

Celebrating
20
years



Clients, staff and friends of Nexus descended upon the Elwick Racecourse in October to celebrate our 20th birthday in style!

MORE PHOTOS AND FUN FROM THE NIGHT INSIDE!





Innovation gets a run at the Disability Expo

Nexus welcomed Bianca Hardaker to the team in July. Bianca has been an NDIS LAC at Mission Australia's Gateway service and has a passion for connecting people with a disability with services that help achieve their goals.

Bianca has a very wide remit in her role - go and find innovative things that will excite people with a disability. As the number of people getting disability service is set to over double by the time the NDIS is fully rolled out it is clear that existing services and service models will be under a lot of strain. So, Bianca's role is to look outside the box and find other solutions. One great thing that this will do is force Nexus to look away from traditional disability services and try harder to make mainstream services work for people with a disability - exciting stuff.

We decided to send Bianca to the Speak Out Disability Expo - and we tied a balloon to her so we wouldn't lose her. The balloon invited people to share their innovative ideas or their frustration about the lack of innovation - she was busy!

Some of the things Bianca has already organized is fielding a Cricket Team in the Inclusion Cup and running a Taster Day with a youth worker looking at Street Art, Rap and Photography. The Taster Day was run by Joel and was great success.

We have also started work on a client interest survey and a staff skills inventory. We are also looking at how we can make better use of our client management software (CIMS) to capture and track client activity goals so we can really get some good measures on how well we are doing.

Another area of passion is enabling people with a disability to have a level of economic freedom and earn some extra dollars! So, a number of team members are heading off to the NDS Customised Employment workshop and we are also looking at supporting some people with micro-business ideas.

Not to be upstaged at the Expo, Alison and Adrian also had a table to promote our new housing options. They too were very busy and looked like a pair of real estate agents selling apartments off a plan. Great interest from people and a lot of praise for creating real housing options for people.

Policy Project

We have appointed Aaron Bristow as our Policy Officer for a 12 month project to review and modernise Nexus policies – here is Aaron’s first report:

Nexus is growing quickly and the NDIS is coming, so Nexus is changing to meet new challenges inside and out. It’s an exciting time and there are plenty of challenges to meet. During this period of change, one of the important challenges is continuing to work as a team to provide services safely, fairly and consistently. Having good systems and processes that support staff to provide high quality services is the job of policy and we must ensure our policies are consistent with the new NDIS rules and requirements.

Good policy reflects legislation and practical solutions that deliver outcomes for clients. Our policy development captures effective staff practices and ideas and shares them with the whole organisation.

To make Nexus policy as good as it can be, new drafts and old policy will be reviewed by all levels of staff to capture our needs, our best ideas and most effective working practices. My policy writing will be advised by a policy reference group, made up of staff that work with clients, and this group will review all operational policy to ensure it is correct, practical and useful.

Two weeks ago we called for participants in the Policy Reference Group. Now we’re pleased to announce that Scott Wheatley, Liz Sonners, Tony Burton, Clive Hanks, Bianca Hardaker, Catherine McNeice, Jenny Free, Peter Morgan and Janelle Salter make up the new Reference Group.



Policy isn’t just about “the rules”, it has a role in protecting staff by setting a framework and boundaries for staff to work in.

Being aware of, and following organisational policy and procedures, is a good way to reduce your personal risk in dealing with difficult situations in the workplace. Nexus is an equal opportunity employer that uses policy to makes decisions based on evidence and best practice using transparent and non-discriminatory procedures. Policy works both ways – it supports productivity and it keeps workplaces safe and fair.

HR update

Congratulations Nexus. Since our last Nexus Ink we have reached the mile stone of having over 200 people on our payroll each fortnight – in fact well over that with about 215!

With our new houses that coming on line between now and Christmas the payroll will probably exceed 250 very soon.

CEO, Mark Jessop said “while this is good news that so many people are getting more services, it is a real risk to the culture and work practices that we have developed at Nexus”. With any organisation experiencing rapid growth it is important to preserve the culture of the organisation – the very essence that is fueling the growth.

