Dominic Binny

I have a double degree in Economics (Honours) and Arts, where I was able to learn more about my educational passions in Economics and Psychology at Monash University. I've always had a fascination of how humans act and think the way they do. I like to think of myself as a Behavioural Economist these days!

I am Geelong-based, where the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) head office is. Though I split my time with Melbourne, where the rest of my family is, as they are a big part of my life.

Outside of work, I have a few hobbies to keep me busy such as badminton, hiking and playing games (both boardgames and computer). My main hobby though is dodgeball where I've even travelled interstate and overseas to play! I use it as a good way to stay active, and an excuse to take holidays and travel.

I've been Director of the Economics and Insights team since early 2023, setting up and leading the team in that time. The team examines a range of economic issues impacting the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and broader care and support sectors using economic frameworks, research, and modelling tools.

We aim to inform policy decisions, particularly for pricing and market interventions, by using economic analyses to promote better understanding of the state of the NDIS and care and support sectors. This includes the impact the NDIS has on the wider Australian economy and other sectors such as healthcare and aged care.

I've always wanted to help people and better society in some way. I believe that was main reason I found my way into the NDIA graduate program, and Australian Public Service more broadly.

When I first heard about the NDIS, it certainly caught my eye considering my personal experience with disability. Both myself with hearing loss (single-sided deafness) and supporting my dad who had a vision impairment. I felt I had a stronger connection with the goals and values of the NDIA, than I would with other Government Departments. Not to mention the chance to be part of a life-changing reform for Australian society!

My advice for future NDIA Graduates is:

1. Try your best at anything you do. Nobody can ask you to do more than your best.
2. Don't be afraid to ask questions or provide your opinion. This is a great way to learn and consolidate your own knowledge. It also reinforces that you have your own thoughts, and it is OK if they are different from others.

3. Try new things and hop out of your comfort zone! Even if it is little by little, you broaden your horizon the more you do. I never did this prior to working, and it is something I wish I did.

James Kendall

I'm Melbourne-based and completed my studies at Monash University. I was part of the 2023 Graduate Program and undertook rotations in Risk and Procurement.

I currently work in the Enterprise Risk Team within the Risk Management Branch. We are focussed on providing an aggregated view of the Agency's risk landscape and collecting performance commentary for Board reporting. Recently, a major focus of my role has been designing and developing a quantitative scoring model for enterprise risk.

I was attracted to work in a location that would provide some positive benefits to Australians living with disability and their supporters. No matter where you are in the Agency you can be confident that your efforts are helping to deliver the Scheme and that you are helping to make a meaningful difference. Additionally, the Graduate Program lets you undertake multiple rotations around the Agency that enables graduates to get real experience in multiple roles.

The best benefit of the Graduate Program was having the opportunity to network and build friendships with the other graduates in the 2023 cohort from across Australia. Throughout the program we attended numerous events as a cohort, and it was fantastic to work with the other graduates, establish a network and build friendships that last long past the conclusion of the Graduate Program.

My advice for future NDIA Graduates is:

1. Ask questions – Joining the agency is joining a team, and there will be plenty of times when work can be challenging or confusing. Don't be afraid to say that "I don't understand this?" or "How can I improve this?" and learn from the wisdom and experience of your teammates and colleagues.
2. Aim higher – Before submitting work to your team, ask yourself if the deliverable is as good as it can possibly be? Can you improve it? Is there a suggestion you can provide to your team that might improve the process or make the task better the next time it is undertaken? Always look for ways improve your work or suggestions that will help your team.
3. Be open to change – The grad year is jam-packed with activities, not to mention undertaking multiple rotations within the Agency, you'll find yourself constantly working with new people and taking on new responsibilities. Expect change, expect to keep learning from it and always meet it with an open mind.

Dana Cerone

The NDIS resonates closely with me and is somewhere I have always hoped to work for. The graduate program seemed like a great opportunity to join the APS world and begin my career in a field of work that I love.

Currently, I work as a Mental Health & Wellbeing Officer, and I love the team I work with. We are all there to support and lean on each other, whether it's with work tasks or personal challenges. Each person is valued for what they bring to the team, with opportunities to exceed in our strengths, and support from each other for the areas we can improve on.

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing the positive impact it can have on staff members. Sharing the amazing resources, we have for mental health & wellbeing is such a good feeling, especially when you see the shock and excitement from other staff not having known we have so much to offer! Also, having staff come back to us with such appreciation for the supports we have available with our EAP provider (e.g. counselling, financial counselling, nutrition appointments) makes it worth doing what we do!

My advice for future NDIA Graduates is:

1. Make the most of every opportunity! Go into each rotation with a positive mindset & enthusiasm and take any opportunities you can.
2. Network, network, network! Build friendships with fellow grads. They will either be your support network, your go-to people, or you'll motivate each other to strive for greatness!
3. Look after yourself. It can be exhausting starting a new job, especially if you are new to full-time work. So, make sure you find ways to unwind, take care, and come into work feeling refreshed! Also check out our Well+ intranet page for mental health & wellbeing support resources, or feel free to reach out to our team any time!

Michelle Lin

I am currently a Health Liaison Officer. Health Liaison Officers work directly with Hospitals to facilitate the safe discharge of participants from hospital into the community. We are the main point of contact for Hospitals and provide specialist advice and guidance to external stakeholders.

I currently work with the Southeast Sydney Local Health District. I meet with staff from this health district weekly to discuss specific cases. I also provide support with assisting patients admitted to hospital in accessing the scheme. My team help discharge patients into the community and relieve pressure placed on the Australian Health system.

