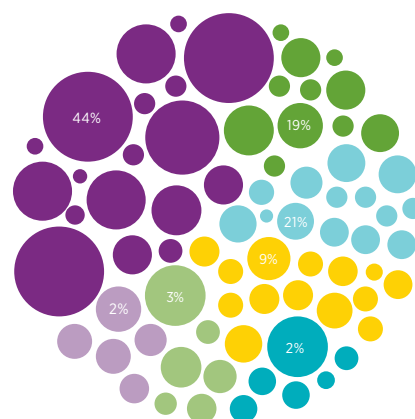




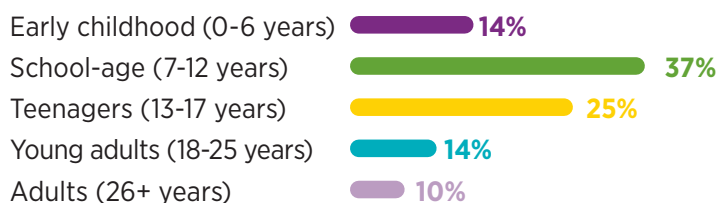
# Who we helped



## PRIMARY DISABILITY:



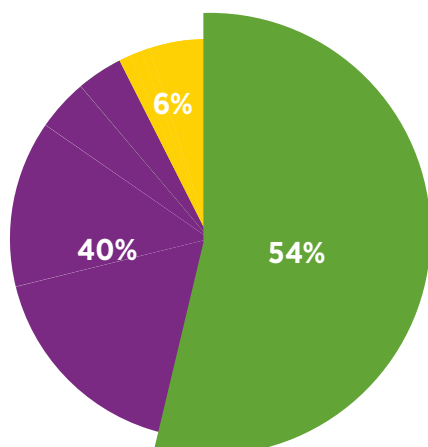
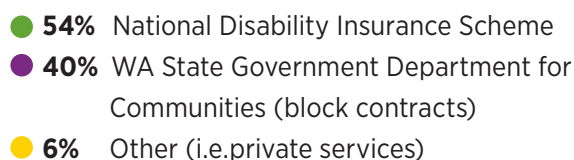
## AGE BREAKDOWN:



# How we helped



## FUNDING SOURCE



CATEGORY	NO. ITEMS
Communication aids	425
Mobility aids	292
Orthoses	292
Positioning aids and seating	266
Bed equipment	133
Therapy resources	113
Personal hygiene aids	72
Recreation	63
Transfer aids	60
Specialised footwear	45
Daily living aids	24
Accessible transport	15
Safety equipment	11
Education resources	9
Other	8



## Case study

### There's no stopping Candice

**Five and a half year-old Candice Evans is not letting her disability get in the way of living life to the fullest, thanks to the use of specialised equipment and support from her dedicated therapy team.**

Candice has Pitt-Hopkins Syndrome, a condition that is characterised by intellectual disability and developmental delay. The condition affects many of Candice's body systems, including her ability to walk, talk, learn and play.

Over the past two years Therapy Focus Advanced Physiotherapist, Deborah Mitchell, has worked closely with Candice, her family and the staff at St Mary McKillop Primary School in Busselton to maximise Candice's independence and help her participate in school activities.

"Candice is an inquisitive little girl who loves mat time, listening to music and making new friends," Deborah said.

"Our physiotherapy sessions have focused on developing sitting, standing, balance and walking skills to allow Candice to sit on the floor with her classmates, stand for tabletop activities and navigate the playground during breaks."

In addition to regular hands-on physiotherapy sessions, Deborah has assisted Candice's family to access specialised equipment and assistive technology.

"In the last 12 months I've worked closely with the family to acquire funding for a walker, height-adjustable bed, Second Skin body suit and specialised tricycle," Deborah said.

"Recently Candice has learnt to independently propel herself on the trike and has started enjoying regular outings with her mum, Jen. This has been a great source of pleasure for both Candice and Jen, and they are looking forward to being able to ride along the Busselton foreshore in the future."



With access to specialised equipment and support from her broader therapy team, including her Speech Pathologist Heidi Jupp, Candice is continuing to grow and flourish as any five year-old should.

"It's always a pleasure working with Candice and her family," Deborah said.