The People & Culture Team are making sure this does not happen by making some very important decisions early in someone’s career:

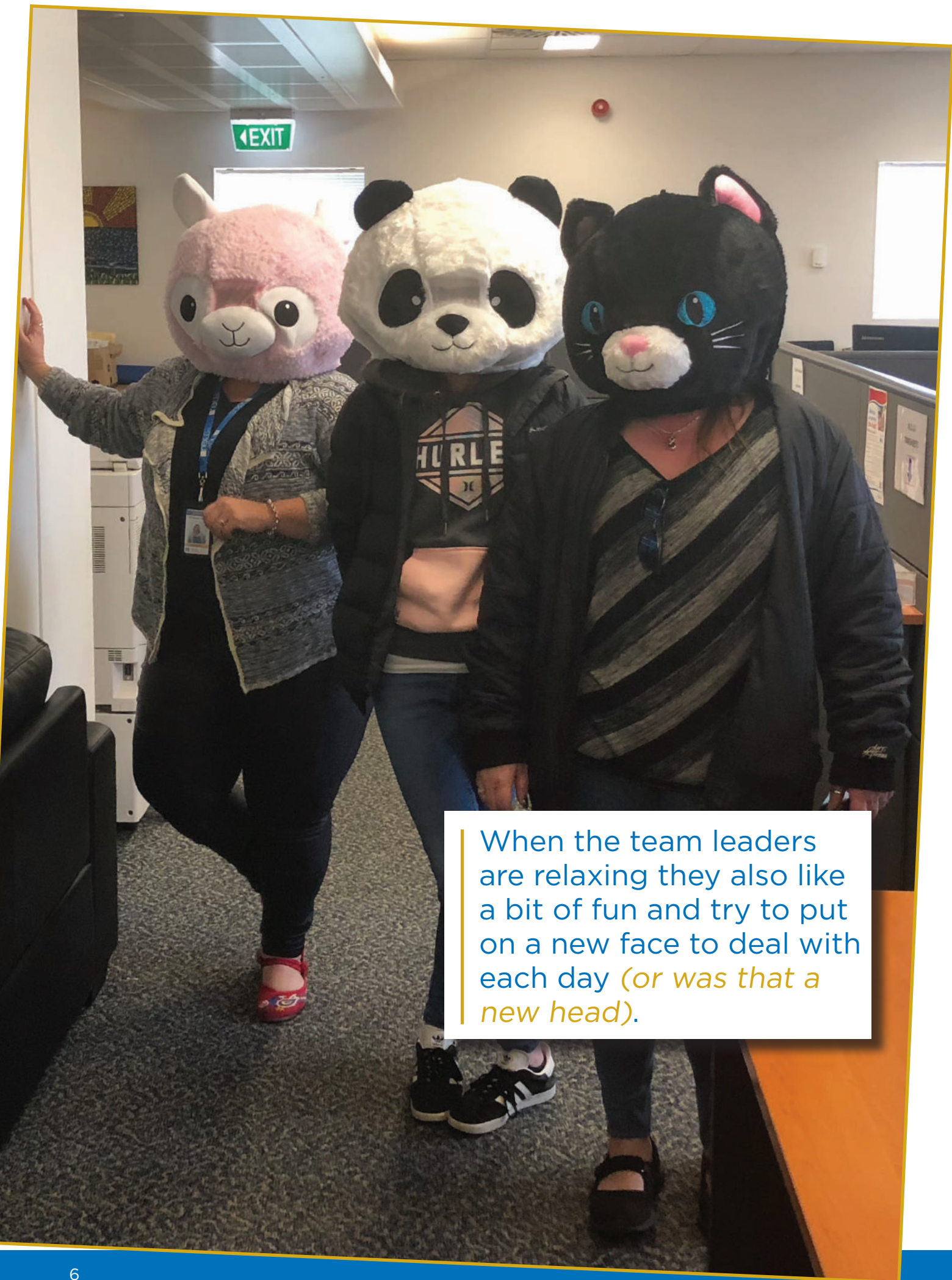
1. Maintain our selection standards – P&C and our managers have been very clear in that we need to maintain our standards and make.
2. Tell people about the culture – we have a two part selection process where recruits meet the managers of each area and hear about the work we do, as well as getting a bit of the history of the organisation. After this we ask them to decide where they think they fit – some realise they don’t and we part company, others select the area they feel comfortable in.
3. Select people in the real world - we then get recruits in for a paid induction, sort out all their medical and legal paperwork and put them through our selection process. We then get some buddy shifts



organized, during which time our senior workers and team leaders can observe people doing real work and very quickly assess how they fit the Nexus culture.

