



Diverge

**Annual Report**  
**2014 - 2015**



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## Manager's report

2015 was a year of both consolidation and development for Diverge and as such 'growth' will be the theme of this year's annual report. Diverge has again grown the business in the areas of psychology, brain injury, neuropsychological assessment, behaviour support, complex client support, training and research. In addition, Diverge has also continued to grow its voice and input in the disability sector that has identified the need for change around clients with disabilities and the ways their needs are met. In 2015, Diverge continued work on two significant projects in the areas of ABI, criminal justice and access to appropriate supports. Diverge continued to develop highly valued working relationships with OPA and the Victorian Law Foundation in their work on these projects. Diverge is proud of the contribution it has made into these sensitive areas and continues to support clients involved in the criminal justice system as well as those who are at risk in the community.

Diverge has continued to develop its role as a registered service provider for the NDIS and significant work was completed to upgrade our registration and develop relevant documents and information to support this process. Diverge has adapted well to the new model of service provision to clients through the NDIS in the pilot region of Barwon and we are now prepared and have developed our service model to support a larger number of NDIS clients as this program is rolled out more broadly across the state in 2017 and onwards. Diverge invested in the development of a working relationship with Everyday Independence in the Geelong/Barwon area and we now have access to shared office space in Geelong. This has proven to be a beneficial relationship for the growth of both organisations.

Diverge faces 2016 with new challenges and continued enthusiasm. We look forward to further development of the business and ongoing improvements and adaptations to the ways we engage with the disability community across the state.

Samantha Burns,  
Acting Manager



## President's Report

This has been a good year for Diverge with strong demand for our services. Paediatric work has continued to expand probably due in part to increased referrals from the Barwon NDIS trial site.

Our clinicians have been kept very busy with increased referrals for both behavioural work and neuropsychological assessments and it is gratifying to note that, Adrian, our newest recruit actually completed the highest number of assessments this year. Our staffing levels have been very stable this year.

The nature of the training we have offered has changed somewhat this year. Diverge has not offered scheduled training sessions this year but has concentrated its efforts on tailoring the training sessions to reflect specific requests. In that vein, Diverge again conducted the Australian Psychological Society auspiced series of 3 study groups which were again fully subscribed and we are in the process of organising a series for 2016.

Research this year has been focused on our Building Bridges project that strives to build connections between the ABI sector and the criminal justice system. This project has been headed up by Glenn and assisted by Genevieve and is now drawing to a conclusion with all the regional sessions having been successfully completed.

The Rights & Resources guide for people with ABI accessing the criminal justice system is a significant piece of work headed by Suzanne and Glenn in conjunction with Victorian legal services. This booklet, which is filling a large knowledge gap in our community, will undoubtedly become a much sought after resource both within the criminal justice and ABI sectors.

This year 2 staff members spoke at conferences, Glenn at the ACSO conference and Genevieve at the Royal Children's Hospital and at the grand rounds case presentation at the CCN conference. Adrian presented on dementia and behavioural support and his proposal for a dementia service in Geelong, to the Cognitive journal club at Barwon Health. Samantha supported a client appearing in the prominent 4 Corners investigation on sexual abuse in the disability sector, an investigation which has recently led to a Royal Commission being announced. Diverge continues to find its wings as a statewide service, providing its expertise to the community on ABI. To that end we also now have collaborative office space available for our use in Geelong.

Jan Loewy  
CoM, President



## Treasurer's Report

The financial year 2014/2015 has again seen ongoing growth for Diverge Consulting. Demand for services has continued to grow and the business has successfully met the challenges of the introduction of NDIS and a new financial management system as well as the consolidation of staffing and business stabilisation. There was a significant increase in both income and expenses again this year with increases in wages, superannuation and professional development. All of these areas are fundamental to the effective operation of the business and Diverge continues to face the challenge of supporting business development whilst maintaining adequate income to support expenses.

Given this consideration, the basic business figures for the 2014-2015 year are provided below. In addition, a comprehensive financial report and audit has been completed by our accountants Collins & Co. and was presented at the AGM on November 26<sup>th</sup> 2015.

### **Diverge Consulting Financial Summary 2014 - 2015**

	Amount
Starting Balance	\$194,457
Expenses	\$641,509
Income	\$626,420
Ending Balance	\$179,368

These figures highlight ongoing increases in business expenses that are predominantly being incurred as we attempt to further develop the clinical and research areas that we work within. In addition there are associated costs in the continued development of an evidence base for the model and methods that we employ in the complex area of brain injury, behaviour management and neuropsychology. The year ahead will provide the team with new opportunities to manage our core income producing activity with development goals and will require ongoing budget planning, management and oversight to ensure all business and budget requirements continue to be met. Diverge faces these challenges with enthusiasm and optimism and we look forward to another exciting year ahead.

