

Inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the ACT

The inquiry terms of reference appear to be mainly about inter-government issues rather than the impact on people with disabilities. This is unfortunate given the issues we and others are experiencing with the NDIA.

Comments on each of the terms of inquiry:

a. *The relationship between the ACT Government and Australian Government in regard NDIS and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) as it affects the ACT; particularly gaps or duplicate roles and responsibilities;*

From the point of view of the parent/guardian of a person with intellectual disability the transition from ACT Government care (Disability Services) to the NDIS has involved unresolved confusion in whether or not some services provided previously by the ACT Government now fall under the NDIS and hence require NDIA funding if the service is to be continued. Examples include Podiatry and Psychiatric Services. A major shortfall in service delivery is occurring with advocacy services, our experience is that they are so snowed under with NDIA issues that the various advocacy agencies do not return e-mails or phone calls.

b. *Practical outcomes of implementation in relation to disability workforce development strategies; the Human Services Registrar; the availability of services for eligible NDIS participants; the availability of early childhood intervention services; the implementation of local area coordination; and supports for people with psycho-social disabilities; and*

We have found it difficult to obtain satisfactory service providers/carers. Some of the people interviewed appeared incapable of providing any level of care let alone a satisfactory level of care. Under Disability ACT effective coordination of services for our son were performed by ourselves and the local house manager. Under our son's first two plans the coordination was performed by ourselves and the funded plan coordinator. Under our son's third and current plan funding for the plan coordinator has been reduced to such a level that the funds will be spent well inside the plan period, necessitating that we take over all coordination activities. This scenario will collapse when we are no longer capable of carrying out the coordination/die.

c. *Whether there are unique factors relating to the provision of disability services affected by the implementation of the NDIS in the ACT.*

What appears to be a unique factor to the ACT or perhaps unique to all the sites that were involved in the pilot program has been the massive reduction in funding provided to participants when comparing their initial plan(s) to subsequent plans. It would appear that as implementation has progressed the same amount of funding has been divided among more and more people and the bucket not increased in necessitating the reduction in funding to the original NDIS participants. The initial funding/plans under the pilot have created false hope.

Some issues we have experienced that do not fall into the terms of reference are mentioned in the following to try and raise awareness and possibly verify issues experienced by others.

The NDIA planning process is totally non-consultative with large reductions in plan funding occurring without warning in a dictatorial fashion and without consideration of the impact.

Furthermore the NDIA has adopted a threatening stance when the funding reductions have been

questioned and reviews requested, the response being yes you can have a review but it is likely your funding will be cut further.

Indirectly the NDIA is discouraging people with disabilities from working. When we questioned the level of funding in our son's new plan (greatly reduced from the previous plans) we were told the "average" carer rate used to calculate the funding, based on hours of care, was heavily biased towards the "normal" hours of work. In other words because our son works four days per week a lot of his care hours can only be delivered outside of "normal" weekly hours and on weekends, thus he receives less hours than some-one with similar disabilities but does not work. In response to our questioning this we were told "he has the choice and control" as to when he receives carer services. This does not make sense to us, because he does work he has less choice as to when to use the carer and health services.

Regards,