



TAC response to the Delivery of Outcomes under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to build inclusive and accessible communities

Purpose

This submission aims to provide an overview of the key TAC initiatives relevant to the terms of reference provided as part of the Senate Inquiry into *the delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to build inclusive and accessible communities*.

The submission offers shared learnings and specific ideas in response to the Senate Inquiry based on known synergies across government departments and outlines opportunity for further discussion and collaboration based on the recommendations provided.

Recommendations:

- 1. Planning and Design - Housing:** Note the upcoming discussions to be held at the Building Minister's Forum meeting in March 2017, where the costs and benefits of applying accessibility standards for private dwellings will be further considered.
- 2. Transport Services:** Monitor with a view to investment in autonomous vehicle technology and shared mobility solutions which may have considerable benefit to social insurance schemes.
- 3. Communication and Information Systems:** Identify and facilitate partnership opportunities with industry and educational institutions which present an opportunity for government to be an early adopter of technology.
- 4. Research/Innovation:** Leverage from the considerable investment TAC has made in relation to disability, health and trauma research and consider the best government and sector led forums to translate key research findings into practice.
- 5. Economic Participation:** Invite TAC to participate in the Employment Reform Working Group *National Disability and Carers Advisory Council* (NDCAC).
- 6. TAC Client Voice:** Invite TAC clients to participate and inform the broader disability reform agenda; and partner with TAC in the co-design and implementation of initiatives arising from the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*.



Introduction and purpose

The current *TAC 2020* strategy aligns with, and the TAC strongly supports, the purpose and priority areas of the overarching *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*.

The TAC operates from a best practice and sector leading perspective in areas including accessible housing planning and design, research and innovation in independence enhancing technology in transport and communication, and in fostering greater participation, employment, citizenship, safety, choice and control for TAC clients living with a disability. The TAC welcomes the opportunity to share this evidence base with government and with other sector stakeholders, translating best practice and key research findings that will support the outcomes of the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*.

As a funder of contemporary disability services for Victorians living with a permanent disability and a commitment and accountability to ensure TAC clients participate meaningfully in society, exercising agency and citizenship at every level of their life, TAC is well positioned to add value to the national disability reform.

The TAC welcomes the opportunity to continue to work closely with the government, people with a lived experience of disability, the National Disability Insurance Agency, the disability services sector and the community in achieving the outcomes of the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*.

TAC Overview

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) is a Victorian government owned statutory authority governed by the *Transport Accident Act 1986*. The TAC is responsible for funding treatment and supports for people injured as a result of a transport accident as well as actively campaigning to reduce the incidence of road trauma.

Each year TAC accepts around 16,000 new claims from people who have been injured as a result of transport accidents in Victoria. Within 12 months approximately 80% of these people have their lives back on track and no longer require support. Around 20% of claimants require ongoing support to help increase their independence and quality of life.

The *TAC 2020* strategy has two strategic outcomes - *Getting client's lives back on track*, with a key focus on increasing independence and economic participation and *Towards Zero*, a vision for a future free of deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

TAC responses to National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 outcomes -

a. The planning, design, management, and regulation of:

i. The built and natural environment, including commercial premises, housing, public spaces and amenities

The TAC's response to this item relates specifically to housing due to its expertise in the design and construction of best practice accessible housing for TAC clients.

The TAC invests in:

- the development of purpose built accessible housing via the Residential Independence Pty Ltd (RIPL) initiative, with a current funding allocation of \$30 million with four developments of 21 houses completed to date; and
- home modifications that support approximately 1500 TAC clients annually to continue to achieve their independence goals living in the community.

National policy and practice

The 2010–2020 *National Disability Strategy Report* to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 2012 included a target of 100 per cent of new dwellings to meet the silver level of the *Liveable Housing Design Standards* by 2020.

The TAC acknowledges that progress has been made in this area, particularly in relation to the voluntary uptake of the *Liveable Housing Design Guidelines* by state and federal government agencies. The 21 completed Residential Independence Pty Ltd houses have all achieved platinum, gold or silver level accreditation against these guidelines.

It is noted that COAG, via the Building Minister's Forum, is currently considering the inclusion of minimum accessible and adaptable design standards in the *National Construction Code* for private dwellings in Australia.

