

Department of Communities,
Disability Services and Seniors

2018–2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Public availability of report

This Annual Report is available on our website at:

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/about-us/our-organisation/publications/annual-report/annual-report-2018-19>.

For further information on how to contact us – refer to Appendix 5 on page 144.

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Cultural acknowledgment

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country and recognise their connection to land, wind, water and community. We pay our respect to them, their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

27 September 2019

The Honourable Coralee O'Rourke MP
Minister for Communities and
Minister for Disability Services and Seniors
GPO Box 806
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Minister O'Rourke

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the *Annual Report 2018–2019* and financial statements for the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is provided at page 162.

Yours sincerely



Clare O'Connor
Director-General

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Clare O'Connor, Director-General, Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors

Message from the Director-General

Clare O'Connor

It has been a significant year for the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. We have continued to implement our strategic vision of thriving Queensland communities, where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can participate, are included and resilient, and enjoy high levels of social and economic wellbeing.

Over the past 12 months, we have delivered on many key priorities and achieved some fantastic results for communities across our great state.

The department has worked hard to support the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and as a result this important national scheme is now available in all areas across Queensland and providing real benefits for people with disability, their families and the sector.

We supported government in securing a favourable full scheme NDIS agreement that will provide maximum benefit to Queensland. We also delivered the *Disability Services and Other Legislation (NDIS) Amendment Act 2019* to support the NDIS transition and strengthen protections for NDIS clients and Queenslanders with disability.

During this past 12 months, the number of NDIS participants in Queensland has increased to 61,000. This is an enormous achievement which has been driven in part by the department's transition and readiness programs.

Across our Communities and Seniors programs there have also been many important achievements.

We're continuing to invest in our network of 124 funded neighbourhood and community centres, and have also progressed work to construct a series of new neighbourhood centres in Inala, Moranbah, East Murgon, Bowen, Yarrabilba/Jimboomba, Wilsonton, Kallangur and Thursday Island, as well as upgrades to centres in New Farm and Gatton.

These neighbourhood centres have also been supported through the Thriving Queensland Communities grants program, which provided centres with a share of \$600,000 in grants in 2017–18 and another \$800,000 in 2018–19. The Community Connect program has also been successful, with a further \$1.5 million in annual funding announced in the 2019–20 state budget for Community Connect workers in 12 centres across the state.

Our work with the Commonwealth Government has secured two new place-based projects in Gladstone and Rockhampton, as well as an extension for the Logan Together initiative.

We're also delivering on our commitment to respond to and raise awareness of elder abuse in Queensland, with funding for 11 seniors legal and support services and seniors financial protection services.

The financial protection service, which was announced earlier this year, will provide independent financial advice and information to seniors.

We're supporting Queensland seniors through the generous Cards and Concessions scheme, providing more than \$373 million in concessions and rebates to eligible Queenslanders, including seniors, putting money back in their pockets.

Our commitment to giving Queensland kids a great start also continues, with a further \$1.5 million expansion of the school breakfast program over five years announced following the \$1 million announced in 2018.

This year has been challenging for many communities with bushfires, flooding and cyclones causing widespread damage, and our department has been there on the ground each time to support community members through their recovery. Across these disasters, we have provided more than \$35 million in Personal Hardship Assistance grants to help people get back on their feet.

This year has brought about extensive change for our department during a period that has also seen a great deal of achievement and reform. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to our Minister, the Honourable Coralee O'Rourke, and to the dedicated staff across the department and our partner organisations for their great work this year.

I look forward to delivering for Queensland communities over the next 12 months.

Clare O'Connor
Director-General