

Participate Australia

Strategic Plan 2017–2019

Revised and extended version of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 of Participate Australia;
updated 5 May 2018.

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 while valuing difference, and
- ensures the full and effective participation and inclusion of people with disabilities by ensuring equal opportunity and accessibility.

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.

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 to do the things they want and lead fulfilling lives.

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.

5 Strategies

This strategic plan has two phases.

Phase 1 for 2014-2017 was focused on preparing for the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the Sydney region.

Phase 2 for 2017-2019 is focused on fully implementing the NDIS and positioning Participate Australia for sustained growth.



The strategies adopted by Participate Australia in 2017-2019 build on the lessons, challenges and successes experienced in Phase 1 of this Strategic Plan.

Our overall goal is for Participate Australia to be a provider of choice.

We will maintain and further develop our reputation for excellence, quality service, and engagement. To do this we will ensure the highest professional standards, proactive engagement with participants, their carers and families¹, responsive customer service, and effective marketing to build greater awareness of our new brand.

¹ The use of the word Participants throughout this document is meant to include their carers and families.

5.1 Phase 1 2014-2017

Summary of strategies and key achievements to date in preparing for the introduction of the NDIS

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| <p>Strategy 1 Participate Australia will be NDIS-Ready.</p> <p>Successfully implement significant changes to our model of service delivery to integrate the NDIS through a person centred and individualised planning approach.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ implemented new quality assurance processes (third party verifications and rigorous board committee oversight process) to ensure high service and quality standards in transition to the NDIS; ▪ introduced new business systems, operating procedures, management structure, staff development and communication tools to be NDIS ready, and ▪ modernised our branding and legal structure to be market ready. | <p>Strategy 2 Participate Australia will deliver person-centred support for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Use our expertise so that Participants can rely on Participate Australia in the transition to the NDIS for comprehensive, person-centred life planning and support.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ achieved high retention rates of participants in the transition to the NDIS ; ▪ continually recruited new participants, based on our reputation for quality and innovative services, and ▪ built capacity of Participants to actively participate in decisions affecting them, including through building the capacity for self-advocacy. |
| <p>Strategy 3 Participate Australia will pursue considered growth opportunities.</p> <p>Diversify our business offering and proactively generate demand for supporting people with disabilities.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consolidated partnership with RASAIID and transitioned their participants to full NDIS support; ▪ expanded geographic reach of our services, and ▪ developed and grown a capital fund to provide a secure basis for investment in our business. | <p>Strategy 4 Participate Australia will succeed because our people succeed.</p> <p>Strive continually to be the employer of choice in the sector and nurture an environment that sustains staff and is professionally rewarding.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ put in place a statement of professional standards that reflects our core values and which underpins our performance assessments; ▪ systematically reviewed and adjusted our workforce capability to ensure we have the skills necessary to meet our strategic goals and to deliver person centred supports; ▪ ensured regular review of staff satisfaction, engagement and retention rates, benchmarked against industry standards, and ▪ regularly reviewed the capability and performance of our Board. |

Strategy 5 Participate Australia will measure the quality of its supports.

Make business decisions on the basis of evidence and professional judgment, ensuring clear and simple business processes with high value placed on what customers are saying.

We have:

- improved systems for auditing service quality and handling complaints;
- improved Board reporting of complaints from participants, staff and suppliers, as a method for ongoing quality improvement;
- instituted a participant communication and engagement plan to keep our participants fully informed about the changes that are taking place with the NDIS, and
- maintained excellence in financial management and resource utilisation in the dynamic changing environment that is the NDIS.

5.2 Phase 2 2017-2019

Implementing the NDIS and positioning Participate Australia for sustainable growth

In this phase, Participate Australia routinely operates a person centred approach, with all participants fully transitioned to the NDIS by July 2018. The strategies for this two-year period reflect the achievement of this significant transition.

We are focused on consolidating the operating environment under the NDIS and we are offering an outstanding experience for Participants, while also enhancing our agility as an organisation with an eye to ensuring our long-term sustainability.

Strategy 1 We enhance quality assurance and risk oversight processes.

Participate Australia continually strives to improve its service quality and has a finely tuned risk awareness culture at Board and operational level in order to assess challenges and future opportunities.

We are proactive in taking a preventative approach to these issues in a challenging operating environment.

To achieve this, we will:

- continually review and improve our organisational risk mitigation processes to manage potential internal and external risks to our ongoing organisational viability;
This will include risks, such as data mitigation, financial stability, succession planning and reputational risk etc.;
- enhance the risk oversight processes of the Board and its alignment with the organisational risk management framework, including by appointing a Director for risk management and tasking Board committees with oversight of key identified areas of risk to the organisation;
- 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;

Strategy 2 We will building partnerships and alliances.

Participate Australia looks to secure its long term financial sustainability by confirming its reputation as an NDIS provider of choice while also identifying options to diversify the funding base.

We are focused on laying the groundwork for new approaches to raising capital and investing into the future, building partnerships and alliances, and building business acumen among key staff for future growth.

To achieve this, we will:

- refocus the activities of Board committees on identifying suitable capital raising and investment initiatives;
- assess the suitability of social impact investment;
- consider the capacity to expand our educational services, and
- maintain and grow a capital fund to provide a secure basis for investment in our business.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ review our policies and processes to ensure Participate Australia is a child-safe organisation with mechanisms in place to educate and ensure the safety of children, and ▪ ensure full compliance with the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, maintaining our reputation for excellence and innovation in service delivery. | |
| <p>Strategy 3 We will ‘listen and learn’ through robust engagement practices.</p> <p>Participate Australia strives for continual improvement by understanding and being predictive of and responsive to 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>We respond promptly and professionally to any concerns.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ revise our statement of professional standards in consultation with our staff, to ensure it reflects our core values, affirms our commitment to being a child safe organisation and underpins our performance expectations and management practices; ▪ survey Participants annually to rate their experience of Participate Australia, assess the services we provide and suggest areas for improvement; ▪ review our communication and engagement practices with Participants and employees continually (oversighted 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 build capacity for sustained growth.</p> <p>Our future growth and sustainability depend on our having the necessary capacity to deliver.</p> <p>Key challenges for Participate Australia in this phase 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.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ systematically review and implement our workforce capability strategy to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cultural fit and values alignment of all employees with our stated purposes; - high rates of retention, and - focused training and development opportunities to support an agile and adaptive 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 capacity to deliver our services and to sustain growth into the future. |

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.