At its December 2016 meeting, the Building Minister's Forum noted its commitment to universal and accessible housing and agreed to further discussions on the costs and benefits of applying minimum accessibility standards for private dwellings in Australia at the next Building Minister's Forum meeting scheduled for March 2017.

The TAC draws the Senate's attention to these upcoming discussions in your consideration of this matter.

- **The planning, design, management, and regulation of:**
ii. Transport services and infrastructure

Please see *Appendix A* for the full response to this section - commissioned by the TAC from the University of Melbourne. In summary:

‘For people who are aging, financially vulnerable, or who have disabilities that prevent them from driving, Australia’s private-car dominated transport system is a significant barrier to community access. However, the advancement and introduction of new vehicle technologies and infrastructure heralds a potential positive change.’

‘Following, influencing, and potentially investing in autonomous vehicle technology and shared mobility solutions may have considerable benefit for both road safety and injury compensation / rehabilitation schemes. This influence and investment may be in the form of technologies, themselves, or in the coordination and piloting of transport services and systems arising from their introduction. If such technologies can provide greater safety and reduction of injury, while also improving access to social and economic opportunities for existing people with disabilities, it could mark an extremely positive development for Australians with disabilities.’

‘Further, achieving broad public acceptance of autonomous vehicles and shared mobility solutions may be enhanced through agencies’ active public discourse of the social benefits they may bring for people with disabilities, older Australians and other people currently facing mobility and access issues.’

- **The planning, design, management, and regulation of:**
iii. Communication and information systems, including Australian electronic media and the emerging internet of things

The TAC recognises the importance of technology in facilitating the independence of its clients, with the stated commitment in *TAC 2020* to ‘encourage clients to take up innovative technology to support their independence’.

In advancement of this priority TAC is progressing a number of initiatives, including a partnership with Deakin University in trialling their Unisono smart home technology.

The Unisono system has been developed specifically to assist people to ‘age in place’ and delay transition to supported living environments. This technology also has potentially significant benefits for people living with disability. Specifically, it has the potential to: increase the independence of the people with disability, reduce their reliance on paid supports, and increase their safety within the home.

The Unisono system aims to achieve the above by:

- the installation of low cost, non-invasive sensors placed throughout a home;
- using artificial intelligence to make smart conclusions from the data collected by these sensors; and
- proactively prompting the occupant or calling for assistance as appropriate.



Partnering with industry and educational institutions presents an opportunity for business and government to be an early adopter of technology and to influence the design of the technology to the benefit of the community including those with a disability.

In addition to trialling the Unisono system, TAC via the Residential Independence Pty Ltd initiative, has installed industry leading home automation and assistive technology into all of its developments. The TAC has also invested in post occupancy research of Residential Independence Pty Ltd developments to obtain independent feedback and to build an evidence base regarding how best practice housing design coupled with home automation and assistive technology can assist seriously injured TAC clients to live more independently.

The TAC welcomes the opportunity to share this evidence base with sector stakeholders, translating key research findings to benefit the broader sector.

b. Potential barriers to progress or innovation and how these might be addressed

The TAC strongly supports the *NDIA Assistive Technology Strategy* and the strategic intent underpinning its priorities, with particular reference to market stimulation and informed participant led demand.

The TAC welcomes the opportunity to contribute the significant body of research it has commissioned in the assistive technology space and to operate in a partnership role with the NDIA and the sector in future development of the proposed innovation hub.

An example which demonstrates TAC's response to overcoming barriers to innovation has been its approach to, and translation of, the post occupancy research of Residential Independence Pty Ltd.

Research findings identified barriers in the uptake of the consistent use of technology by TAC clients and carers. The TAC's response to this was to employ client centric methodologies based on best practice innovation in order to deliver training and to conduct small scale experiments of new technologies directly with clients and carers, prior to scaling up to full implementation.

This enabled frequent, direct client feedback on the ease and usability of these technologies. Training and development was tailored to the specific needs of clients and their carers, maximising the uptake and use of the technology.

c. The impact of restricted access for people with disability on inclusion and participation in economic, cultural, social, civil and political life

The devastating impact restricted accessibility has on the lives of people with disability and the consequence of this to the whole of society, has been well documented.

