



# Year In Review

Annual Report  
2019 - 2020



lutheran  
disability services

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# 1. Chairman's Message



Lutheran Disability Services (LDS) experienced growth and success across 2019-20 in the face of South Australia experiencing an economic downturn due to the devastating effects of the summer bushfires closely followed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The LDS Board is immensely proud of the entire LDS community – staff, clients and supporters, who have stood together in the face of these challenges to ensure that our clients have continued to have safe and happy homes while finding new and unique ways to still enable integration and connection with their communities.

Early in 2020 we said farewell to Sandy Harrison, who had been acting CEO for more than twelve months. The Board thanks Sandy for her many wonderful years of service as LDS Business Manager and her time as acting CEO during a period of rapid, unrelenting change. In particular the Board is most appreciative of her leadership that resulted in successful accreditation from the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding audit in August 2019.

The Board spent considerable efforts during the year exploring the possibility of a merger with Lutheran Community Care to create a new combined entity. In February 2020, after careful deliberation and much prayer and reflection, the Board decided it was not the right time for the merger to proceed.

# 1. Chairman's Message

## (cont)

Following that decision, the Board appointed John van Ruth as interim CEO. As he commenced duty, the COVID-19 restrictions were proclaimed and John was faced with managing that crisis on a day-to-day basis, as well as helping to set future strategy and to search for alternate head office premises to cater for the continued growth in LDS. The Board was so impressed with John's approach, skills and alignment to our faith-based principles, that it consolidated its CEO recruitment process and appointed him as ongoing CEO of Lutheran Disability Services.

There was pleasing growth in our client numbers, with the Board noting particularly the efforts to maintain outstanding accommodation and community participation options to help our clients live the lives they wish to live.

In May 2020, following an extensive review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by management and review of strategic opportunities, the Board signed off on a strategic plan for 2021 to 2023. The plan recognised the incredible legacy and sound structure of the business, and set objectives for continuous improvements in our client centric focus, our partnering to provide outstanding accommodation options and strategies to develop the awesome and dedicated team of staff who are there for our clients. The management team have now developed a business plan for the implementation of these strategies.

The Board recognises that 2019-20 was particularly challenging for staff, across several areas. It sincerely thanks all staff for continuing to provide high quality services to clients. In particular, the Board is most grateful for the incredible efforts made during the pandemic crisis and the instant positive support for the new CEO. Our staff give the Board great confidence that LDS is well run, ready for the challenges of a post-COVID world, and provides a warm, caring environment for clients and their supporters.

The Board met nine times through the year. For the majority of the year, the Board members were, John Belcher, John Inglis, Sam Paior, Pastor Geoff Burger, and Kym Wallent. In June 2020 Louise Trinkle and Ben Raw joined the Board to bring substantial skills from the perspective of persons living with a disability and finance respectively. I thank all members for their unfailing commitment to LDS, their input and their willingness to embrace the changing LDS world during a challenging year.

Kym Wallent  
Chair, LDS Board



**76**  
Clients Served

**115,000**  
**Support Hours**

Provided by our awesome client services team.





## 2. Connecting Families

Can you remember communicating with your child in a meaningful way for the very first time? For Mark Obst this first time happened only a few weeks ago, when his daughter Chelsea spoke to him through an eye gaze device – for the very first time.

“Chelsea will let me know if she doesn’t want to do something or doesn’t want to eat a certain food through her actions,” said Mark, “but, the eye gaze allowed her to communicate in a real way for the very first time.”

Mark was visiting Chelsea at RIV180 House in Nuriootpa when the LDS team and the speech therapist were testing this new device with Chelsea. Mark said that when he arrived Chelsea wasn’t really interested in using the eye gaze, “she wasn’t focusing and the team thought that maybe the device wasn’t right for her.” Mark starting to talking to her and all of a sudden, she started to connect with him.

“I asked Chelsea if she’d like to come home with me this coming weekend and suddenly, she moved her eyes and the machine responded with a ‘yes’. You can’t imagine how I felt, to have my adult daughter respond to me for the very first time.” The whole LDS team and the speech therapist were amazed as Chelsea became engaged with the device, was focused and kept chatting with Mark. Mark was blown away to have been there with his daughter for this special moment.