"While her condition presents challenges as she grows, it hasn't stopped her from learning to walk, ride a bike, make her own choices and follow her big brother around the house."

**"Candice has learnt to independently propel herself on the trike and has started enjoying regular outings with her mum"**









24%

of our clients are  
aged 18+



# Strategy

## Our journey to adjust and transition our operations and services for continued success has led our strategic thinking this year.

We have focussed on streamlining processes and delivering quality services in the past year, and are well placed for the continued roll-out and expansion of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Part of this effort included a review of key systems and infrastructure to ensure we are minimising our costs as an organisation. We also reviewed our pricing structures and are pleased to be able to deliver NDIS services at prices lower than those suggested by the National Disability Insurance Agency. We will continue to review this pricing to ensure high-quality service delivery and ongoing sustainability.

Until the NDIS roll-out is complete in 2020 we will continue to support clients under a range of funding models. This has and will continue to present complex challenges for both clients and the organisation. Over the course of the year we hosted a series of NDIS information sessions for clients, their families and carers, to ensure they have the information and support required to get the most from their NDIS Plans. We also worked to simplify access to our services, securing a grant from the Department of Communities that enabled us to develop animated videos that explain our service agreement and how we work within the NDIS. These videos have been

translated and recorded in six different languages and are accompanied by our written service agreements, which have been redeveloped with simplified language.

With the NDIS one of the biggest social reforms of our time, we see ourselves as playing an important role in supporting the education of therapists completing their studies and entering the sector. We are invested in the provision of student placements and in working closely with universities to ensure that disability is covered in coursework. Through these partnerships we have been able to secure funding in partnership with Curtin University to explore and develop innovative programs for young adults with disability entering employment. The delivery of services to adults has been a continued focus this year, with a growing number of adults accessing our services.

Looking towards the year ahead, we are excited to be taking up opportunities to strengthen relationships with other organisations. This will see Therapy Focus expand services to cover a broader client population that will include elderly people. We have commenced work on our 2020-23 Strategic Plan, which will be developed with input from staff and clients, and see local teams mirror their local communities.



**33%**

Increase in the number of clients aged 18+



**50**

Allied Health students completed placements



**5,274**

Hours of supervised student learning



**\$616k**

Grant and project funding secured



# Case study

## Just your average bloke

**Tony Vardaro is a self-declared average bloke. He says that he has never wanted his cerebral palsy to define him, or place restrictions on his life.**

“I don’t want to go into a nursing home or supported accommodation. I want to live independently for as long as I can.”

This independence is one of the things that makes Tony happiest in life - but he may not have experienced the freedom he does today if he had let his past experiences determine his future.

As a child, Tony describes his interactions with occupational therapists and physiotherapists as “challenging”. He was sceptical about letting therapy services back into his life when he started working with Therapy Focus, but needed the assistance to maintain independence.

Through teamwork and honest communication with Physiotherapist Nicole Massey and Occupational Therapist Katherine Cooper, Tony is able to continue living the independent life he loves.

“Working with Katherine and Nicole, I’ve really seen how good therapists can be,” he said.

“They ask for permission to touch me, they have respect for me and we have a great working relationship.

“I’ll be honest with the girls and say no to things if it’s not what I want, and they’ve said; right, if that’s not what you want we’ll find another option and move onto the next thing.”

Together they plan and implement strategies to maintain Tony’s independence and safety, so he can live at home for as long as possible, and access the community and the activities that fulfil him.

“Tony is one of the most thoughtful and driven people that we have ever met. He knows exactly what



supports he needs and the goals he wants to work on,” Nicole said.

“Since first meeting him, we have thoroughly enjoyed listening to his experiences and his strong commitment to advocating for himself and for others with a disability.”

Through their collaborative work, Tony has been prescribed a new wheelchair and footwear that supports him when standing and transferring from his wheelchair, reducing the risk of falling.

A specialised mobile phone, practicing ways to transition from sitting, and completing tasks like showering, dressing and sleeping in his home are next on the list.

“Tony now has a clear plan that will enable him to achieve his goals and to maintain his quality of life,” Nicole said.

“This is testament to his involvement in goal setting, challenging himself and working hard with his therapy team to achieve great outcomes.”









