

Participate Australia

**Strategic Plan
2019–2023**

1 Vision

Participate Australia makes a difference in the lives of people with disabilities by respecting their dignity and rights, autonomy, freedom of choice and independence, and by supporting the achievement of their goals.

2 Purpose

Participate Australia is a high-quality provider of person-centred advice and support for people with disabilities, their families and carers.

3 Core Values

Participate Australia strives for a community that

- respects human rights, dignity and freedom and the personal identities of all people of all ages;
- is non-discriminatory and affirms equality of opportunity while valuing difference, and
- ensures the full and effective participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the community.

As a business we

- focus on the people who receive our support – people with disabilities, their families and carers;
- maintain high ethical standards;
- listen with respect, learn continually and innovate with purpose, and
- engage the community.

We are committed to protecting all children in our care. Our responsibility to promote child-safe practices and protect children from harm and abuse is taken very seriously. We operate in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and regularly review our operations for compliance.

4 Supporting people with disabilities

Participate Australia exists to support people with disabilities to live active independent lives in the community. For over thirty years we have been supporting people with disabilities lead fulfilling lives and to do the things they want.

Services we provide include

- **Individual Support** – delivered in-home, in the community or in dedicated accommodation;
- **Supported Living** – providing permanent, semi-permanent and transitional accommodation support according to needs;
- **Social Inclusion** – weekday support and training that maximise opportunities for personal growth, social interaction and employment readiness, and
- **Life Skills and Community Engagement** – activities for involvement in the community in age-appropriate ways, building confidence and increased independence.
- Other supports that are within our expertise that improve the lives of people with disabilities.

5 Strategies

The strategies adopted for 2019-2023 build on the successes and challenges experienced by Participate Australia in the transition to the NDIS and during the operation of our previous Strategic Plan (2014-19).

This strategic plan has two phases focused on building our long-term viability and securing our future.

Phase 1 for 2019-2021 is focused on **building the long-term viability** of Participate Australia as a not for profit, community-based provider of services to people with disabilities, their families and carers by:

- providing high quality, individualised support to people with disabilities that is financially sustainable
- undertaking business planning to adapt how we operate by diversifying our services and implementing a capital growth strategy over the coming years
- further building the financial, technical and personnel skills and capabilities needed to achieve this.

Phase 2 for 2021-2023 is focused on **securing our future** by:

- diversifying our services within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and outside of it
- building our assets to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of Participate Australia so that we can serve the community for the next thirty years.



Over our next four years of operation, we will focus on continual improvement in:

- engagement with participants, families and carers
- innovation and flexibility in the services offered
- staff expertise and skills to ensure high quality service provision
- internal systems to ensure efficient administration of services.
- skills development across the organisation to enable us to provide services that are consistent with our core values and purpose, but that are not dependent upon the NDIS.

Participate Australia continues to grapple with industry wide challenges that exist under the NDIS relating to complex and administratively burdensome processes for billing, dealing with plan management arrangements, delays in the assessment and finalisation of individual packages, and a flawed costing model that underfunds more complex support needs.

These challenges are significant for small, community focused, not for profit providers like Participate Australia. Overcoming these challenges, however, is critical to ensuring that people with disabilities have genuine choice and are able to live with full independence.

5.1 Phase 1 2019-2021

Meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a financially sustainable manner

In this phase, Participate Australia is focused on continuing to offer participants high quality and rewarding experiences and supports that meet their needs and those of their families and carers. In doing so, we are focused on continually improving our service model so that activities delivered under the NDIS are fully funded and so that we continue to attract new participants to our services. We are also laying the foundations for future growth of Participate Australia through stringent business planning by identifying opportunities that exist beyond the NDIS, for diversification of our business, building partnerships and ensuring that we have the skills and capabilities to deliver these.

Strategy 1 We will operate a sustainable service delivery model.

Participate Australia continually strives to improve its service quality and ensure that the services provided are fully funded. Robust risk management processes are in place to manage key risks to the organisation.

To achieve this, we will:

- Continually review the cost of delivering our services within the NDIS model, with a view to reducing administrative overheads where possible and focusing on increasing the delivery of viable services
- Continually improve the basis on which we provide services to participants, their families and carers in order to offer maximum flexibility and choice while also providing financial stability and consistency for Participate Australia
- Look to opportunities to grow services outside the NDIS
- Ensure full compliance with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, maintaining our reputation for excellence and innovation in service delivery.
- Maintain rigorous risk management processes to manage potential internal and external risks to our ongoing organisational viability, including data security, financial stability, succession planning and reputational risk
- Advocate for reform to address the significant challenges in operating under the NDIS, particularly administrative complexities and the under-funding of services for persons with disabilities with complex needs.

