

DIVERGE CONSULTING

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



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Manager's report

2020 was a year no-one planned for or anticipated – Covid 19 descended on the world as a global pandemic in the early months of 2020 and by March, Australia had been plunged into lockdown.

The Diverge clinical model is predominantly based in community delivered supports, seeing clients in their homes and local communities to ensure clients have the best possible opportunity to translate the support and recommendations being offered into their own personal environments. Covid restrictions meant Diverge was extremely limited in our capacity to offer services using our well researched and clinically valid model. Diverge clinicians had to 'pivot' and make a swift and significant shift to provide the majority of services via telehealth. Various online platforms were explored, and several options were trialled. Ultimately Diverge clinicians began using Google Meet, Covui and Zoom for online 1:1 sessions with clients, telehealth assessments and for team meetings.

The shift to provision of services using these online platforms required all Diverge staff to adapt and manage a whole new model of service provision all the while working from home and managing their own personal family situations as well. I have been incredibly proud and inspired by the work all Diverge clinicians were able to provide to our vulnerable clients over the lockdown period. It is remarkable that we were able to further grow the business and employ a new registrar, Dr. Penny Analytis during this period.

Diverge was also successful in obtaining a small business support grant during Covid and we have used this funding to completely redesign the Diverge website which is our window to the community and the source of most of our referrals. Stream Art in Tasmania have been our able assistants in the redesign process, and we are indebted to their knowledge and experience (Rachel & Anita) in assisting the team to think through the new website design and the message and team collaboration we were keen to reflect to the community.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and knowledge of our accounting team at Collins & Co. (Fab & Alysia) who were critical in assisting us to work through the business entitlements at a time we were very uncertain about the future sustainability of the business. As we move toward 2021, hoping for the swift and effective rollout of a Covid vaccine, Diverge now has an even stronger understanding of the resilience and adaptability of our staff and our business model. We look forward to another year knowing we can manage almost anything!

Samantha Burns, Manager



President's Report

Covid-19, social distancing, N95, "Flatten the Curve", contact tracing, Covid safe workplace, "Job Keeper", "Ring of Steel", telehealth assessment, CoviU, Zoom meeting ...

These are just a few of the words and concepts that have defined our work and our daily lives during 2020. It is hard to conceive that these terms would have had little meaning to us when we gathered for the Diverge 10-Year celebrations and AGM at Arinya Retreat in Daylesford in last October.

When we brainstormed potential threats Diverge faced in the future, "Global Pandemic" was certainly not on the list. Some challenges we identified, such as "burnout from travel" and "unproductive time on the road" were no longer relevant in 2020. In their place there were different challenges we could not have imagined, such as the screen fatigue and the almost impossible act some of the team have faced this year of juggling work as a neuropsychologist with supporting kids with remote learning. The difficulties we identified last year of "isolation", and "the blurring of boundaries between work and home" have been magnified to a degree that we would have found hard to imagine.

Despite all the challenges of 2020, the strengths we identified as an organisation have meant that Diverge has not only survived Covid, but has, in many ways, thrived. We have embraced the "whatever it takes" model in our lives and work, demonstrating our "can do attitude", through our "flexibility", "dedication", and "passion" as we supported our clients, not only with their brain injuries, but also their own anxieties about the changes in the world. The "collaboration", "respect" and "supportiveness" of the team have come to the fore, with innovations such as "Star of the week" (thanks Nicolette!), surprise gifts (thanks Sam!) and virtual morning tea, to help strengthen the bonds between team members. While we farewelled some team members during this time, Harriet, and Ellen, we have also welcomed our new registrar Penny to the team, as she starts her working life in the strange new world of online neuropsychology.

I would like to thank the Diverge team – Penny, Nicolette, Sara, Jane, Adrian, Kath, Sam, Jan - for the resilience, creativity, humour, and professionalism that you have all brought to the organisation this year. I anticipate that those same strengths will help meet whatever challenges – seen and unforeseen – that the Diverge encounters in the future.