**Top 3 reasons for  
working at  
Therapy Focus:**

1. Meaningful work
2. Positive environment
3. Making a difference

2019 staff survey



# Workforce

Over the past 12 months we have focused on our attraction and retention strategies, with a number of initiatives developed and due for implementation in the 2019-20 year. We are committed to finding people who fit the culture of our organisation, as this has been key to enhancing customer focus in all that we do.

Staffing has increased by 10% with the average headcount increasing from 301 in July 2018 to 332 in June 2019. Turnover in 2018-19 was measured at 11.8%, which is well under our KPI of 17%, and staff wellness remains front of mind as we continue to transition to a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) environment. We have worked closely with our staff to ensure personal wellbeing and work-life balance through initiatives such as flexible working arrangements. We have also reviewed our Employee Assistance Program to secure a new provider, Access Wellbeing, who offer a suite of confidential counselling and support services for staff.

Learning and Development is integral to all we do at Therapy Focus and has continued to be a key focus area again this year. 86% of staff attended training over the year, with 11,932 hours of training delivered. A highlight was UK-based Speech and Language Therapist, Alex Kelly, delivering a two day workshop on assessing and teaching social skills. This training was well received, with attending clinicians using the skills learnt to assist clients, families and carers. Therapy Focus was well represented on a local and national stage, with a number of our clinicians attending and delivering presentations at the AGOSCI National Conference, the International Society on



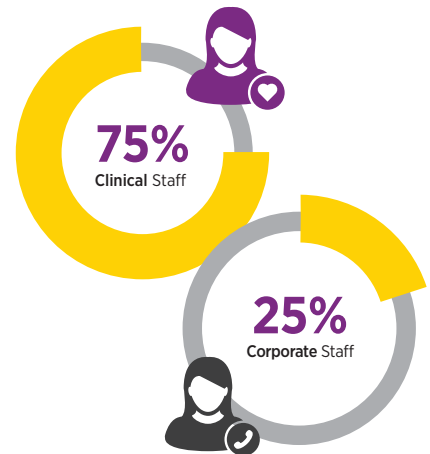
**316**  
Average  
headcount



**93%**  
Female  
staff

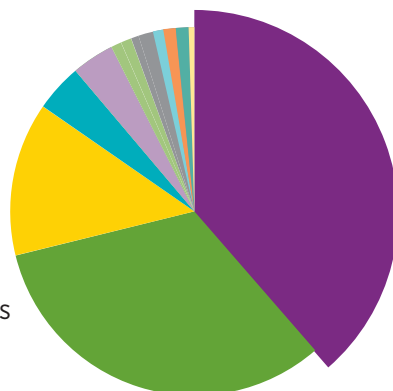


**7%**  
Male  
staff



## CLINICAL DISCIPLINE BREAKDOWN:

- **94** Occupational therapists
- **82** Speech pathologists
- **34** Physiotherapists
- **13** Psychologists
- **6** Continence nurses
- **5** Dietitians
- **5** Therapy assistants
- **2** Behaviour support specialists
- **2** Support coordinators
- **2** Profilers
- **1** Social workers



## STAFF TENURE





# Workforce

Early Intervention Conference, and the National Conference on Incontinence to name a few.

We have also been working to extend learning opportunities through partnerships with like-minded organisations. In March 2019, two of our clinicians travelled to California as part of our international exchange program with AchieveKids. We also supported four employees to undertake international volunteering opportunities with organisations such as Kolega, Equal Health and Cosmos HealthCare, who send multi-disciplinary healthcare teams to disadvantaged communities around the world.

Our 20th Anniversary saw staff celebrated for their outstanding contributions, with our annual awards presented at the Gala Dinner in July 2018. Therapy Focus Behaviour Support Psychologist Scott Payne

was awarded the 2018 People's Choice Award, after being nominated by his 11 year-old client, Rhys Tallowin, and his mother. A total of 88 nominations were received from Therapy Focus clients and their families, and our Parent Reference Group were astounded by the calibre of entries. South West Team Leader, Danelle Milward was awarded the colleague-nominated Leadership Award, while Speech Pathologists Chloe Justins and Caitlin O'Meara and Advanced Occupational Therapist Olivia Coleman were jointly awarded the inaugural Innovation Award. A number of employees received 5, 10 and 15 year Service Awards, and Administration Officer Heather Stanley was also acknowledged for 20 years of dedicated service.



