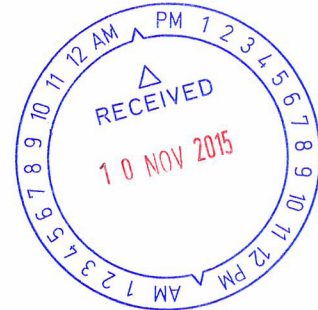




Our ref: 68000233
Your ref:
Enquiries: Ron Chalmers

Senator Rachel Siewert
Chair
Standing Committee on Community Affairs
References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Senator

Thank you for your letter dated 21 October 2015 requesting information from the Disability Services Commission in reference to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee's Inquiry into *Violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings, including the gender and age related dimensions, and the particular situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability.*

The Disability Services Commission's response to each of your questions is provided below.

1. Progress of the Western Australian Government in implementing the 2014 National Framework for Reducing and Eliminating the Use of Restrictive Practices in the Disability Sector

Progress in the implementation of the framework has been made in the following ways:

- The development of a Positive Behaviour Framework (2009 and 2013) to guide the continued implementation of Positive Behaviour Support across the disability sector and to influence mainstream services.
- Setting the direction for service development in WA (Effective Service Design and Restrictive Practices issues paper) which highlights the role of Positive Behaviour Support in getting the service design to be person centred and reducing the need for people with disability to use challenging behaviours to get what they want or need.
- The development of a Code of Practice for the Elimination of Restrictive Practices. Feedback from the disability sector indicates that this voluntary code has had a major impact on reducing restrictive practices.

- 'Is There A Better Way' training package has been used to deliver extensive training across the sector regarding the human rights inherent in the Code of Practice. The training package provides families and disability sector organisations with the opportunity to talk together and to explore ways of supporting people with disability using the principles of Positive Behaviour Support embedded in real life stories of how families have themselves (and with professional support) addressed issues of "challenging behaviours" in positive and contemporary ways.
- The WA Disability Services Commission has funded a collaborative two year project to develop cultural competency in the disability sector to ensure the rights of Aboriginal people are understood and upheld in relation to restrictive practices.
- Using a funding grant from the WA Disability Services Commission, the Western Australian Individual Services (WAIS) organisation has developed a guide to Supported Decision Making.
- Introduction of a "Guiding Committee" in 2010 (now standing at 41 members), comprised of families, people with disability, peak bodies, service providers and Disability Services Commission directorate representatives to oversee the implementation of the Positive Behaviour Framework.
- Establishment of the Behaviour In Action Interest group (150 members) as an information sharing and skill development group comprised of disability sector organisations and peak bodies.
- The Disability Services Commission is working with a number of disability sector organisations who have proceeded to appoint Behaviour Support Consultants to act as mentors and/or front line supervisors to assist in the implementation of Positive Behaviour Framework reform agenda.
- Introduction across the disability sector of Positive Behaviour Support "Panels" to review any Behaviour Support Plans that contains a restrictive practice (the use of the Behaviour Support Plan Quality Evaluation Tool II, or BSPQEII, provides us with the common language and focus that allows organisations to collaborate).
- Implementation of a "Community of Practice" to support best practice in Positive Behaviour Support. Behaviour Support Consultants represent 45 Positive Behaviour Support adopting organisations (so far), who meet, share information and support each other on the journey towards the minimisation and elimination of restrictive practices.
- A Disability Services Commission policy for the elimination of the use of restrictive practices.
- Project work across metropolitan and country to explore and develop evidence for appropriate organisational, workforce and operational reforms that support the implementation of Positive Behaviour strategies and

eliminates the use of restrictive practices across multiple service types and service settings.

