



# FOCAL Community Living Inc

## Annual General Report

### 2015 - 2016

#### Chair's Report

Roy Henderson

FOCAL has had quite the year! There have been numerous organisational changes and a lot of work completed to provide clarity for our customers prior to the Ipswich implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in July 2017.



As you are no doubt aware, FOCAL is at a turning point in its history, with the departure of Sonja at the end of May and replacement Mickael Blanc commencing as the new Chief Executive Officer in July. This offers a fantastic opportunity for FOCAL to review its priorities and ensure more than ever that we listen to our customers and meet their individual needs.

Mickael's mandate can be summarised in two words, GROWTH and SUSTAINABILITY. This is about ensuring new customers can benefit from our services and ensure FOCAL is here in the future to support the community.

On another note, FOCAL acknowledges the provision of services to a broad range of customers, including people with disability their carers and loved ones. To reflect this, FOCAL is changing its organisational Vision and Mission as follows:

- **Our Vision** at FOCAL is to create endless opportunities for all.
- **Our Mission** at FOCAL empowers a life of choice by listening and working alongside you towards your goals.

FOCAL also recognises that with the NDIS, sustainability is about doing things differently. New services are currently being designed and piloted, working with our customers to build flexibility and agility. The Board has identified a need for FOCAL services in different geographic locations (especially services catering to children) thus, the organisation is working toward being present in new locations with the ambition to deliver services throughout South East Queensland.

A special thanks to the FOCAL Team who have continuously supported our customers and maintained a high level of professionalism during 2016.



## A Year at FOCAL in Numbers...

75,000	Number of approximate hours of client support provided
83,604	Number of Kilometres Driven by support workers
50	Number of New Customers who have joined the team
42	Number of Years FOCAL has been operating

Let me first acknowledge all FOCAL employees and volunteers for their strength and willingness to give it a go! I have been in this role for four months now and can vouch for the effort FOCAL's employees have deployed to ensure the organisation is ready for the NDIS and that high quality service standards are being met, while catering to our customer's individual needs.



As a newcomer to the organisation, it is difficult for me to comment on this past year and I commend the staff and volunteers for their ability to cope with change and the tremendous amount of work which has been done to prepare the organisation for NDIS. My arrival coincides with a turning point for FOCAL which will see the pace of change further accelerating to cater for our customers.

To provide clarity, my strategy going forward is simple and can be summarised as follows:

FOCAL intends to create meaningful relationships, a strong connection with the community, places to call home and overall facilitating choice and control over the lives of our customers, their families and the community.

This can be further defined in four points:

- Reinforcing the delivery of **Individualised Services** and ensuring these services address existing and unmet needs. This will be achieved by continuously consulting with the community, customers, parents, carers and loved ones, to understand how FOCAL can better support them. This will certainly lead to the redesign of our current services, creation of new ones and further pilot projects.
- Development of FOCAL's **In Home Services**. You already know FOCAL provides support in your house, at work or where you need it the most. The NDIS will certainly empower customers to choose when and where they receive individual services which make a difference to them.
- **Supported Accommodation**. Through our recent community consultation, FOCAL has discovered that one in three of FOCAL service users identify accommodation as an acute need. FOCAL will certainly support you by providing options and opportunities for you to live independently. This could be done at your current place of residence, living with a loved one, in a shared accommodation setting, or anywhere you call home. To this end, FOCAL is currently proceeding with the purchase of another property to pilot future services.
- **Plan Management**. FOCAL is in the process of registering with the NDIS to become a Plan Manager. This will give you the opportunity to have FOCAL, rather than NDIA, managing your future funding which will in essence provide you with more control over how your funds are spent in an easy going environment. Furthermore, FOCAL will support you if you want to partially manage your funding. Additionally, FOCAL will continue to provide the very popular "Your Life Your Choice" initiative as a pre-cursor to NDIS, allowing qualifying persons to gain access to individualised funding.