2018 People's Choice Award Winner, Scott Payne, with Parent Reference Group member, Amanda Reed.



## Case Study

### SOS Makes Feeding Fun

**In late 2018 a group of Therapy Focus speech pathologists, occupational therapists and dietitians completed a four day training course in the use of the Sequential Oral Sensory (SOS) Approach to feeding.**

Developed by Dr Kay Toomey, the SOS Approach focuses on increasing a child's comfort level by exploring and learning about the different properties of food.

Advanced Speech Pathologist, Jahde Sumner said that the approach is an effective way to address problematic feeding behaviours in children with disability.

"For many of the children we work with, being able to sit down and eat is such a complex thing."

"Some of them have difficulties with sensory regulation and exploring different textures, while others have difficulty with their oral-motor skills, which means being able to manipulate and chew foods safely."

Following the training, a number of therapy teams hosted SOS groups for Therapy Focus clients who had feeding disorders and other mealtime challenges, allowing them to interact with food in a fun, non-stressful way.

The initial focus is the child's ability to tolerate certain foods in the room and in front of them, then activities encourage the child to touch, kiss, and eventually taste and eat various foods.

Rachael Wilkinson registered her 5 year-old son Elijah in an SOS group in an effort to broaden the range of foods he eats. She said that in just six sessions he was trying foods he had never tried before.

"Elijah has a really limited diet. He'll only eat foods that are very soft in texture or pureed. He has a problem



with his oesophagus, which we think is the reason for his sensory issues."

"Toward the end of the program he put apple in his mouth for the first time. He wouldn't bite it, but he put it in his mouth, which he has never done before. Then he took a bite of a carrot in the final session, which was amazing."

Similarly to Elijah, 6 year-old Zack has an aversion to solid foods. His Mum Emma said that the SOS group had helped Zack try new foods and break his usual mealtime routine.

"Before the group Zack would only eat the same foods of the same brand – he was very routine in his eating."

"In the sessions he put new foods in his mouth for the first time ever. He's now tried twiggie sticks, carrots and Cheetos, which he's actually putting in his mouth and chewing. He spits them out, but that first step is a huge improvement."

The SOS Approach to Feeding is now used by therapists as part of intervention strategies and therapy programs to address mealtime concerns, with regular groups facilitated.







# Financial Summary

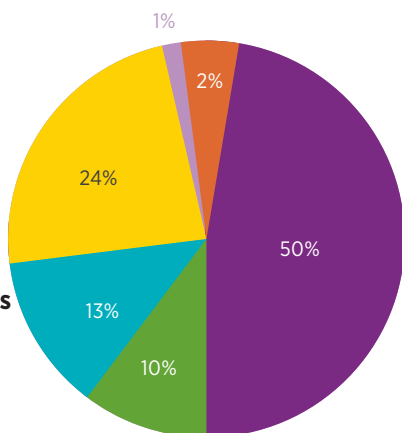
	2018-19 \$000	2017-18 \$000
<b>Operating Result</b>		
Income	33,903	30,352
Expenditure	32,578	30,167
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	1,325	185
<b>Working Capital</b>		
Current Assets	15,458	15,832
Current Liabilities	12,115	13,768
Working Capital Surplus (Deficiency)	3,343	2,064
<b>Significant Items</b>		
Salaries and on-costs	22,609	21,540
Administration	2,038	1,409
Program Expenses	5,833	5,131
Depreciation	783	849
Accommodation	990	856
Sundry Expenses	325	382

FINANCES

## Our Revenue

- **Block Contract Funding**  
\$17,088,987
- **Other Contracts**  
\$3,325,321
- **Equipment Program**  
\$4,457,428
- **NDIS**  
\$8,237,833
- **Projects, grants, donations and claims**  
\$208,069
- **Sundry and Interest Income**  
\$584,952

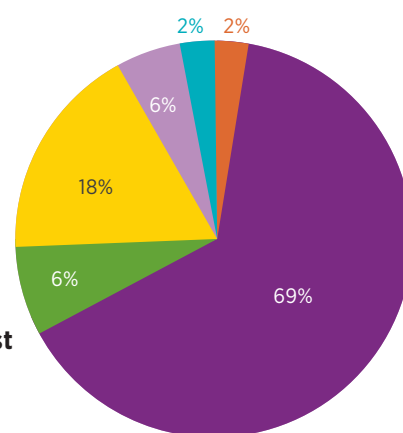
**TOTAL REVENUE**  
\$33,902,590



## Our Costs

- **Salaries and on-costs**  
\$22,608,966
- **Administration**  
\$2,038,079
- **Program Expenses**  
\$5,832,820
- **Depreciation**  
\$783,042
- **Accommodation**  
\$989,736
- **Sundry and Interest Expenses**  
\$325,204