“This was the tipping point for Chelsea as she is non-verbal,” says Kimberley Clarke, the CSA for RIV180 House, “we were able to see that the trial of the eye gaze worked for her.” The eye gaze was then deployed for a trial that included options for Chelsea’s favourite foods – Cheezels and Chocolate and then progress to yes/no answers all powered through eye movement.

Working together the LDS team in Nuriootpa has been able to secure a NDIS plan review with extended funds for Chelsea to rent her very own eye gaze unit so that she can continue to develop her communication skills and connect with her family, friends, housemates and support workers.

Chelsea found her happy home at LDS in January 2019 and Mark tell us that, “Chelsea is happy, happy to visit him at his house and happy to return to her home. She loves her housemates and it’s great the level of support and care she gets from the LDS team.”

Lutheran Disability Services, serving communities and connecting families since 1986.



# 3. Chief Executive Officer's Report



It gives me immense pleasure to provide the chief executive report for 2020. Since I joined Lutheran Disability Services in March as the interim CEO role, it has been an amazing ride. I have been made to feel incredibly welcome by the whole team and I am so proud to support Lutheran Disability Services in its mission of strengthening communities and helping people living with a disability to thrive and live the lives that they want to live. I would like to acknowledge the wonderful service of both Janine Lenigas our previous CEO and acting CEO Sandy Harrison who led LDS before I arrived. It is a testament to their work and dedication that Lutheran Disability Services is in the strong position it is in today.

## Achievements

Lutheran Disability Services has continued to experience growth as can be seen throughout this report. More importantly, our fantastic team continue to enrich the lives of the clients we serve. There has been significant changes throughout the year, and the

staff team have again showed their high commitment, love and skills as they get on with their work and the clients we serve. Here are a few of highlights of the year and opportunities looking forward to the future.

## COVID-19

A pandemic is a challenge for any organisation, let alone one that works with vulnerable persons. Our clients, staff, and families have all worked hard together through the various challenges of restrictions and extra precautions. We continue to remain vigilant to ensure the safety of all persons in the Lutheran Disability Services community. Thank you to everyone for playing your part.

## Strategic Plan

In June, senior management and the Board conducted a strategic planning exercise to create the strategic objectives for the next few years. The Board agreed on the following 5 core strategic objectives:

- Deliver quality, safe and caring client-focused services
- Develop disability housing options and other services to help our clients thrive in Christian community
- Create strong partnerships and leverage our core Lutheran heritage
- Build financially sustainable support and advocacy for people with disability
- Attract, train and develop an awesome, efficient team that embodies our faith-based values

# 3. Chief Executive Officer's Report (cont)

## Policy Frameworks

During the year, LDS has continued working to update and improve all of our policies and procedures to ensure we are providing client focussed, safe and efficient services. We have mapped our policies to the NDIA Quality and Safeguarding Commission Standards to ensure we meet all of their regulatory requirements for our NDIS registrations. I wish to thank Karen Harvey, Michael Kromwyk, Delmy Ramirez and Vanessa Rojas for all of their hard work on the Policy and Procedure Framework.

## Client Services

We finished the year with 75 clients, 48 of which are in group homes across 18 group home sites.

## Staff team

As at the end of June 2019, we had 156 staff. There has been considerable effort during the year to streamline our staff intake processes, induction and training. Attracting and retaining quality staff remains a key challenge in the industry. We continue to strive for excellence in how we support our team. Our faith based values at Lutheran Disability Services set us apart and we truly value our employees who so often go above and beyond for our clients and each other.

## Properties

Our property team have had another outstanding year of supporting various Board and Lodging options for our clients. Working closely with our housing

provider partners: Lutheran Church of Australia, Cornerstone, Unity Housing and others, the team has ensured all clients can feel happy and proud of the places they live in.

## Future

We have an exciting future at LDS. In the coming years we are committed to expand the ways we help our clients to live the lives they want to live, in great homes with housemates that share their interests and goals. LDS will continue to review the services we can offer and in particular we are exploring new accommodation options and partnerships to create more options and locations to match where and how our clients want to live. We will build on our early successes partnering with Christian communities to create opportunities for our clients to serve others in those communities. We will continue building an awesome team of dedicated staff who have a passion helping persons living with a disability to achieve their goals. In particular we will develop our training frameworks to equip all of our staff to meet the needs and goals of our clients. We have hired a developmental educator who will assist with additional training around setting positive behavioural support plans and helping our staff deliver client centric supports.