### FOCAL Staff and Volunteers Now and in the Future

An organisation can only meet the needs of clients and families if it engages and supports the right people. FOCAL continues to place a strong emphasis on recruiting staff and volunteers who have the right values and can offer the appropriate supports for clients. "Every moment has potential" has become a key attitude and focus that staff has when working with clients. FOCAL is also investing strongly in ensuring staff are receiving the right training and support they need. This provides a diversified staffing group that can safely and effectively meet needs now and in the future.

### Government Accreditation

It is with great pleasure that I can inform you that, on 1 October 2016, following a successful HSQF Audit (Quality Audit) FOCAL was fully re-accredited to deliver government programs.

Paula Penfold (Independent Auditor) complemented FOCAL on the quality of staff, their listening abilities as well as their respect and kindness toward our customers. Positive comments were also made about FOCAL's processes and policies which underpin our work for, and with, clients.

Those positive comments certainly demonstrate that the major changes undertaken by the organisation in the last six months are bearing fruit and that FOCAL is getting ready to answer the NDIS challenge.

Thank you all for your welcome and continuous support. I look forward to listening and working alongside you all, assisting and enabling you to achieve your personal goals and those of our customers and the community.

### FOCAL In and With the Community

In 2015 – 2016 FOCAL has continued to be active in, and with the local community in so many ways.



- During events, connections have been made with people with disabilities, their families and carers. We are listening to what people want and need, sharing information about what FOCAL can offer now and in the future and connecting people with what is already available. Some events included Blair Disability Links, NAIDOC Week, Carers Week, Special Schools Fete, Amberley Defence Families Welcome, Leichardt Community Centre Celebration and Parades.
- FOCAL collaborated with other service providers to provide the Fresh Futures Market at the Ipswich Show Grounds. This event continues to evolve and has become a highlight of the year for people with disabilities, families, carers and service providers. Entertainment and workshops were provided by people with a disability and service providers like FOCAL were able to assist people to plan positive futures.
- The FOCAL Band “The Axe Grinders” has secured a range of gigs including competing in the ‘Battle of the Bands’ competition and headlining at the Fresh Futures Market. This is a wonderful example of FOCAL making dreams come true.
- FOCAL held the first North Ipswich Community Christmas party. This inclusive event provided an opportunity for neighbours to connect and share in the celebrations. This event is now an annual event for this community with the 2016 party scheduled for Thursday 1st December.
- External consultants were engaged to find out what people identified as FOCAL’s strengths and to gather ideas for the future. These consultations and the recent audit of services highlighted FOCAL’s flexible approach and ability to respond to needs as common strengths. This and other consultations give FOCAL clear information about what is needed in the community and is directly influencing the design of FOCAL services.
- FOCAL has facilitated and coordinated workshops and activities to prepare people for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. With the NDIS starting in the region in 2017 it has been essential that we support people to get the information they need and plan for this exciting initiative.

### Service Team

Kerri Siebenhausen  
Out of School Hours Care Manager

#### Programs for Children

Over the last 12 months, FOCAL has continued to provide After School and Vacation Care services for children with a disability and their siblings. During this time we have also cemented our long-standing and valued partnership with the Ipswich Special School, and all of the programs based at the school.



#### Highlights of what is currently happening

We have been privileged to have some very special guests participate in our Vacation Care program this year.

- On 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016, members of the Lockyer and Ipswich Ulysses branches (plus a friend) gave up their time to either show their bikes off or give rides to the children. It really was a terrific event, there was tons of enthusiasm and excitement and lot’s of FUN was had by all.
- On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016, the children and staff of the Senior Vacation Care service had the privilege of a visit from Joshua Brass and his mother Abbi. Joshua was just 6 years old at the time of the visit and bravely shared his story with the group (with just a little help from his Mum Abbi). Well done and thank you Josh. The Brass family have been and continue to be an inspiration to all those they meet, our group included.

#### Moving Forward

As the NDIS rolls out, what will our services for Children look like in the future?

To begin with, more of the same (but more of it!!!) as we continue to provide quality After School and Vacation Care, expanding on what we currently offer within this area of service delivery.

