



**ELIZABETH MACKNEY**  
REGISTERED MUSIC THERAPIST  
BN MMUSTHY, RN RMT



**5 DECEMBER 2021**

**TO**  
SANDRA MCDUFF  
& FAMILY, SUPPORT  
CO-ORDINATOR  
AND NDIA

**RE: SANDRA MCDUFF – PROGRAM REVIEW AND OBJECTIVES  
UPDATE**

***As per the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Registration process Elizabeth Mackney is a Registered NDIS Provider. This Registration is current until 2023 and the Registration Id is: 4-3LLO-1571.***

Sandra, thank you for the opportunity to continue working with you through my role as a Registered NDIS Provider of Therapeutic Supports to provide you with a music therapy program that targets building your capacity and independence in the domains of your physical, psychological and social functioning, along with supporting you in carving out a place for yourself in the local performing arts community and beyond (N.B. non-musical and musical goals/aspirations).

***...confirmation from the NDIA that: “music therapy is a therapeutic intervention recognised by the NDIS when delivered by Music Therapists registered with the Australian Music Therapy Association as part of a planned therapy program to enable a participant to meet their goals” (20 Nov 2018).***

**Summary of session attendance, performances and recordings:**



Since Sandra's last music therapy NDIS plan review report, which was written in May 2020 and was essentially her initial music therapy program plan, she has attended a total of 68 sessions. Fifty-two of these were individual sessions (F2F = 35 & Telehealth = 17), and 16 were group sessions (F2F = 11 & Telehealth = 5). Throughout this period, and based on my recommendations, Sandra has also joined the Sprung!! Online Auslan Choir and the online Couch Choir. She has also joined a band, been actively involved in two local public busking performances, been part of 14 multi-participant recordings, written two songs, and improvised multiple spontaneous songs. For all of these Sandra sang, signed and/or played a range of instruments - keyboard, piano, guitar, and a range of pitched and non-pitched percussion. The recordings can be shared with you by Sandra or her representative on request. Sandra's participation in the online Couch Choir can be viewed on YouTube through the search "You're The Voice Couch Choir", which was produced in celebration of National Week of Deaf People. It should be noted that Sandra has missed some sessions over this program period due to illness/other commitments.

The option of Telehealth has been critical throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in keeping people safe and connected. Sandra responded beautifully to it. The unanticipated silver-lining was that it provided a pivotal mid-step in supporting Sandra's comfortable and successful transition to the variety of group experiences defined above. Group work was something she was very apprehensive about in the early part of her program. Sandra's transition to music therapy group work resulted in her becoming a member of "The Monster Rap Band". All the group sessions and band experiences were supported by myself and community musician, Jo Young, of Lismore Community Music. Sandra attended two busking performances put on by the band this year through the "Buskability" program - a joint initiative of Lismore Music Therapy and Lismore Community Music. The first of these Sandra attended as an active audience member due to her significant apprehension about performing publicly, and the second and most recent she performed in with great confidence in celebration of International Day Of People With Disability (IDoPWD). From this most recent event, which was held in a prominent position in the Lismore CBD and attended by many ( $n = 50+$ ), "The Monster Rap Band" earned more than \$450.00 in total. Along with 18 covers, Sandra performed two original songs. One was written by me in celebration of IDoPWD, and the other was written by Sandra. The latter we performed as a duet at her request. Many in the audience commented afterwards that her "Butterfly Song" was their favourite and made them cry. The song that I wrote, which involved multiple participants (40), including Sandra, was publicly released on this day and performed live by the band for the first time at this event. Its music video has raised more than \$1300.00



so far. All funds made from the video will go to the NDIS participants involved - including Sandra. At our group celebratory dinner following the performance Sandra commented proudly that she was very good at her music and performing.

Sandra's music therapy program outcomes are undeniably strong. A world of performing arts opportunities have opened up to her rapidly and she has responded to them with gusto. Sandra is an inspiration, a role model to others, and her case is an exemplar of all the NDIS promises to make a reality for people living with disability. Sandra's regular individual sessions where she has had the opportunity to work-on and through her areas of concern, resistance, and vulnerabilities have been fundamental to these strong, incremental social and economic outcomes. Sandra's case highlights the critical role and value of investing in long-term therapeutic relationships, as well as the importance of frequency and repetition in effecting strong, rapid and sustainable outcomes. The career pathways for performing artists living with a disability in our society are, in comparison to their able-bodied peers, still unmade. It is our job to make them, demand them, and make them visible. This is the responsibility of everyone involved in Sandra's care - workers and NDIS delegates/planners alike i.e. to ensure the consistent and sustained support of outcomes such as these, and trailblazers such as Sandra. This is the only way the social change the NDIS promises will become a reality. We are only at the beginning. The scheme is far from maturity in this regard and this is a marathon - not a sprint.