John van Ruth  
Chief Executive Officer



# 4. Serving in the community

LDS is committed to finding new ways for our clients, staff and families to serve the community. We believe that contributing to communities builds inclusion, self-esteem and confidence.

One example is Edwardstown Baptist Church (EBC) has been providing opportunities for LDS clients to participate in their community activities. During August Rocco spent some time helping the EBC 'Grumpies' who in turn were helping Operation Flinders make tent pegs and folding & packing away tents from the recent student Kangaroo Island trip. Rocco has been involved with group for some time now and is starting to feel like just one of the team.

We asked Rocco, why do you like to Volunteer? Rocco responded "I enjoy volunteering as I make new friends and it keeps me busy. I like working with Grumpies because I learn new skills and enjoy sharing my stories and hearing their stories."

By serving in the community Rocco is building new friendships, giving back, gaining independence and building new skills.

If you have any opportunities for LDS to serve the community please get in contact with us at [admin@ldssa.org.au](mailto:admin@ldssa.org.au)



“

**I enjoy volunteering as I make new friends and it keeps me busy - Rocco.**

”



# Serving Communities

The Lutheran Disability Service values are:

Faith | Empowerment | Excellence

Through these values LDS believes that people living with disability have a right to be included in everyday life and this includes within the community.

LDS staff and clients serve the community everyday to help communities become inclusive and diverse.

## 1

### Faith

LDS is a faith based organisation, delivering our service through our Christ centered focus. This means that we support our clients who want to experience and express their faith.

By extension being involved in Church activities such as the community group at Edwardstown Baptist Church aligns to the values of our clients and the experience of giving back to the community

## 2

### Empowerment

Our clients are independent people living with disability who have the right to exercise choice and control.

LDS is a support service to help guide and empower our clients to assist them in making decisions that aligns to their life goals.

Empowerment can come through helping others and contributing to communities to build self-confidence and self esteem.

## 3

### Excellence

Everything we do at LDS is through the lens of excellence. Our stated aim is to provide client centric services that are valued by our clients, the people that care about them and the community.

By building relationships whereby LDS can help to service the community and giving access to our clients, together we can build excellence in Disability support services for South Australia.