We also have many people who come to us with no formal experience in the disability sector. While they might have a great personality and natural empathy for the work, a lack of qualifications is a real barrier for them. To help these people get a foot in the door Nexus has partnered with training provider AETS to provide Cert III training to these potential employees. The bonus of this training is we are placing people on a minimum 20 hour a week contract as a Level 1 support worker for 6 months – which they can then progress to level 2. Level 1’s must always work supervised.

Another bonus is that Greg McKenna (our Manager NCIS) will provide about half of the training. Greg’s training skills are legendary in the sector and this helps us shape the culture of these new workers. AETS is providing training in areas like manual handling and first aid, while we provide the culture and practice training. Kirsty Barwick and Craig Vernon will also be providing some of the work place assessments which uses their skills as trainer. We plan to have three courses run over the next 18 months with about 15 students in each.



When the team leaders are relaxing they also like a bit of fun and try to put on a new face to deal with each day *(or was that a new head).*



New NCIS team

Our team leaders in the Nexus Complex and Individualised Supports unit are taking the NCIS theme all the way and look like they have added a bit of Miami Vice in as well.

Indy Cassidy, Kirsty Barwick and Michelle Lovell are managing a committed team of workers who provide a service to some of the most disadvantaged clients in Tasmania. Recently described as coming from the “shadow zone” these people have often not had positive interactions with services in the past and are commonly described as “falling between the cracks”. Under the NDIS, once deemed eligible for the scheme (which can be a challenge) they are at last treated like any person with a disability in term of their access to supports – they receive “reasonable and necessary” supports.

Some of the clients NCIS is working with have had a history of homelessness, abuse, trauma and long term disengagement in education and employment and regular contact with acute health and sometimes the justice system. These clients are not as “obviously” disabled as many of our traditional clients but none the less they still need support for many of their daily living needs.

The theme of many NCIS client interactions is often to help clients problem solve and regulate their emotional and psycho-social needs when they are dealing with services, family and the community.

Nexus provides services to over 20 “complex” clients through NCIS including supported living (residential support), community access and capacity building.





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GPS Tracking - making us safer

At Nexus, we spend many hours transporting clients in our fleet of vehicles for their household jobs (like the weekly shop), to their day activities or simply for pleasure.

We have always had a focus on ways to improve driver safety, for our people, our clients and the travelling public – and most of you would remember Adrian’s talk on vehicle safety at your induction!

Damage to vehicles cost Nexus and our clients as it increases the cost of insurance, but much more seriously accidents injure staff, clients and other road users so we would like to avoid accidents and keep everyone safe. Thankfully many of our accidents are at low speed and involve stationary objects (poles, shopping centre bollards etc) and ultimately are due to drivers not correctly checking or under estimating the size or turning circle of our large vans.

Our vans are not the easiest vehicle to drive, particularly if your main experience is in a small car, so we are always reminding people to drive safely and to conditions. A few years ago we had a driver safety initiative and this did improve driver safety, but we have been looking for a better way to remind drivers to always think safety first.

One recent initiative has been the installation of GPS tracking on our vehicles to monitor a range of factors like speed, hard braking or cornering and location. Speed alone, regardless of any other factors, including how good a car you may be driving or how good a driver you may be, increases both the likelihood and the severity of a crash.

A recent example involved an employee traveling on the Midland Highway to Launceston, who got more than he bargained for when he stopped at Campbell Town

to take a break. It involved them having a discussion with Adrian Scott (Manager Supported Living) about several speeding alerts sent by the system to Adrian’s phone, which informed him of where the van was, how fast it was going and who was driving.

The driver not only slowed down for the remainder of the trip, but also has changed driving habits since the discussion – not just at work, but also in their own vehicle!

