

# Sunnyfield Matters



From left to right Rob (Sunnyfield resident), James Griffin MP, Gordon (Sunnyfield resident), The Hon. Ray Williams MP, Tony (Sunnyfield resident) and Caroline Cuddihy.

## A new place to call home for Sunnyfield residents

It was all smiles as Sunnyfield residents, families and friends celebrated the opening of their new homes as part of the NSW Government funded Large Residential Centre (LRC) Devolution Project on Friday 11 May. The event marked the successful completion of three more purpose built homes, out of a total of nine, for Sunnyfield residents on Sydney's Northern Beaches.

Guests included The Hon. Ray Williams MP, Minister for Multiculturalism and Minister for Disability Services; James Griffin MP for Manly; representatives from key project partners – NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Landcom, Nasr Group, Kennedy Associates, Westbury Constructions; Sunnyfield Director Heather Milnes; and staff.

“This project has been a collaborative effort from the very beginning, and has been developed in the spirit of building inclusive communities. Working together, Sunnyfield, the State Government, and the local community are ensuring the best possible outcomes for people with disability to enjoy a good quality life.”  
Caroline Cuddihy, Sunnyfield CEO.

The project has been ten years in the making and all homes have been developed with the resident's needs in mind, based on consultation with residents and their families throughout the duration of the project. This has resulted in bedrooms painted with each resident's favourite colour, accessible bathrooms, operating hoists, shared dining, and shared outdoor and private areas.

The new homes are located on Sydney's Northern Beaches and are close to local shops, employment and community services, as well as good transport options for residents to participate more widely in their communities. Residents are now happily settled into their new homes, daily routines, and really enjoy being part of their new community.

Registered  
**NDIS**  
provider



**Sunnyfield**  
disAbility Services

# Message from the CEO and Chair

Dear Clients, guardians, and friends of Sunnyfield,

The Sunnyfield Board and Senior Management held our annual strategy planning day in late March. The day, facilitated by McKinsey & Co. (pro-bono), provided the opportunity to review the state of the disability sector, and to discuss and formulate Sunnyfield's strategy and objectives for the next few years.

## Key strategic issues facing the disability sector include:

- The NDIS has created a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous – VUCA – operating environment, driving significant change for organisations for most likely the next five years.
- NDIS processes have increased administration costs for the disability sector. This is at a time when well-developed, integrated software systems to significantly improve organisational efficiency are not yet available.
- The NDIS community access, transport and some other fixed pricing levels have significantly eroded margins in Community Services, challenging the financial viability of some operating models. This is impacting the financial performance of some disability sector services.
- To date, there have been significant barriers for new entrants with intellectual disability into the NDIS. These clients need help from people with high levels of knowledge to navigate the complex pathways for new NDIS participants.

## Sunnyfield's experience has confirmed the above sector-identified issues.

- The Sunnyfield Board and Management have made significant efforts, because of the VUCA operating environment created by the NDIS, to advocate to improve certain aspects of the NDIS with politicians and NDIA staff. Of note is that Sunnyfield has reduced its NDIS debt levels from over \$7m in November 2017, down to approximately \$3m today.
- Sunnyfield has calculated that the additional costs of administration under the NDIS in FY18 is around \$3.5m. Investment in continuous improvement initiatives, particularly through enhancing business systems, continues to be essential for Sunnyfield to prosper in this new NDIS operating environment.
- The low NDIS community access fixed pricing has eroded Sunnyfield's Community Services margins, resulting in a forecast FY18 financial loss for this Division. An initiative to bring Community Services 'back into the black' is in progress, requiring carefully managed change, whilst focused all the time on supporting staff to deliver quality support service for clients.

- Sunnyfield staff have worked tirelessly to understand the complex nuances of NDIS new entrant pathways, working with people with disability and families/guardians to assist in securing vitally needed NDIS funding although at times this process can be frustratingly slow for all involved.
- The Board and Senior Management agree that Sunnyfield's FY18-FY20 Strategy to Strengthen, Grow, and Innovate was, and is, a good one. However, the emphasis of business plans for the coming year needs a greater focus on strengthening Sunnyfield, while tempering, for the time being, our growth objectives.

## FY19 business plan priorities will be on:

- Delivering excellence in customer service, and improving the Sunnyfield client journey.
- Improved financial viability, especially for the Community Services Division.
- Reducing NDIS administration costs by continuing a high level of investment in more efficient business systems.

As the Sunnyfield Board and Senior Management, in alignment with the agreed FY18-FY20 Strategy, finalise FY19 business plan objectives and establish the budget for the year ahead, we continue to keep Sunnyfield's Vision at the centre of all we do – Excellence in supporting people with intellectual disability. And while the NDIS continues to present challenges for both people with disability and service providers, it is also a wonderful national initiative in creating choice, control and opportunities for Sunnyfield clients.