Samantha Burns  
Treasurer



## Clinical Coordinator's Report

2015 has seen Diverge continue to develop and grow. During this time Diverge received 137 new client referrals from a wide range of referral sources including: NDIS, insurance agencies, TAC, case managers and self-referrals.

In 2015 we saw an increase in medico legal work with assessments now being undertaken by a number of staff as well as a general increase in requests for neuropsychological assessments. Staff are also increasing work with clients with NDIS funding and there has been considerable work to improve information for clients and to ensure the process is well handled.

Diverge continues to be called on to work with clients with an array of complex issues both in terms of assessment, therapeutic input and training. Some examples of this work include:

- Completing a medico legal assessment for a client with a history of severe ABI who was in prison for repeatedly breaching intervention orders.
- Developing a behaviour plan for a young man with an intellectual disability, history of schizophrenia and aggressive behaviour who was being moved from a secure psychiatric facility to a community residential house. This work included significant training of staff from the residential house.
- Working with the parents of an 11 year old with autism to develop his level of independence and reduce challenging behaviours. This included developing new routines and responses to behaviour and setting realistic expectations.

Jenny Todd (2015)  
Clinical Coordinator



## Neuropsychology Assessment Unit

Diverge received 84 referrals for neuropsychology assessment this financial year, increasing from 55 last year.

Diverge neuropsychology assessments have gained a reputation for being clear, easy to read and user-friendly, with practical and relevant recommendations.

There has been an increase in referrals from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and Funds in Court (FIC, formerly Senior Masters Office). There is also an increased demand for medico-legal assessments where we are engaged to be independent expert witnesses to assist a court.

We have begun to receive referrals via an agreement with Corrections Victoria, for people in prison who would not ordinarily have had access to neuropsychology assessments. Referrals have also begun to trickle in from the National Disability Insurance Scheme pilot site in Barwon South West region, likely to increase as the Scheme rolls out across Victoria in 2016 and 2017.

Reasons for referral have included clarifying diagnosis, a person's cognitive strengths and weaknesses, support needs, capacity to make decisions and recommendations on behaviour and memory management strategies.

### **Case example:**

A 50 year old man with a long history of daily alcohol abuse was referred for neuropsychology assessment to clarify whether there was any acquired brain injury. He was currently in prison convicted of a violent offence and the referrer wanted to understand his support needs within the prison and on his release.

In conversation, the neuropsychologist noted the man was extremely disorganised and distractable. On assessment, he had good intellectual skills, but he had extremely slow, rigid and disorganised thinking and limited memory and insight, consistent with alcohol related brain injury.

The neuropsychologist concluded he would not benefit significantly from counselling or group work in prison because he would not be able to learn and apply new information. On his release from prison, it was recommended he have ABI case management, supported 'dry' accommodation and a structured routine with activities organised for him. The neuropsychologist also recommended applications for an administrator to manage his money, and a guardian to make decisions about his accommodation if needed.



## Paediatric Service Coordinator's Report

Paediatric clients have again been well represented in referrals to Diverge during November 2014 to November 2015. In addition to referrals from traditional sources of the VPRS at the RCH and TAC, this year has also seen an increase in referrals of NDIS clients from the Barwon region, primarily presenting with Autism Spectrum Disorders, as well as the commencement of medico-legal assessments through Michelle French and Associates. The inclusion of both of these client groups into Diverges' client work been challenging, but has also resulted significant learning and broadening of our service.

Diverges' intellectual and physical resources for working with paediatric clients were augmented during 2015 through the acquisition of memory assessment tools and the completion of Autism training through ASPECT.

A highlight at the end of November 2014 was presentation of a child behavioural case as part of a Grand Round on Neuropsychological Interventions at the College of Clinical Neuropsychologists Annual Conference in Adelaide. Entitled "Taking the bite out of the ankle biter"; the case provided a detailed description the type of collaborative behaviour management work in which Diverge specialises. Using a four component model of behavioural formulation incorporating person-, environment-, family- and brain injury related factors, an intervention with one of our pre-school clients was described. The case highlighting the role of the neuropsychologist in building a collaborative team around the child with an ABI, and helping families and professionals working with the child to understand the impact of ABI on cognition, behaviour and development. Another highlight of the year was the presentation of two child cases to the Neuropsychology Students Society, increasing the understanding of a new generation of neuropsychologists as to the types of support that neuropsychologists in the community can provide children and young people with ABI.