# 47

Clients homes where  
we provide service

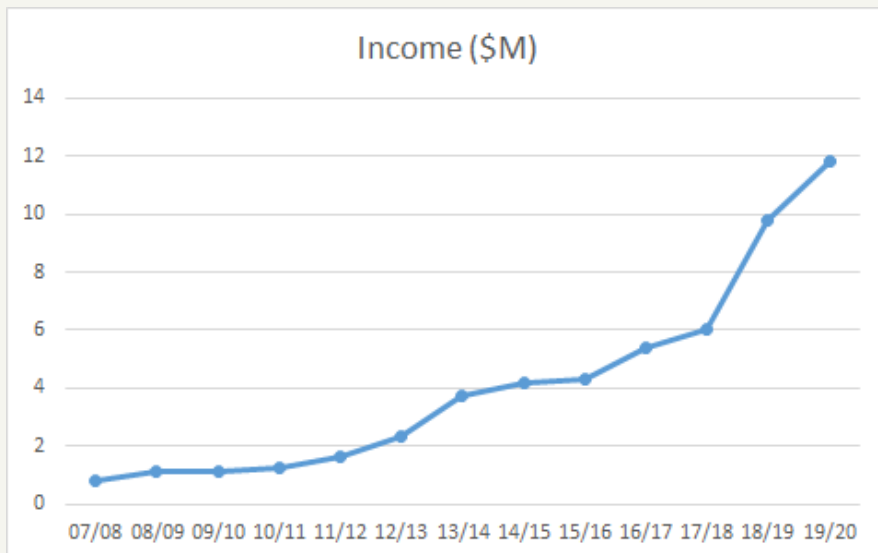
# 200,000 kms Travelled

Supporting clients to integrate into community activities



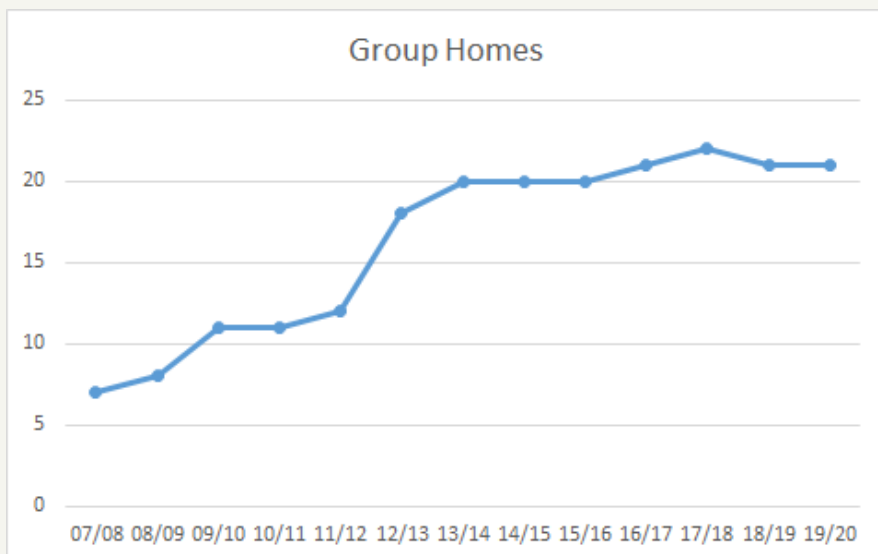


# 5. FY20 Achievements



# 17%

Growth in income in  
the past year



# 21

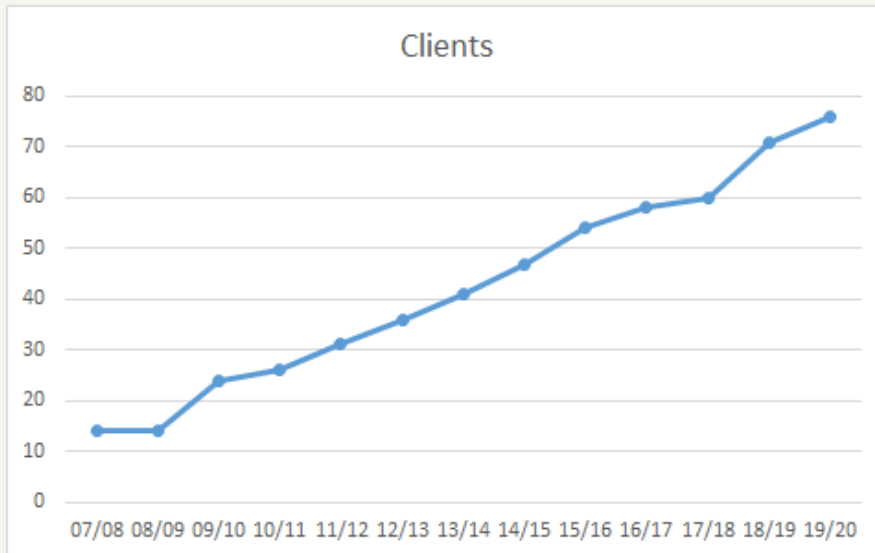
Group Homes  
supported by LDS

2019-20 has been a tough year for our community with bushfires and COVID-19. Through this time LDS has continued to thrive and grow as people recognise LDS as being unique in how we serve our clients. During the year LDS has made the following achievements:

- Navigated through the potential merger discussions with Lutheran Community Care and appointment of a new CEO
- Navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic by developing plans, keeping clients & staff safe and found new and unique ways to help our clients stay active safely
- Developed new policy frameworks to ensure compliance with NDIS Quality and Safeguarding best practice
- Set a new strategy with the Board to continue on the legacy from the previous years focusing on our clients while continuing to grow and improve our services