I was interested in working in government as I wanted to be in a role where my work had a significant impact on the lives of Australians. Ultimately, I'm grateful I was paired with the NDIS as I

really value the purpose, and values of the Agency.

The best part of the Graduate program was being able to explore different areas of the Agency. Throughout the program I worked in three different teams and got to experience numerous areas of the Agency through shadowing. This allowed me to be able to figure out where my interests lay and make connections, ultimately leading to the Health Liaison Officer role.

My advice for future NDIA Graduates is:

1. Don’t be afraid to reach out to people and explore the Agency. If you are interested in certain roles and want to shadow/learn more, don’t hesitate to discuss with your line manager or reach out to other graduates.
2. Make the most of the opportunities that come with a graduate program. Volunteer to run meetings, join working groups, pursue rotations/teams you are interested in.
3. Make new friends and connect with others! I’ve made some great friendships across the graduate program including people based in Sydney and across the country.

Rik Saunders

The Graduate Program is a fantastic way to begin your professional career. The rotations provide an opportunity to experience working across different teams gives you a well-rounded understanding of your department. This not only connects you to many people across your department but also fellow graduates working in departments outside of your own.

Currently I’m working for the assets team within The Financial Reporting Team. My role is busy and there is something different to do every day. There is a monthly cycle to the nature of financial reporting which gives you an opportunity to refine your understanding and hone your processes across the course of the year and when I’m not counting beans, you’ll find me listening to music. I’m deeply passionate about songwriting and the therapeutic benefits of keeping a musical practise.

My advice for future NDIA Graduates is:

1. Never be afraid to ask your team how you can help.
2. Take time to get to know your colleagues.
3. Spend time understanding the purpose of the Agency and the outcomes it strives to achieve.

Amanda Garland

I have a strong understanding of the difference the NDIS makes, as my brother lives with intellectual disability and autism. We were raised in public housing and experienced the double challenge of a piecemeal disability system, that wasn’t easy to navigate for people already doing it tough.

During my Master of Social Work I completed units in social policy and disability practice. My lived experience and time at university sparked a dream of making a difference at the NDIA.

In 2019, while working away at my final placement, I got a lifechanging call. I was going to be a 2020 NDIA Graduate. Four years on I am a Guidance Lead. I have the privilege of translating NDIS laws into accessible guidance for staff and community.

The NDIA Graduate Program provided a pathway to where I am today. It helped me gain skills, experience and exposure needed for an impactful Australian Public Service (APS) career.

That is skills in applying for APS jobs, managing government projects and human-centred leadership, experience across the NDIA in service delivery, legal case management and service design as well as exposure to peers, leaders and projects across the APS.

My advice for future NDIA graduates is:

1. Give things a go. Talk to that person you admire; speak up at a meeting; test out a new way of doing something, reflect on your progress.
2. Trust yourself. Collaborate with your colleagues, share your innovative ideas, and know that you will bounce back from any challenges or setbacks you face.
3. Be kind to yourself. You are entering a new chapter of your life, treat yourself with the same kindness you would a friend.

James Tyrrell

I have a Bachelor of Economics and Finance from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and joined the Graduate program through the Finance stream. Prior to starting at the NDIA, I did not know which specific finance area I wanted to pursue. Since then, I completed six rotations across the Finance division and have been exposed to new and exciting areas. I have just been placed in a full-time role of my choosing and could not be more excited to start in the Scheme Reporting team!

The biggest program benefit has been the exposure to various areas of the Finance division, and networking with many talented individuals. In addition to this, the Agency supports further study, such as the Charted Accounting program, which is a great motivator to learn new skills.

My advice for future NDIA Graduates is:

1. Never stop learning.
2. Invest in relationships.
3. Utilise your networks.

Nicholas Dean

I am a Costings Officer in the Chief Financial Officer Division, and my job is to assist New Policy Proposal (NPP). This involves working with stakeholders to determine the anticipated financial costs of certain policy ideas, which are then considered by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet. NPPs can come from a variety of sources and can touch on all aspects of the Agency, so there is always something new and interesting on my desk.

The ability to play a part in shaping an Agency that will have a tangible impact on the lives of Australians living with disability was a major drawcard to working here. The Graduate program gave me credits for a Master in Public Policy. I am currently studying part time at the Australian National University which would have been much more difficult at another Agency or company.

The Agency is really supportive of me pursuing further education.

My advice for future NDIA Graduates is:

1. Embrace challenges.
2. Ask lots of questions.
3. You get out what you put in.

Nathan Petrovski

The NDIA Graduate program attracted me because I love being able to develop my skills and apply my knowledge in aid of giving Australians living with disability a better life. It is an endlessly motivating purpose. The Agency holds such a unique and important role in our country, the prospect of being part of its inception and growth was exciting to me. I get to solve problems that are often faced for the first time as the Agency is so young. The issues that often arise do not have an established history or process for being rectified, which is where we get to have lasting impacts in our solutions.

As part of the Graduate program, I completed six rotations within the Finance stream. Since completing the Graduate program, I’m now working as a Finance Officer.

The best part of the program is working on a multidisciplinary project aimed at improving the representation of leaders living with disability. The project allowed me to meet a range of different stakeholders in the disability community and subsequently increased my understanding on the importance and value that is provided to our society by individuals living with a disability.

My advice for future NDIA graduates is:

1. Be open-minded.
2. Be enthusiastic for work.
3. Be willing to learn.

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