Genevieve McMahon  
Paediatric Coordinator





## Research & Training Coordinator's Report

### Research

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There is increasing recognition in the disability and justice sectors that people with ABI are overrepresented in the criminal justice (CJ) system. A key role for Diverge can be to contribute to both the research activity in this area, and therapeutic interventions using its neuropsychology and behaviour support expertise. The bulk of research time this year was spent implementing two projects related to ABI and justice, funding for which arose on the back of the 2012 publication<sup>1</sup> highlighting issues faced by this client group in Victoria.

#### Rights and Resources Guidebook

The full title of this document is: "People with acquired brain injury (ABI) and the Victorian justice system: Rights and resources". The working title is the "Rights and Resources Guidebook".

The Rights and Resources Guidebook is designed to inform the reader about the rights of someone with an ABI in the CJ system, and to provide them with resources for achieving the best possible outcome. The primary target audience is service providers and family members who can assist people with ABI. The Guidebook introduces a reader to some fundamental aspects of ABI and provides direction for the reader to find out more information about this disability. Some section examples are *Police, Bail processes, Working with lawyers, Preparing for court, and Prison*. The Guidebook will be publicly launched and made available at no cost in the first half of 2016.

This project is a partnership between the Victorian Coalition of ABI Service Providers (VCASP), Diverge, BrainLink, and Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Centre. Diverge and Villamanta are the authors, and the Victorian Law Foundation is the funder.

#### Building Bridges: Linking disconnected service networks

Across 2014-15 the Building Bridges project delivered five workshops in regional Victoria designed to increase active liaison among staff working in diverse roles across the ABI and CJ sectors. A sixth metropolitan workshop is scheduled to take place in late 2015. The following agencies have provided their support to host workshops: Barwon Health (in Barwon Southwest); Latrobe Community Health Service (Gippsland); Ballarat Health Services (Grampians); Goulburn Valley Health (Hume); Bendigo Health (Loddon Mallee); and BrainLink (Metropolitan Melbourne).



Other agencies have assisted with the provision of expert presenters: the Office of the Public Advocate; Victoria police; Community Corrections; various legal services; representatives of ABI information providers, and individuals with ABI. Approximately 200 direct-line staff have participated including ABI service providers, mental health workers, community corrections staff, and post-release services staff. The workshops include resources for participants, involve active learning tasks, and are part of a longer-term approach of systemic change designed to benefit this client group. Outcomes evaluation will occur into 2016.

Using a training approach targeting direct-line staff in this service area is a unique initiative, and an approach we expect will find further application in Victoria, and other states and regions seeking to address the overrepresentation of ABI in the justice system.

Funding is being provided through The Office of the Public Advocate.

We greatly appreciate the people who have provided us their time and expertise to help shape these projects.

- ABI-CJ Reference Group: Glenn Kelly, Nicole Telfer, Neil Cameron, Peta Ferguson, Deidre Griffiths, Vanessa Marrama, Karen Jorgensen, Jade Preston, Genevieve McMahon, Peter Perssons.
- Rights and Resources Guide Focus Group: Mick Hurstfield, Alison Park, Lesley Smith, Andrew Conley, Bonnie Ledwidge, Genevieve McMahon

### Conferences delivered

- Kelly, G. (2015). Building Bridges Project-Linking disconnected service networks. Symposium paper presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> International ACSO Criminal Justice Conference, October, Melbourne, Aus.
- Kelly, G., Hoskin, K., Simpson, G., Descallar, J., Gillett, L. (2015). Treating inappropriate sexual behaviour after acquired brain injury: Community-based behaviour support interventions. 5<sup>th</sup> INS/ASSBI Pacific Rim Conference, July, Sydney, Australia.

We sincerely thank our colleagues Grahame Simpson from the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research, Peter Kremer from Deakin University, and Nicole Telfer from VCASP for their ongoing support and collaboration in our applied research efforts.

Dr. Glenn Kelly, Research Co-ordinator

*1. Brown, S., Kelly, G., 2012. Issues and inequities facing people with acquired brain injury in the criminal justice system. Victorian Coalition of ABI Service Providers, Melbourne, Australia.*



## Service Development Coordinator's Report

During 2015 Diverge has continued to build strong relationships with service providers both within the disability sector and in other areas. We continue to have a strong presence within brain injury networks across regional Victoria as well as within a range of other agencies.