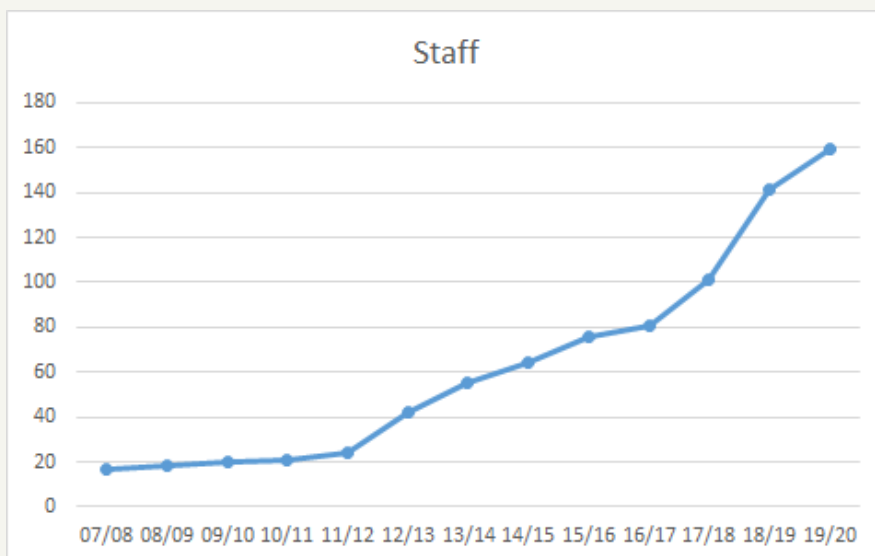
During 19-20 LDS consolidated our focus on delivering exceptional service and care to our clients. Utilising our values of faith, empowerment and excellence we have continued to:

- Deliver quality, safe & caring client-focused services
- Creating disability housing options and other services that help our clients thrive
- Continue to build financially sustainable support and advocacy for our clients
- Continue to attract, train & develop an awesome team to support our clients



7%

Growth in clients in the past 12 months



18

New staff to help support our clients

Our vision for next year:

- Develop our brand to represent LDS to our existing and potential clients as the premier disability accommodation service in South Australia
- Providing our clients with pathways to be included and integrated into communities through our Serving Communities program
- Development of an Endowment Fund outside of Government support to assist people living with disability in our community
- Relocation to new premises and deployment of new efficient technology in order to better serve our clients
- Financial due diligence, risk, governance and management systems that are client centric and efficient for better serve delivery to our clients and community

# 6. Governance

## CHAIRMAN

Mr. Kym Wallent

## BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Sam Paior

Ps. Geoff Berger

Mr. John Belcher

Mr. John Inglis

Mr. Ben Raw

Ms. Louise Trinkle

LDS's dedicated group of Board volunteers espouse our faith based values and provide the guidance and oversight to ensure client centric outcomes.

The Board has met 9 times this financial year. The Board has developed a structured Board calendar to manage and focus upon oversight of budgets, policies, risk management, finances and client outcomes

In 2021 the Board plans to establish separate Board sub committees for:

- Audit, Risk & Compliance
- Clinical Governance



"LDS lets me be me" -  
Jack



# Our Awesome Team

Chief Executive Officer:  
John van Ruth

Senior Managers:  
Darren Anderson (Service Delivery)  
Darren Button (Finance)  
Michael Kromwyk (Service Development)

Management Team:  
Delmy Ramirez (Human Resources)  
Jane Brookes (Finance)  
Joyce You (Finance)  
Matthew Stevens (Service Delivery)  
Ben Natt (Service Delivery)  
Yasmin Potts (Service Delivery)  
Patricia Horne (Client Intake)  
Rebecca Hammat (Client Intake)

The heart and soul of LDS is the Client Service Assistants and Support Workers who everyday go above & beyond to deliver exceptional service and care to our clients.

During the year we developed our employee recruitment & onboarding programs to assist LDS in recruiting staff who share our values and service ethics.