Genevieve McMahon
Diverge COM President



Treasurer's Report

The financial year 2020 has seen a period of sustained growth and expansion for Diverge Consulting. Demand for services has grown significantly and the business has successfully met the substantial financial challenges of the Covid 19 business disruption as well as the expansion of staffing and increased business demand. There was a large increase in income and an increase in expenses this year with an associated increase in wages, superannuation, and increased business management costs. All 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 2020 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 19th, 2020.

Diverge Consulting Financial Summary 2020

	Amount
Starting Balance	\$96,022
Expenses	\$882,776
Income	\$922,625
Ending Balance	\$135,871

These figures highlight ongoing increases in business expenses that are predominantly being incurred as we attempt to manage and develop the clinical areas that we work within. In addition, there were associated costs in the immediate and necessary development of telehealth psychological services requiring the team use of secure online platforms including Covui & Zoom. 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. We had anticipated a year of stabilisation in 2020 however we were forced to confront and manage the incredible challenges presented by Covid and I believe the Diverge team has managed those with a high degree of success both professionally and financially.

Samantha Burns
Treasurer



Referral Coordinator's Report

Throughout the course of 2019/20 Diverge received a total of 166 referrals and re-referrals. These came from a variety of sources including Transport Accident Commission, Worksafe Victoria, Department of Health and Human Service, National Disability Insurance Scheme, (NDIS managed, plan managed and family managed), Support Co-ordinators, Case Managers, Corrections Victoria, Northern Territory Corrections, Alfred Health ABI Rehab, Epworth Rehab, Royal Talbot Rehab, Barwon Health, Bethany, ACSO, VPRS/RCH, Forensicare, Senior Masters Office, OPA, Victorian Legal Aid, Solicitors, family/self-referrals, Physicians and General Practitioners.

The services for referral include neuropsychology assessment, capacity assessment, paediatric assessment, parenting assessment, functional assessment, return to work, anxiety management, behaviour management plans, staff training, behaviour support, counselling, family education and counselling, education support, school transition, mental health treatment plan for counselling and anxiety, secondary and tertiary consultations.

Our clinicians travel throughout Victoria, and interstate, to complete assessments in the community, schools, and prisons. Our clients are also able to attend the office in West Footscray for services.

Jane Jackson
Referral Co-ordinator



Neuropsychology Assessment Unit Report

Neuropsychology assessment during a pandemic brings many challenges, but Diverge clinicians quickly adapted to these challenges, attending training, and providing peer support to meet the needs of clients, with a combination of in-person assessment with COVID-safe practices and telehealth assessment.

Telehealth neuropsychology assessment involved us administering verbal tasks via videoconference, visual tasks via document cameras, substitution of written tests with oral versions, online delivery of questionnaires and discontinuation of some tasks that were simply incompatible with telehealth. This was clearly a deviation from standard in-person administration and there is only limited research demonstrating their equivalence, therefore results from telehealth assessments were interpreted with caution, and Diverge made the decision not to provide medico-legal assessments via telehealth.

97 referrals were received for neuropsychology assessment. The number and source of referrals were similar to the previous year, with referrals from Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support co-ordinators, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Corrections Victoria, solicitors, doctors, other allied health workers, family members and clients themselves. Unfortunately, we were unable to continue our assessment services to clients in the Northern Territory prison system due to the quarantine requirements, but we look forward to resuming these services in future.

Case study

Mr. M., a 25-year-old man with traumatic brain injury living in remote regional Victoria was referred by his TAC support co-ordinator to clarify his cognitive strengths and weaknesses and capacity to manage his finances as he was wanting to apply to revoke his financial administration order and regain control of his finances.

The health advice at the time was that allied health services should be via telehealth wherever possible. He was capable and comfortable with using telehealth, using it regularly with his therapy team during the pandemic. The assessment was completed over four telehealth sessions of 45 minutes, as fatigue was more of an issue using the telehealth format (for both the client and the clinician). There were instances of loss of connection due to the quality of the internet service in his regional area, but these were quickly resolved.