The TAC strongly supports the United Nations *Convention on the Rights Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD), taking active steps to progress Convention articles intent on enacting citizenship and accessibility, as well as eliminating barriers to the built environment, information and communication and transportation.

To action this commitment the TAC has undertaken a number of initiatives and innovations that seek to enact the citizenship and participation of its clients, as detailed below.

TAC Client Voice

The TAC continues to build and improve its approach to the development and implementation of initiatives which capture and respond to the voice of its clients.

The TAC is committed to the development of dedicated platforms to ensure clients have the opportunity to inform and direct their engagement with the TAC. Plans are currently underway to establish a Client Reference Group, providing lived experience consultation and advice to key areas across the scheme.

The TAC welcomes the opportunity for the scheme and its clients to participate in and inform the broader disability reform agenda. This would ensure that TAC clients as people with a disability supported by a compensable scheme outside of the NDIS are represented in this evolving policy area.

The Independence Model

In 2011, TAC implemented the Independence Model, a person-centred approach to enable clients to identify goals that are meaningful to them and which provide opportunity to maximise independence in all areas of their life. A range of philosophies and theoretical frameworks were considered when developing the Independence Model, including the *Disability Planning Principles* within the Victorian *Disability Act 2006* (Section 52).

The overall aim of the Independence Model is to ensure clients have access to services delivering contemporary disability practice, resulting in the following outcomes:

- Citizenship
- Maximum independence
- Increased participation levels in work, community and family life

The Independence Model has delivered the following outcomes:

- Increased number of client independence and quality of life outcomes through the measurement of Goal Attainment Scales (GAS) and Maximal Independence achieved in Life areas (based on International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health)



- Higher level of client satisfaction demonstrated through client satisfaction surveys

Individualised Funding

Building on its previous Self-Purchasing model, in 2014 the TAC introduced an Individualised Funding model to enable increased choice, control and flexibility for TAC clients, enabling them to actively self-direct and self-determine the supports they receive.

The TAC has sought to adopt a flexible approach relating to the supports clients can purchase. In the formulation of the Individualised Funding model TAC drew on the considerable international and national evidence that indicates the majority of individuals using self-purchasing models consistently demonstrate a 'value for money' and non-fraudulent approach.

Currently 108 clients have transitioned to Individualised Funding, 46% of whom have a cognitive impairment. Clients report a greater sense of control and autonomy over their lives. Financial outcomes have also been compelling with a 15% reduction in projected spend for those individuals utilising Individualised Funding.

Economic Participation

As part of the *TAC 2020* strategy the TAC has embarked on the *Enterprise Work Strategy*, the intent of which is to support clients at all levels of injury or disability to achieve their maximal participation in work. The development of this strategy is currently underway and includes the re-design of the Vocational Services framework, and the development of an employment model that will promote inclusivity and accessibility in and to the workplace.

Many TAC clients are unable to return to their pre-accident occupation and face significant barriers in returning to the workforce including transportation, physical access and employer support.

While the TAC has particular strengths in the provision of vocational guidance and investment in re-training, evidence indicates that future models should have a strong focus on workplace accommodation and workplace based interventions. There is an opportunity to work collaboratively across government and jurisdictions in Australia to ensure that all people with disability receive fair and equal employer support.

The TAC has invested significantly in research to gain insight into how clients can optimise their outcomes in key life areas including citizenship and economic participation. This includes an \$80million investment in neurotrauma research in the ten years 2005 to 2015. Most recently the TAC has commissioned The Institute for Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research (ISCRR) to undertake an international evidence review into current and emerging employment models, including vocational

and occupational rehabilitation frameworks. This research will contribute to the broad evidence base for future developments in employment and economic participation for people with a disability.

The TAC welcomes the opportunity to share and translate research findings with its government colleagues and the sector, and sees this best realised via participation in



the *National Disability and Carers Advisory Council*, Employment Reform Working Group currently underway.

Summary

The TAC is keen to pursue partnership opportunities with its government and sector colleagues in the co-design and implementation of initiatives arising from the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* implementation and 'reinvigoration' currently underway.