Warm regards,

**Karen Ingram** Sunnyfield Board Chair

**Caroline Cuddihy** Sunnyfield CEO



**Right**  
Karen Ingram,  
Sunnyfield Board Chair  
(right) and Caroline  
Cuddihy, Sunnyfield  
CEO (left)

# Sunnyfield champions to improve the NDIS

Sunnyfield is committed to advocating and working with participants, families, guardians, and Members to improve the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and develop a service model that is sustainable and promotes choice and control for people with disability.

## Sunnyfield's key recommendations to the NDIA to assist the improvement of the NDIS

- **Make the NDIS easier for people with intellectual disability and their families:** There are significant barriers for people with intellectual disability, mental health issues and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), to navigate the NDIS. There is an expectation that the family, guardian or service provider will be responsible for understanding and interpreting the NDIS. *Sunnyfield's recommendation:* Increase Support Coordination funding to assist participants to navigate the NDIS.
- **Promote employment for people with disability:** Open employment is not suitable for people with disability that have high support needs; and community access is a costly alternative for participants. *Sunnyfield's recommendation:* NDIS Planners and Local Area Coordinators (LAC) should actively promote supported employment as an option for people with disability.
- **Address community access and transport pricing:** Community access pricing is not financially viable for service providers and some are exiting 1:1 supports. NDIS transport funding is not sufficient to cover participant transport, and vehicle and maintenance costs for service providers. *Sunnyfield's recommendation:* Review NDIS pricing model and increase NDIS prices.
- **Review the shared independent living (SIL) pricing model:** The SIL funding model does not work for all existing resident groups, and is not flexible to address this issue. Not all SIL participants are able to access Specialist Disability

Accommodation (SDA) funding. *Sunnyfield's recommendation:* SIL quoting tool should have a whole-of-life approach. NDIA should review and extend the SDA pricing timeframe and participant eligibility.

- **Clearer processes to access SIL and SDA:** There is no clearly defined and measurable NDIS entry and approval pathway for participants which creates a barrier for new SIL participants to access SDA funding. *Sunnyfield's recommendation:* Document evidence required, the process and timeframes for participants to have a SIL and SDA funding assessment.
- **Streamline NDIS policies and processes to make it less complex:** NDIS policies, systems and processes are complex, inconsistent and costly. Advice from the NDIA and LAC's is inconsistent and driving a massive administration burden for participants and service providers. *Sunnyfield's recommendation:* Shift NDIS plans to 24-month duration; and upskill NDIA planners and LAC's to ensure there is a consistent approach to NDIS plan development and funding.
- **Make the NDIS portal easier to use:** The NDIS portal is the primary point of interaction between the NDIA, participants and service providers. It is not easy to navigate and lacks basic proactive information for participant planning. *Sunnyfield's recommendation:* NDIA to seek feedback to improve usability for both participant and service providers.



## Sunnyfield Constitutional 2018 Review

As communicated at the Sunnyfield Annual General Meeting in October 2017, the Board has recognised the importance of reviewing Sunnyfield's Constitution this year for Members' consideration at the October 2018 AGM.

This is driven by the increased complexity and significant changes flowing from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and with expectations that Sunnyfield will continue growing; with revenues likely to exceed \$100 million in the next few years.

One main focus of the review will be facilitating Board access to the mix of skills and experience required to provide sound Corporate Governance in the new, more demanding, environment; including Board succession planning.

Regards  
Karen Ingram Sunnyfield Board Chair

# A GIFT TO BUILD A DREAM ON

## Creating shared living home opportunities for people with disability

There are many people with disability who would like to live in a shared living home. However there is a shortage of appropriate housing solutions, and a lack of affordable options is a significant limitation in Sydney. A number of families are working in partnership with Sunnyfield to create accommodation solutions for people with disability that provide benefits for clients, families, guardians and Sunnyfield.



## Help create the reality of a lasting home for your family member

There are a range of options available to help secure the future living arrangements for your family member, including:

- Leasing a house to Sunnyfield
- Setting up a house in trust
- Donating a house to Sunnyfield
- Leaving a gift in your Will to Sunnyfield
- Bridging any rental gap on a leased house
- Jointly funding to build a house with other families

The NDIS's Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) funding may be available, depending on the house, location and client support needs.

Sunnyfield will assist families and clients to understand how any of these options may be suitable for their situation. Please note that we cannot provide specific financial or legal advice and recommend that you consult an independent advisor.

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**To get things started contact Raquel Solomovic for a confidential discussion.**

**T 1300 588 688**

**E [r.solomovic@sunnyfield.org.au](mailto:r.solomovic@sunnyfield.org.au)**

## Feedback

We're not only in the business of improving lives, we also are in the business of improving the way we do it. So, if you have any feedback about the things we have done well, or the things we could do better, then please get in contact and send an email to our confidential email account at [feedback@sunnyfield.org.au](mailto:feedback@sunnyfield.org.au)

## Contact us

T 1300 588 688  
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[www.sunnyfield.org.au](http://www.sunnyfield.org.au)

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For a brighter future