Our links with the justice sector and Corrections has continued to build during 2015 as has our reputation for being a “go to” organisation with expertise to deal with the complexities of brain injury. Diverge has been successfully running a series of seminars, ‘Building Bridges’, over the last year providing up to date information for practitioners working in the criminal justice system and the disability sector around access pathways for clients, with an ABI, accessing the criminal justice sector. Suzanne and Glenn, in collaboration with the legal sector have made a valuable contribution to the literature with their comprehensive guide to the rights and resources for people with ABI in the criminal justice sector. This is likely to be a “game changer” in what has been a long neglected area.

We continue to provide ongoing mentoring to a large group of Psychologists working with brain-injured clients across the breadth of New Zealand via teleconferencing. With this work we have developed expertise in providing distance clinical support to a group of clinicians using new technology. This has led to the development of a teleconferencing service that will be available to be accessed by services that are interstate or in remote rural locations.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is now well established in the Barwon region and Diverge has been well placed, with its significant presence in that region, to be able to provide a responsive clinical and advisory service for clients and service providers around brain injury and multiple and complex needs.

We are very excited that with the advent of our new Dementia service that we will now be able to offer clinical services across the whole lifespan. Diverge will be able to continue with our signature service provision in this area of strong clinical skills, tight teamwork, coupled with clear and pragmatic communication.

Jan Loewy  
Service Development Coordinator



## Financial Report

<b>Income</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Grants/donations no GST	11,827	11,827
Building Bridges Project	23,912	50,000
Health Services Pty Ltd	175,411	107,716
Health services no GST	12,047	25,118
Medicare services	6,379	2,536
TAC services	394,222	381,272
Government rebates	-	
<b>Gross profit from trading</b>	<b>623,798</b>	<b>578,470</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
Interest received	2,623	1,672
Paid parental leave		7,459
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>626,420</b>	<b>587,600</b>



## Financial Report (continued)

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Accountancy fees	4,864	5,140
Annual leave expense	(12,584)	
Annual leave expense: 2014 & prior	35,317	
Assessment forms	-	
Bad debts	-	
Consumer Affairs	106	106
Bank charges	120	150
Bookkeeping fees	216	
Equipment – immediate write-off	-	-
Computer expenses	3,235	21
General expenses	9,491	291
Insurance	7,563	5,644
Internet and associated costs	763	763
Journals and periodicals	409	2,745
Long service leave expense	864	
Long service leave expense: 2014 & prior	22,573	
Office supplies	2240	4,480
Postage	105	97
Printing and stationary	557	223
Rates and taxes	1,102	1,850
Registration fees	-	-
Rent	21,800	20,800
Repairs & Maintenance	195	
Room hire	1,432	1,101
Staff amenities	402	819
Staff training	2,175	1,743
Superannuation contributions	39,714	36,644
Telephone	8,088	7,172
Travelling expenses	15,913	4,943
Wages	474,850	458,296
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>641,509</b>	<b>552,924</b>
<b>SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE to the ASSOCIATION</b>	<b>(15,089)</b>	<b>34,677</b>



## Financial Report (continued)

<b>Share Capital and Reserves</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Retained earnings	198,876	177,084
<b>Total share capital and reserves</b>	<b>198,876</b>	<b>177,084</b>

Represented by:

### **CURRENT ASSETS**

Cash at bank	47,382	8,849
Investment account	13,930	39,475
Term deposits – 3 months	-	35,152
Term deposits – 6 months	-	35,157
Direct Investment Account	75,168	
Petty cash	50	50
Trade debtors	62,346	58,400
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>198,876</b>	<b>177,084</b>

### **NON-CURRENT ASSETS**

#### **Fixed Assets**

Office renovations	6,005	6,005
Assessment tools	18,681	14,013
Computers	7,647	7,647
Furniture and Fitting	150	150
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>32,483</b>	<b>27,815</b>

#### **Intangible Assets**

Preliminary set-up costs	259	259
Bond (office)	5,000	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,259</b>	<b>5,259</b>

<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>45,297</b>	<b>40,629</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>244,173</b>	<b>217,713</b>



## Financial Report (continued)

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Sundry creditor	-	4,375
Superannuation payable	8,825	10,484
PAYG Withholding payable	7,923	6,846
GST collected/paid	1,789	1,452
GST adjustment	98	98
Provision for Annual Leave	22,733	
Provision for long service leave	23,438	
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	64,804	23,256
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	64,804	23,256
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	179,368	194,457
<b>PROFIT/DEFICIT</b>	(15,089)	34,677
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	179,368	194,457
<b>Total available for appropriation</b>	179,368	194,457
<b>Retained earnings at the end of the financial year</b>	179,368	194,457



## Contact details

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