**TOTAL EXPENSES**  
32,577,848





# 2018-19 Highlights

## 20th Anniversary Gala Dinner

500 guests including Therapy Focus staff, alumni and special guests celebrated the organisation's 20th Anniversary with a Gala Dinner at Crown Towers in July 2018.

Parliamentary Secretary Mr Reece Whitby MLA officially opened the event on behalf of the Minister for Disability, congratulating staff for their dedication to supporting WA people with disabilities, and thanking the organisation for its contribution to the disability sector across 20 years.

Internationally awarded author and speaker, Rachel Callander, gave the keynote presentation, sharing her incredible story of motherhood in a moving presentation that centred on transforming people's view of disability.

The Gala Dinner also kicked off a six month campaign, 20 Stories of 20 Years, which acknowledged the significant contributions of staff, directors and alumni, as well as the impact the organisation has had on the lives of clients, their families and carers. Read the stories at

[TFturns20.therapyfocus.org.au](https://TFturns20.therapyfocus.org.au).



## Communication Matters Clinic Opening

In September 2018 we opened the doors to our purpose-built Communication Matters Clinic, which was set-up with support from Scentre Group Australia through their Westfield Community Program.

The clinic provides access to a range of communication systems and solutions for people living with complex communication needs and is staffed by experienced speech pathologists knowledgeable in the area of alternative and augmentative communication. It aims to reduce wait times to trial devices, so that funding for those devices can be accessed quicker.

Federal Member for Stirling, the Honourable Michael Keenan MP, officially opened the clinic at an event where guests toured the clinic and took part in device demonstrations.



**“ Drawing pictures to illustrate words is a wonderful way to deepen understanding. I’m always I’m always excited to see the many different ways kids interpret words and themes like inclusion in a story.”**

Sean E Avery

## Art Competition & Book Launch

The 11<sup>th</sup> and final title in our Help a Child Grow Storybook Series was unveiled at a book launch at Perth Town Hall during National Children's Book Week in August 2018.

The storybook, entitled *If I Met a Baboon Who Lost His Balloon*, was written by local teacher, author and artist, Sean E Avery, and encourages readers to be kind, understanding and helpful toward others. The illustrations were created by WA primary school students who took part in our 2018 Art Competition. More than 5,300 artworks were received from 103 schools across the state, with 21 selected as the winners and published in the storybook.

Thanks to the generous support of Art Competition principal sponsor, The Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, a complimentary copy of *If I Met a Baboon Who Lost His Balloon* was provided to every primary school in WA.



**“The workshop provided a great balance of information, demonstration and practical activities. It was a really worthwhile experience and I’m excited to start using Key Word Sign in my classroom.”**

Zerin Grech

## Key Word Sign Workshops

A group of parents, carers and educators learned the basics of Key Word Sign at a series of workshops that kicked off in November 2018.

At the full day workshops attendees watched demonstrations by our qualified therapists and took part in activities, which allowed them to practice Key Word Sign and other methods of alternative communication.

Key Word Sign is an interactive sign vocabulary that includes the use of manual signs and natural gesture to support communication. It can be used with both children and adults, and can benefit people who have difficulties with attention, comprehension and/or developing speech.



## NS Projects Backyard Blitz

A team of volunteers from project management company NS Projects conducted a 'Backyard Blitz' style garden renovation for 18 year-old Lisa Harris and her family.

Lisa has cerebral palsy and lives with her Mum, Tania, and two teenage siblings in their Kenwick home. Lisa's Occupational Therapist Deborah Waghorn nominated the Harris family for the garden renovation, seeing that Lisa would benefit from a more accessible backyard.

The team from NS Projects met with Deborah and the family to plan a more accessible and sensory-stimulating garden, which included paving, shade sails, a vegetable garden, worm farm and fire pit. As a finishing touch, the team from NS Projects also purchased and installed a hammock for Lisa to enjoy out of her wheelchair.