"I love working at LDS  
because we have  
great leadership" -  
Joyce

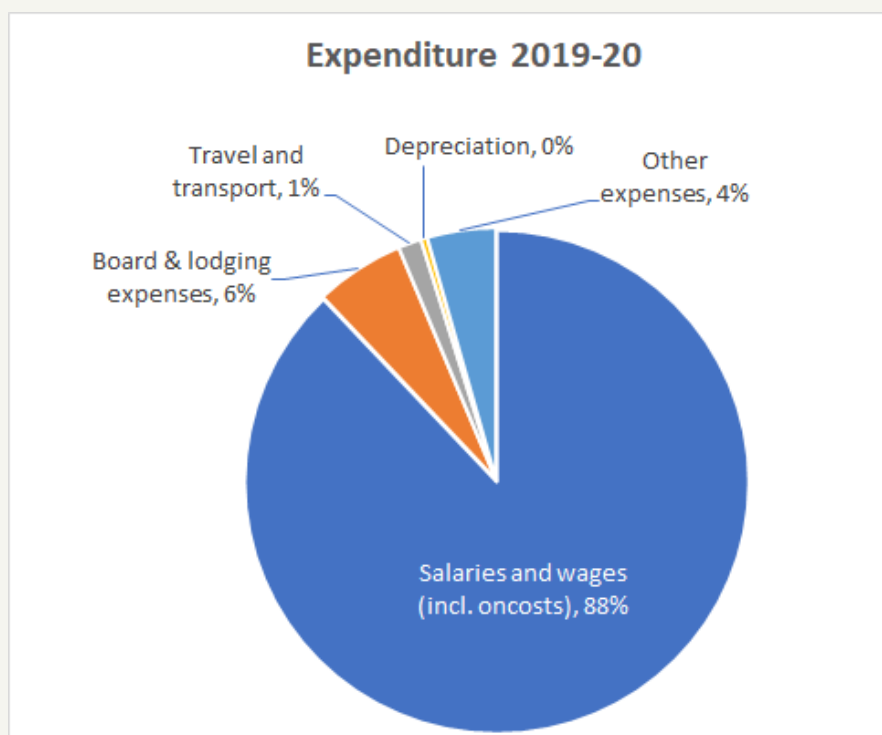
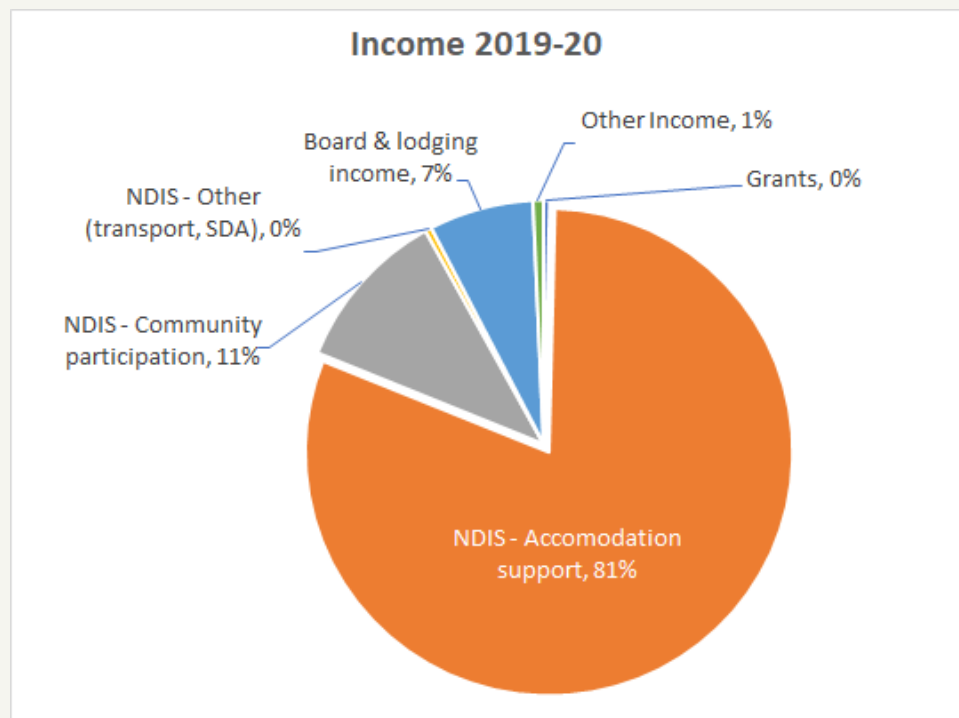
# 7. Financials

## LUTHERAN DISABILITY SERVICES IS GROWING.

Our organisation continues to grow as we positively impact the lives of our clients.

During FY19/20 LDS continued to grow income from NDIS accommodation based support for our clients living with disability.

- We provide outstanding supported accommodation to help people living with disability create happy homes. This continues to be our core source of income, representing 88% of income in FY20.