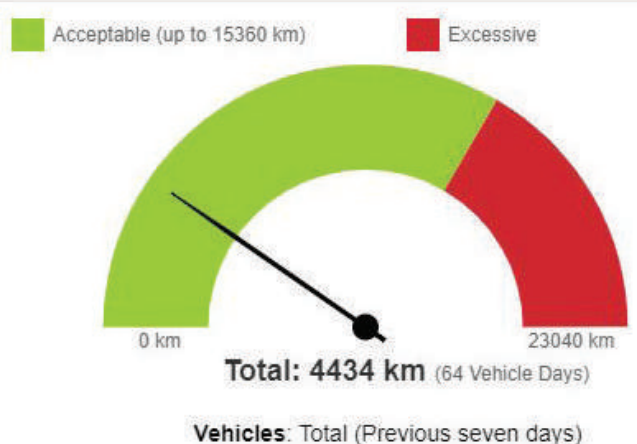
We can also use the information to reward houses with a good driving record as the software will rank vehicle safety on a number of factors – so stay tuned to hear about our best drivers too.

The software can also remember where the vehicle has been and where it is now. Which is good when we get a call from day services saying where is the pick up – we can now tell them exactly where it is and how long it will be.

Remember allow enough time to drive safely and within the speed limit and you will make your life and client’s lives safer and more enjoyable.

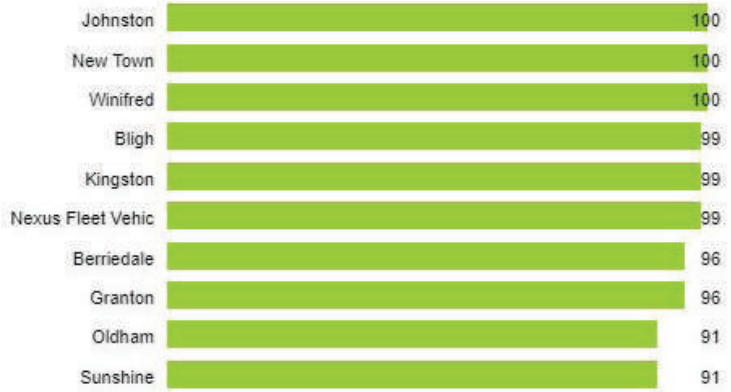
Don’t risk it – get to your destination safely!

Distance Travelled



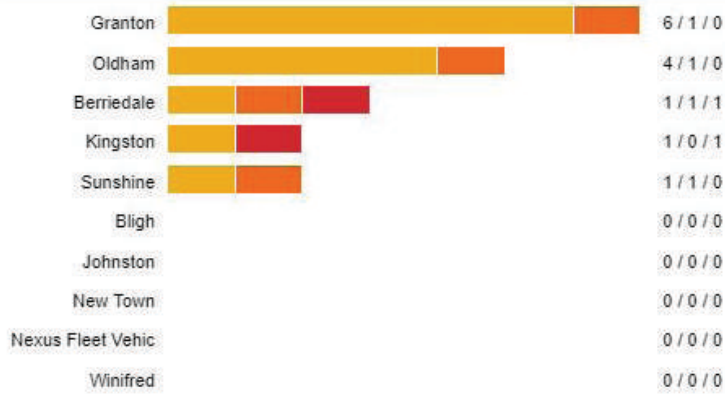


Safety Score



Vehicles: Total (Previous seven days)

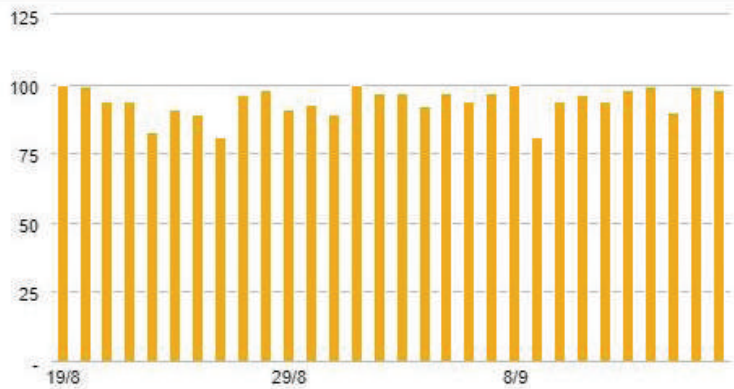
Harsh Driving



Vehicles: Total (Previous week)



Safety Score



Vehicles: Total (Previous 30 days)

A photograph of a woman with reddish-brown hair wearing a red dress, and a man with glasses wearing a dark grey cable-knit sweater. They are embracing and smiling. The image is decorated with colorful fireworks in shades of pink, purple, and blue. In the upper right corner, there is a blue rectangular graphic with a gold border containing the text "Celebrating 20 years" in a gold, cursive font.

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