Strategy 2 We will ensure we have the organisational capability for sustained growth.

Our future growth and sustainability depend on our having the necessary capacity to deliver.

Key challenges for Participate Australia are building capability across the workforce, technology and infrastructure, and ensuring we have the physical capacity to deliver with appropriate facilities and sufficient service capacity.

To achieve this, we will:

- systematically review and implement a workforce capability strategy to ensure:
 - cultural fit and values alignment of all employees with our stated purposes;
 - a highly skilled and agile workforce that has the necessary attributes to sustain and grow the organisation into the future;
 - high rates of retention; and
 - focused training and development to ensure a high quality workforce.
- continually review our IT and technological capability to ensure we are efficient, innovative and competitive, and
- develop short and medium-term plans to ensure that we have the physical infrastructure to deliver our services and to sustain growth into the future.

<p>Strategy 3 We will 'listen and learn' through robust engagement practices.</p> <p>Participate Australia strives for continual improvement by understanding the needs of Participants and of our employees.</p> <p>We are accountable for our service quality and seek out feedback from Participants and employees to continually improve this.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ demonstrate high rates of satisfaction of Participants with our services by maintaining high rates of retention of participants ▪ regularly engage with Participants to identify their satisfaction with Participate Australia and the services we provide, and to suggest areas for improvement; ▪ review our communication and engagement practices with Participants and employees continually (overseen by the Board's Engagement Committee), and ▪ review staff satisfaction and retention rates on an annual basis and benchmark them against industry standards. 	<p>Strategy 4 We will develop a long-term sustainability plan to ensure the longevity of Participate Australia</p> <p>For Participate Australia to grow in its next phase requires us to look beyond the NDIS by diversifying our services and building a capital base to underpin future growth.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake research into new service areas that are aligned with, or which utilise the skills and expertise of Participate Australia • consider options for property acquisition to ensure facilities that are fit for purpose as the organisation grows and to build long term financial stability • continue to apply a risk framework to expansion opportunities that addresses financial implications; reputational risk; capability of organisation to deliver; impact of potential growth opportunities on existing service; the fit of growth opportunities with our mission and values, and consistency with the NDIS • Consider options for partnerships with other organisations or mergers.
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Phase 1 Targets and actions for 2019-2021

The following key actions and targets have been identified by the Board to guide the implementation of the above strategic objectives for 2019-21:

1. 25% of Participate Australia's income is from non-NDIS sources by 30 June 2021.
2. There is a 25% increase in income from NDIS sources by 30 June 2021 (with all new participants and additional activities provided being fully cost-recovered).
3. Regular review of services that are currently provided at a cost deficit ensures that:
 - a. existing members of the Participate Australia community can continue to benefit from our activities;
 - b. services currently provided at a deficit are quarantined, with a requirement that all services for new participants and any expanded services for existing participants must be fully cost recovered;
 - c. options are considered, where appropriate, to transition quarantined services to services that do not run at a deficit; and
 - d. services that are provided at a cost deficit and that can be transitioned to other models are identified by December 2019 and a transition plan implemented and completed by June 2021.

4. A fully costed business plan for property acquisition and remedial measures to address rental costs, over short and long-term horizons, is approved by the Board by 30 June 2020.
5. A sponsorship, partnerships and merger / acquisition strategy is approved by Board by 30 June 2020, which includes principles and a risk appetite statement to guide proposed actions.

Phase 2 2019-2021

Positioning Participate Australia for sustained growth

In this phase, the challenges of operating viably within the NDIS context have been addressed. We continue to focus on delivering outstanding services and experiences for our participants. We are ready to implement our long-term sustainability plan in order to ensure that Participate Australia is a provider of choice for people with disabilities for generations to come. The strategies to guide Phase 2 of the Strategic Plan will be considered by the Board in 2021 and objectives articulated or amended to ensure that we are able to deliver on our goals.

5.3 Measuring our Impact

We make our business decisions based on evidence and professional judgment.

More than ever before our viability depends on the capacity to have clear and simple business processes and to measure what we do, how well we do it, whether we have the desired impact, and what it costs in time and money.

Our commitment to high quality service for Participants is supported by a robust and transparent complaints handling process that helps us improve our business.

Our environment is changing and we are proactive about evolving as an organisation.

The Board's committees ensure that our strategies remain relevant in a changing environment, and that the business operates consistently with these.

The strategies in this plan are put into place by Participate Australia through its annual Business Plans and applied through departmental operational plans.

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Participate Australia supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and our employees are bound by the principles for which it stands.

The Convention's purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

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