On assessment, Mr. M demonstrated moderately slowed thinking and moderate difficulty registering and learning new verbal information, but once information was learned, he tended to retain it. He demonstrated strengths in reasoning, impulse control, planning, and problem solving and insight, in that he acknowledged his cognitive difficulties and was using apps on his phone for reminders and appointments.



In comparison to a previous assessment in 2018, there was evidence of significant improvement in planning/ organisation, flexibility of thinking and insight and these improvements were also noted in everyday life by his family and therapy team.

In terms of his capacity to manage his finances, the assessment indicated Mr. M. would be able to keep track of his spending and generally avoid impulsive spending (e.g., in response to advertising or attempts at persuasion from others), seek advice when required to improve knowledge of his financial management options, weigh up different alternatives, consider the consequences and make informed reasoned decisions. It was therefore recommended that Mr. M would have the capacity to manage his finances. Occupational therapy support to set up systems for budgeting and bill paying was recommended.

The client provided feedback that they liked the telehealth format, being able to complete the assessment in the comfort of their own home in regional Victoria, and without hours spent on client or clinician travel.

Dr. Kathryn Hoskin
Neuropsychology Assessment
Coordinator





Paediatric Service Coordinator's Report

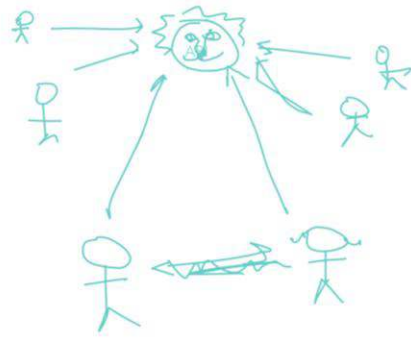
Despite the many challenges of 2020, paediatric referrals at Diverge were on par with those of the previous years, with 28 referrals for paediatric clients received by November. In contrast to 2019, the majority of referrals were funded by TAC (68%) rather than NDIS, with most referrals again being received for neuropsychology assessment or review assessment. Regular referrals from DFFH during the year for assessments for young people in the Geelong and Western Victoria reflected the excellent work being undertaken by Nicolette and Adrian to meet this area of need.

Covid-19 restrictions have resulted in many changes in our practice in working with children, families, and schools. Coviui has worked very successfully, with many of the kids and families appreciating the convenience of attending sessions at home and convenience of presenting and record information on the virtual whiteboard. School and team meetings via Google Meet and Zoom have generally worked well, although not without technical challenges. Telehealth cognitive assessments with children and adolescents have been undertaken by the braver souls among the Diverge Team (Adrian, Penny, Nicolette, and Kath) while for the N95 masks and copious quantities of sanitiser have made it possible to return to in-person assessments in schools following the lifting of lockdown restrictions.

Community involvement continued in 2020 with participation in an online parent forum for Heads Together as "Subject Matter Expert" for parent forum on 12th July on the topic of working with schools.

2020 has also seen some changes in the Diverge paediatric team. Dr Ellen Gentle finished working with Diverge in April 2020 to take up a position at the RCH, while we welcomed Dr. Penny Analytis in May 2020 as our new registrar. Penny brings a lot of experience and expertise to the team through her involvement with Heads Together and her doctoral thesis on the impact on siblings of having a brother or sister with ABI.

Hopefully 2021 will see a return to more opportunities for face-to-face work with children and young people, their families, and their schools. One possible area for future development is group work for children, young people, and families. This may occur in person, but online forums also open increased opportunities for group participation for those who would find it difficult to travel or attend groups in person as well as meeting Covid-safe guidelines.



“Taming the ABI Lion” illustration using the Coviu whiteboard”

Genevieve McMahon
Paediatric Coordinator



Training Coordinator's Report

As with the majority of things in 2020, training sessions looked very different due to COVID-19 and the associated challenges that the world was facing. After doing some preliminary work towards the end of 2019 to look at the possibility of conducting online training sessions, this quickly became a reality as lockdowns were put in place. This resulted in a stop to face-to-face training sessions and Diverge needed to adapt to provide online training and support to various agencies including attendant care providers, families, schools and support groups.