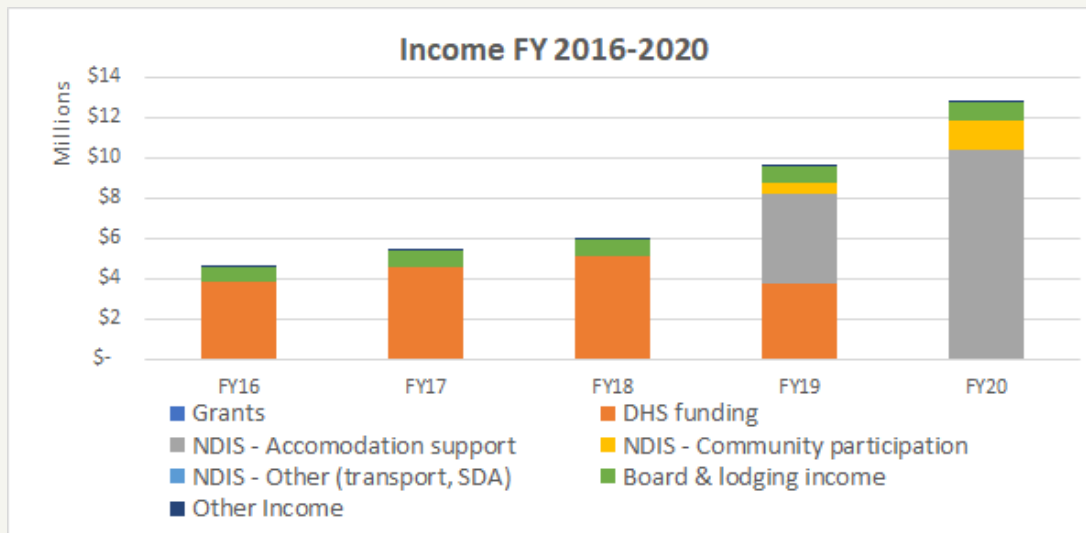


LDS continues to manage our expenses effectively in line with the growth.

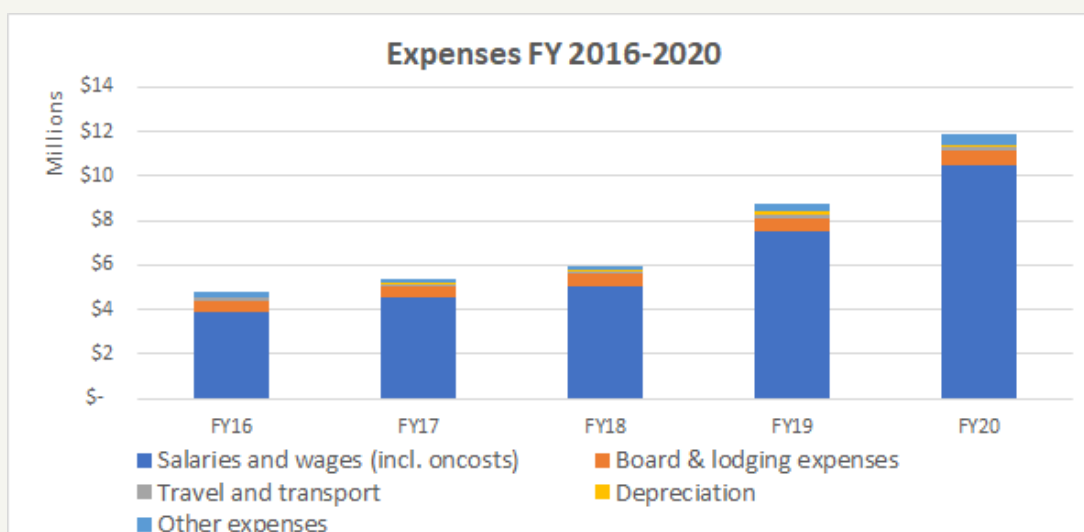
- Salaries continued to be an essential major expense to be able to provide the exceptional service that our clients are entitled to and expect

# 7. Financials (cont.)

Over the past 5 years LDS has grown through providing more services to more clients as well as navigating the transition to the NDIS.



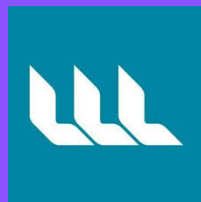
- Since the end of the FY19/20 year, LDS no longer receives income from the SA State Government DHS and has fully transitioned all clients onto the NDIS.
- At the same time LDS has grown NDIS accommodation supports (including supported independent living) and grown community participation supports to growing each year since NDIS commencement.
- Cost control remains an important focus. Surpluses allow LDS to investment in capital and systems to improve the outcomes of the clients we support.





# 8. Partners in our Mission

Lutheran Disability Services would like to thank the following supporters - without your support LDS cannot make the difference we do for our clients and those who care for them.



A big thank you to our community partners - helping LDS and our clients to serve the community



We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

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