- Holding a family leadership conference in the area of Challenging Behaviour, which was attended by over 100 families from around the state.
- Establishment of a 'Side by Side' family mentoring project, which brings families together to provide support, friendship, information and encouragement as families face the challenges of supporting a loved one who sometimes experiences challenging behaviour. This is a co-production model where families are able to have a voice in the design and delivery of services as well as being part of the long term maintenance strategies for other families who might be experiencing challenging behaviours.
- Inclusion of 'unauthorised use of restrictive practices' in serious incident reporting; a contractual obligation on all disability sector organisations.
- The Disability Services Commission has funded two evaluations that have examined sector and workforce development requirements (metropolitan and now country) to explore and develop appropriate organisational, workforce and operational reforms that support the implementation of Positive Behaviour strategies and eliminate the use of restrictive practices across multiple service types and service settings.
- In partnership with the University of Western Australia, the Disability Services Commission is examining the system wide application of Positive Behaviour Support.
- The Disability Services Commission's enhanced quality evaluation system, which is underpinned by the National Standards for Disability Services, commenced on 1 July 2014.
- Supporting the sector's understanding of the Quality System and the National Standards through developing and/or providing written material, information and training sessions and one on one support.
- Funding for the development of Positive Behaviour Teams (for government and non-government providers) to provide early intervention and support to families where there is a person with an intellectual disability (aged 6 – 25) who is experiencing challenging behaviours.
- Developing a consistent, evidence based approach to behaviour support across the state by engaging with Local Area Coordinators, disability sector organisations, local community groups and local families and carers in regional areas (this project started in Albany and is now expanding to the Wheatbelt area).
- A "Positive Behaviour Support Tool Box" to support disability sector organisations to develop appropriate behaviour and environmental risk assessment tools is widely available.

- Introduction (and state-wide training) in the Behaviour Support Plan Quality Evaluation, Version II (BSPQEII) as a transparent, evidence based and contemporary approach to assessing the quality of Positive Behaviour support Plans and eliminating Restrictive Practices.

2. The role of the WA Disability Services Commission in providing guidance for and regulation of behaviour support and intervention services within relevant Western Australian Departments

The Disability Services Commission does not have a regulatory responsibility in relation to other state government departments but seeks to influence decision making through a variety of partnerships, frameworks and processes. There is growing evidence that this influencing and partnership role is positively impacting on mainstream agencies.

3. The Development of behaviour support and intervention services within relevant Western Australian Departments

Government Inter jurisdictional

- Review of the Code of Practice 2014 contributed to greater awareness of the need for a consistent approach to the support of people with disability across life settings and services.

Department of Corrective Services

- Training in communication and positive behaviour support to Entry Level prison officers, Youth justice officers at Banksia, entry level youth justice, community corrections, programs staff, teachers in WA Prisons.

Department of Education

- Individual interventions in school settings where there is evidence of use of restrictive practice.
- The collaborative planning pilot project is well advanced in the Lower Southwest WA NDIS My Way trial site. Families and schools have nominated to participate and collaborative planning is underway.
- The Disability Services Commission has been working with WA Department of Education to develop a shared understanding and approach to supporting students with disabilities whose behaviours are challenging their educational access and participation. A joint initiative is under consideration to trialling the use of a Positive Behaviour Support Package in three metropolitan schools.
- Clinical interdisciplinary support from the Disability Services Commission to schools where there are students with an intellectual disability sometimes experiencing challenging behaviours.
- Joint training in the Behaviour Support Planning Quality Evaluation Tool (BSPQEII) with staff from the Department of Education.

Department of Health

- Individual support (e.g. implementing communication strategies) to hospitals when behaviour support requested or where the use of restraints is considered.
- Collaboration with the Health Department to introduce hospital based Disability Liaison Officers to influence on behaviour support practices and use of restrictive practices in hospitals.

Department of Child Protections and Family Services

- Joint finding of People with Exceptionally Complex Needs and Young People with Exceptionally Complex Needs. These two programs rely on cross government collaboration to meet the holistic life needs (including Positive Behaviour Support) of program participants.

Mental Health Commission

- Disability and Health Sector staff training to support people with Dual Diagnosis.

4. The extent of interaction between the Commission and the Western Australian Department of Education on these matters

The Disability Services Commission does not have a regulatory responsibility in relation to other state government departments but seeks to influence decision making through a variety of partnerships, frameworks and processes.

5. The need to include schools and similar institutions in the National Framework.

The Disability Services Commission is unable to comment on this question.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on

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Yours sincerely

Dr Ron Chalmers
Director General
Disability Services Commission

5 November 2015

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