***A summary of the broader evidence (including brain imaging research) and recommended music therapy techniques for working with a range of disabilities and neuropsychological conditions across a range of populations is well summarised in Michael Thaut and Volker Hoemberg's 2014 text, "The Handbook Of Neurologic Music Therapy", for which they won the prestigious honour of second prize in the British Medical Association's book awards for 2015. Michael Thaut currently works as the Professor of Music, Neuroscience and Rehabilitation Services at the University Of Toronto, Canada.***

The integrated process of music therapy has supported, and has so much more potential to advance Sandra's non-musical and musical abilities. When compared to other therapies this is where music therapy shines in terms of meeting the reasonable and necessary criteria of offering value for money to NDIS participants i.e. it offers a highly specialised context for working on musical and non-musical skills in a way that is integrated, motivating and meaningful to the participant while simultaneously forging and



building innovative pathways within the community to support sustained social and economic participation. Most importantly, the dynamic, flexible and inclusive nature of the music therapy context and approach has allowed Sandra to construct a vision and develop ambitions for herself regarding what she has to offer others and this region i.e. basic human right and supports her beyond basic need (an expressed intent of the NDIS - defined in the online NDIS Worker Orientation module). Sandra, and her fellow band members are, without question, pioneers in translating the ideological intent of the NDIS into a reality. Supporting this social change is a significant responsibility for all of us to bear, and one that we all must consider very seriously and humbly, and stay true to. All should be done to ensure Sandra's continued access to this targeted and specialised support, and that includes following the program plan and funding recommendations made below.

#### **Funding and frequency recommendations for Sandra's ongoing music therapy program:**

Based on Sandra's outcomes in music therapy to date and the ongoing long-term needs to be addressed, I have made my following recommendation for funding based on her attending weekly music therapy for one hour and 16 group sessions that are all two hours in length for a year. I recommend that the total amount allocated be determined based on the current NDIS recommended rate for Therapeutic Supports i.e. 193.99/hr (individual sessions) and \$64.66/hr (group sessions) i.e. the total funding allocation for a 12 month period for the service recommended here would need to be no less than \$12506.60. This includes the cost of a comprehensive report at the end of the next program period.

#### **SANDRA'S UPDATED MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM PLAN:**

I have updated the overarching goal and specific objectives in Sandra's current program plan (*dated May 2020*) where relevant, and/or based on her demonstrating consistent ***"achieving and advancing"*** outcomes over the course of the 68 sessions she has attended since. Some objectives remain unchanged even if a consistent ***"achieving and advancing"*** outcome has been attained. This may be because the objective itself includes an important grounding/reinforcing construct that needs to be ever-present - such as the reporting of evidence that Sandra is transferring our work beyond the music therapy context, or she wishes to explore themes from other contexts within the music therapy context. This review ensures the work of therapy is focussed on challenging Sandra in ways that are responsive to her unique skill set and readiness; thereby, facilitating a dynamic, individualised, capacity building process



that is meaningful, achievable and rewarding.

**Sandra's Key Need:**

*Intensive, long-term, specialised support in the areas of physical, psychological and social functioning to ensure she achieves her full potential in terms of independent living, community engagement and personal ambition: such as, integration into the local performing arts community.*

**Overarching Goal (derived from key need):**

*For Sandra to practise and extend her physical, psychological and social communication skills through experiences that are meaningful to her; thereby, simultaneously supporting her personal ambition, community participation and advancement towards her aspirations.*

**Objectives for Goal:**

**(how achievement of the goal will be addressed/monitored/measured/described/observed):**

- 1) Sandra will consistently make clear her preferences regarding repertoire, her role, instruments, and the like, whenever it is appropriate to do so according to the context (e.g. group/individual/performances/recording/etc).
- 2) Sandra will sing continuously and confidently for the length of a number of songs in every session.
- 3) Sandra will progressively integrate and share her developing musicianship across a variety of contexts.
- 4) Sandra and/or her family/support workers will describe experiences of the sessions reaching beyond the space, and/or Sandra will explore themes or influences from other areas of her life in the space.

If you have any questions pertaining to the above please do not hesitate to contact us.

**KIND REGARDS**



ELIZABETH MACKNEY  
NEUROLOGIC MUSIC THERAPIST

**For your information:**

The following defines how the SMART goal/objectives are evaluated and described in session reports and summarised and updated at NDIS plan review points:

**SESSION REPORT TERMS DEFINED:**

**OUTCOME:** Quantitative measure based on 5 point Likert scale – defined below

**CONTEXT DETAIL:** Qualitative measure – describes how that outcome presented for the participant i.e. what it looked like in therapy, and any relevant considerations/concerns

**LIKERT SCALE KEY:**

- **ACHIEVING AND ADVANCING** = Achieving beyond the measureable element of the objective
- **ACHIEVING** = Achieving equal to the measureable element of the objective
- **ACHIEVING IN PART** = Achieving one part, such as half, of the measureable element of the objective. The element achieved and the element not achieved would then be described in the **CONTEXT DETAIL**.
- **WORKING TOWARDS** = Not achieving the measureable element of the objective, but demonstrating signs that would lead to it. These signs would be described in the **CONTEXT DETAIL**.
- **NOT ASSESSED/NOT APPLICABLE** = e.g. Not relevant for this particular session/s.