Following on from the existing services will be the introduction of some new programs being offered in the way of holiday and recreation programs (such as camps for children).

We definitely have some great opportunities and exciting times ahead of us!!!

## Finance Team

**Deborah Pozingis & Denis Ward**  
**Finance Manager      Treasurer**



During the past few months the FOCAL Finance Team has been very busy polishing financial policies and procedures. Our primary focus is to identify areas of improvements that will fully utilise the organisational resources in a more efficient manner to ensure the financial sustainability of FOCAL as we move towards the NDIS.

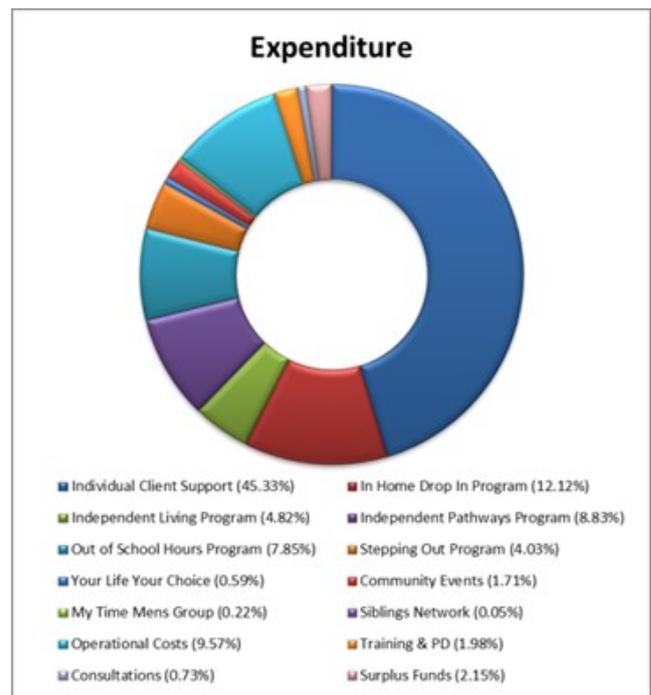
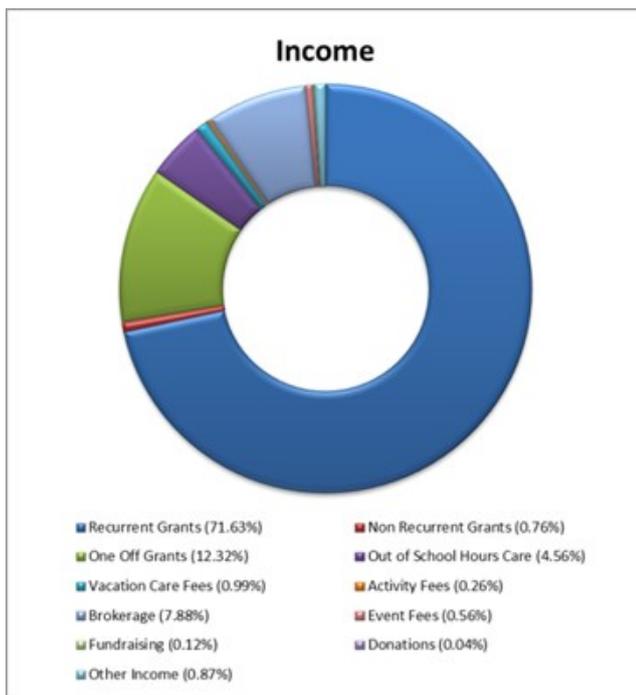
In the 2016 Financial Year, income increased by 4.27% and expenditure decreased by 1%.

Over the next financial year, FOCAL will be making a substantial investment into financial preparations for the introduction of the NDIS in July 2017.

Our target areas for this investment have been identified as:

- Staff & Governance Training
- Marketing
- IT Solutions
- New Positions

The financial results for the 2015/16 Financial Year are summarised below:



## Service Team

Anthony Vaughan  
Manager

It has been another busy year for FOCAL with many highlights and changes. The focus has remained the same, providing high quality service delivery to our customers and support to families and the community.