As was to be expected, our planned in person training sessions that were scheduled were postponed, with the hope of rescheduling them later in the year. However, given the ongoing nature of the pandemic we are still not in a position where we can safely hold in person sessions. It appears that at least for the immediate future all training larger scale training will be provided online, with the possibility of smaller group training being able to be conducted in line with government and health restrictions and regulations.

Diverge clinicians continue to place a great importance on providing training and up skilling all people who work in the brain injury area or who have contact with people who have had a brain injury. It is our goal to continue to expand our training activities, particularly the use of technology to provide online training to individuals and organisations who, due to geographic distance, have been unable to attend our training in person in the past.

I would like to thank all of Diverge team members for adapting so quickly to provide online training, and we look forward to a more 'normal' or 'new normal' in 2021.

Dr Adrian Kamer
Training Coordinator





Financial Report

Income	2020	2019
	\$	\$
<u>Health Services Income</u>		
Health Services Pty Ltd	119,365	62,016
Health services No GST	196,249	147,809
Medicare services	5,973	1,575
TAC services	496,207	488,268
Gross profit from trading	817,794	699,668
<u>Other Income</u>		
Interest received	671	1,189
Memberships Received	160	116
Total	831	
	1,305	
<u>COVID-19 Government Assistance Payments</u>		
Cash Flow Boost	54,000	-
Job Keeper	50,000	-
	104,000	-
TOTAL INCOME	922,625	700,973



Financial Report (continued)

Expenses	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Accountancy fees	-	4,655
Annual leave expense	20,364	5,397
Assessment forms	2,851	3,430
Bad debts	4,469	2,221
Bank charges	110	178
Bookkeeping fees	1,038	979
Body corporate fees	3,049	2,794
Computer expenses	5,811	2,737
General expenses	-	705
Insurance	12,720	1,118
Internet and associated costs	996	1,004
Utilities – electricity & water	2,045	1,687
Legal Fees	-	1,300
Library	52	-
Long service leave expense	60,891	(11,618)
Office supplies	5,445	4,268
Rates and taxes	1,527	1,484
Room hire	162	367
Staff amenities	10,760	5,789
Staff training	3,594	500
Superannuation contributions	58,396	53,819
Telephone	4,783	5,985
Travelling expenses	6,126	6,106
Wages	658,337	607,852
Workers Compensation	-	11,066
TOTAL EXPENSES	882,776	736,703
SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE to the ASSOCIATION	39,849	(35,730)



Financial Report (continued)

Share Capital and Reserves	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Retained earnings		152,797
Total share capital and reserves		152,797

Represented by:

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at bank	121,814	24,246
Investment Account	18,264	1,199
Term Deposit Accounts	71,150	-
Direct Investment Account	-	70,557
Petty cash	50	50
Trade debtors	56,823	58,966
Provision for doubtful debt	(6,690)	(2,221)
Total Current Assets	279,411	152,797

NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Fixed Assets

Office renovations	17,207	17,207
Assessment tools	18,681	18,681
Computers	10,262	10,262
Furniture and Fitting	150	150
Website development cost	7,556	7,556
Preliminary setup cost	259	259
Total Non-Current Assets	54,115	54,115

TOTAL ASSETS	333,526	206,912
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Financial Report (continued)

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Sundry creditor	27,387	18,288
Superannuation payable	4,898	8,520
PAYG Withholding payable	9,477	9,686
GST collected/paid	(1,058)	(1,298)
GST adjustment	97	95
Provision for Annual Leave	58,886	38,522
Provision for long service leave	97,968	37,077
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	197,655	110,890
TOTAL LIABILITIES	197,655	110,890
NET ASSETS	135,871	96,022
PROFIT/DEFICIT	(39,849)	(39,849)
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	135,871	135,871
Total available for appropriation	131,752	131,752
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	135,871	96,022



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