NS Projects has partnered with Therapy Focus since 2014, donating project management expertise and labour for a garden renovation each year. NS Projects have also funded a number of equipment and assistive technology items, which are not eligible for government funding.

**“It’s so nice to have an area that Lisa can get to in her wheelchair. She absolutely loves coming out and laying in the hammock - she looks up at the trees and just chills.”**

Lisa’s Mum, Tania Haris.



# 2018-19 Highlights *contd.*

## Sunflower Sunday

Around 800 people descended on Ascot's Garvey Park in December 2018 to enjoy a great range of free entertainment and activities offered at our Sunflower Sunday community event.

The event coincided with International Day of People with Disability celebrations and was supported by Therapy Focus' partner organisations, Identitywa, Intelife and TADWA. Other organisations offering inclusive programs for people with disability, such as Playgroup WA, Jungle Sports, Football West and Horse Power, also hosted accessible activities for attendees to enjoy.

Feedback from attendees was very positive, with many saying that the event provided a safe, judgement-free zone for both children and adults with disability to give new things a go.

**“To be able to go to a place without judgment, where rules are flexible because disability is understood, was a priceless opportunity for an outing that is crucial for my child's development.”**

Sunflower Sunday attendee



DECEMBER 2018

FEBRUARY 2019



MARCH

**“We cannot thank Therapy Focus enough for this opportunity. We can't wait to share our new-found knowledge with our colleagues, clients, families and schools we work with.”**

Emily Greenwood.

## AchieveKids Exchange

A partnership between Therapy Focus and AchieveKids in California saw staff from both organisations take part in a two week international exchange program that provided invaluable learning opportunities.

AchieveKids is a non-profit that operates two highly specialized schools to meet the needs of children with complex needs in special education. Therapy Focus Advanced Occupational Therapist, Emily Greenwood, and Team Leader, Siobhan Clery, travelled to California where they visited AchieveKids schools and affiliated organisations, and attended the Stanford Autism Conference.

In exchange, Sally Townsend, Glenna Howe and Monet Diaz-Huth from AchieveKids visited a number of Therapy Focus offices across the Perth region and in the South West, where they met with staff and learnt about the services Therapy Focus provides.



## KONGA Megaclass for Autism Awareness

Fitness instructor and mother of four, Tyare Pugh, partnered with Therapy Focus to invite the Perth community to take part in a free KONGA® workout to help raise awareness of autism and highlight the importance of self-care.

The event was a great success, with around 200 people coming together in front of the Perth Belltower dressed in blue to kick-off Autism Awareness month.

With three of her four children diagnosed with Autism, Tyare said that she found strength, courage, friendship and, most importantly, balance in fitness programs such as The Jungle Body's KONGA®. She started the event not only to raise awareness of autism, but to encourage other parents and carers to find 'me-time'.

**“When I got to the event and was surrounded by a sea of blue I realised that I wasn't alone. Autism was so much bigger than I ever realised.”**

Sera Mataserre



## WA Disability Support Awards

Therapy Focus was proud to sponsor the 2019 WA Disability Support Awards and help recognise those who provide the highest standards of support to WA people living with disability.

A group of Therapy Focus representatives, including CEO Angelena Fixter and Board Directors Tony Vis and Amanda Reed, attended the awards ceremony held in May at Crown Perth. The Honourable Kim Beazley AC, Governor of Western Australia and the Honourable Stephen Dawson MLC, Minister for Environment and Disability Services, were also in attendance to help award winners.

Therapy Focus' Communication Matters Team attended the event as nominees for the Excellence in Innovation Award, as well as Executive Manager Ruth Lee, who was selected as a finalist for the Excellence in Leadership Award.

## Reconciliation Week Screening

Therapy Focus staff, clients and the wider community attended a special sold-out screening of the film 'Gurrumul' that was hosted by Therapy Focus in recognition of National Reconciliation Week.

The film pays homage to the life of indigenous artist, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, who was blind from birth and went on to become one of the most important and acclaimed voices to ever come out of Australia. Before the screening Whadjuck/Ballardong Nyungar woman Sandra Harben provided a traditional Welcome to Country, explaining the connection between aboriginal people, their land and culture.





## Connect with us



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