**Individual Services** – FOCAL is committed to and continue to provide a broad range of individualised services tailored to meet our client's needs and wants. We provide flexible and responsive support in many areas whether it be in home, centre based, in the community, and/or supported employment/volunteering.

**Stepping Out Programs** – The Stepping Out Programs are a social group consisting of young adults of both genders getting together and participating in community activities of their choice. The program is driven by the clients by giving them freedom to choose and plan the activities.

**Independent Pathways Program** – The Independent Pathways Program assists individuals to develop skills in a range of areas such as communication, self awareness, relationships, teamwork, numeracy, literacy, leisure recreation and work readiness.

**Handyman Group** – The Handyman group come together each week to participate in projects such as woodwork, maintenance, gardening and cooking. This year has seen the creation of the very popular breadboards which sold out fast at this year's Fresh Futures Market.

**Music Group** – The Music Group has evolved into the FOCAL band 'The Axe Grinders'. The Axe Grinders have played a few gigs over the last year including The Battle of the Bands, the Ipswich Mall Food Van event and the Fresh Futures Market.

Future services will include more peer mentoring/coaching and support for all including a focus on young adults. Community consultations also suggested the redesign of our services to build independence in our clients including support around life skills and lifelong learning focussing on supporting individual toward achieving independent or semi-independent living.

Glenna Shaw  
Manager

The services I now manage are focused on inclusion, integration, freedom of choice, and providing a sense of belonging.



**In Home Drop-In Support Service** – We assist people in their own home to live an independent life. This is inclusive of cooking a meal, supporting with personal care or some light housekeeping. This service allows for people to feel safe and supported in the place they call home.

**Independent Living Program** – This is similar to the FOCAL In Home Drop-In, but targeted toward supporting individuals living at home who need minimal support, but may have complex needs. This service supports clients in their own home or in the community – going to appointments, linking with agencies and government officials.

**Horizons** – This service provides support to complex needs customers' by engaging in crafts, gardening and engaging in projects to stimulate senses and provide a safe and fun environment. Over the coming twelve months, we are looking at increasing the capacity of this service toward providing seven days per week services' for new and existing customers, as well as reinforcing our specialised support of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Future services at FOCAL will focus on empowering individuals to live independently. As a result, some of our services will evolve to provide individual support at home in a streamlined way and will include supported accommodation in addition to respite options.





## FOCAL Supporters

This year FOCAL clients and staff have directly benefited from the generosity of a range of supporters.

FOCAL thanks the many organisations, families, carers and individuals who have partnered with us throughout the year. We also acknowledge and thank all volunteers that contribute to FOCAL with their endless energy and dedication.

### Special thanks to:

- **Clients, families and carers** for choosing FOCAL and working with us to plan and deliver services that meet individuals needs now and into the future.
- **Novaskill** participants who volunteered their time over a 6 month period to build gardens, undertake maintenance jobs and upgrade facilities including painting the building at 6 Canning St.
- **Ipswich City Council** and individual **Ipswich City Councillors** for their continued support of initiatives which included providing Autism Workshops for families, a Carnivale for clients and the community, a contribution to the North Ipswich Community Christmas Celebration and upgrading building access.
- The **QLD State Government** for a small assets grant which was used to purchase a bus for the Out of School Hours (OSHC) programs.
- **The Honda Foundation** for funding the installation of automated doors and a motorised recliner for the Horizons service.
- **Australia Post** for funding the purchase of new computers to support clients to develop skills and make digital connections.
- **Cacti and Succulent Facebook Group** for fundraising.



### Vision

FOCAL creates endless opportunities for all

### Mission

FOCAL empowers a life of choice by listening and working alongside you towards your goals

### Our Values

- Clients, carers and families first
- Safe, encouraging and inclusive care
- To be open, transparent and ethical
- To be flexible, collaborative and innovative
- Excellence within realistic expectations
- Effective management of resources