

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

20 JUNE 2018

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Staffing

Question reference number: 1

Question:

- As at 21 June 2018, what is the difference between employed staff in the NDIA, and the Agency's staffing cap?
- Are there any plans to increase the number of Members and Senators Contact Officers as more participants come into the Scheme?

Answer:

Difference between employed staff in the NDIA, and the Agency's staffing cap

For the 2017-18 financial year, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) had an average staffing level (ASL) cap of 2,460. As at 30 June 2018*, the NDIA workforce was at its ASL cap.

* Please note the NDIA reports on human resources data at the end of every month

Members and Senators Contact Officers

The National Disability Insurance Agency regularly assess the workload of Members and Senators Contact Officers and adjusts resourcing as needed.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Department of Social Services' role and responsibilities

Question reference number: 2

Question: During the initial phases of the Scheme, the committee understood that DSS had policy responsibility for various aspects of the Scheme, while the NDIA had operational responsibility. However, the NDIA appears to now be responsible for both policy and operations in many key aspects of the Scheme.

Could you clarify your Department's responsibility, and update the committee on any activities currently being undertaken in the following areas:

- Sector Development;
- Market readiness, stewardship and intervention;
- Interface with mainstream services;
- Disability housing;
- Disability employment; and
- Workforce development

Answer:

The Department of Social Services (the Department) is responsible for policy and the NDIA is responsible for the operation of the scheme. However, the respective roles of the Department and the NDIA have significant interactions and the agencies work cooperatively on the implementation of the scheme.

The Department coordinates market and workforce development policy and strategy nationally, and works with the NDIA and states and territories to identify and implement priority market and workforce development activities. The Department coordinates this work through Market Readiness Working Groups in each jurisdiction and nationally through the Market Oversight sub-Working Group of the Disability Reform Council Senior Officials Working Group. The Department also administers sector development funding and programs, including the NDIS Sector Development Fund (SDF) from 2015 to 2018 (administered by the NDIA from 2012 to 2015), the new NDIS Jobs and Market Fund (JMF), and the Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program.

The JMF is a \$45.6 million fund announced in the 2018-19 Federal Budget. The JMF will replace and build on the success of the Sector Development Fund (SDF), but shift the focus to prioritising opportunities for workforce and market growth. The objective of the JMF is to grow the provider market and workforce in capacity and capability to meet full scheme demand. There will be a number of targeted grants rounds under the JMF over the 2018-21 period. The first open grant round is scheduled to open for applications by the end of 2018.

The Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program is a \$33 million program to develop the capacity of disability and aged care service providers to operate effectively and expand their workforces, with a particular focus on boosting local job opportunities in rural, regional and outer suburban areas. The Program is deploying Regional Coordinators and Specialist (issues based) Coordinators to raise awareness of employment opportunities, produce and distribute market intelligence, and recommend strategies to address workforce challenges. In addition, eligible disability service providers will be able to apply for business transition advice and grants to help them prepare their businesses to deliver services under the NDIS.

The Department has also engaged Ernst & Young to explore different market design and intervention options to address thin markets, to inform the NDIA's Market Enablement Framework. This market design and intervention work is due for completion by the end of 2018.

With respect to disability housing, state and territory housing and homelessness services remain responsible for the provision of accessible and affordable accommodation that meets the needs of people with disability. The Department manages Australian Government programs to provide funding to assist people to access affordable and appropriate housing. The NDIA can provide reasonable and necessary supports to NDIS participants to live independently by building their capacity and funding home modifications. In cases of participants with extreme functional impairment, the NDIA may fund the capital costs of specialist accommodation.

Outside of the NDIS, the Department is responsible for the following programs and initiatives to encourage and support employment of people with disability:

- *Disability Employment Services (DES)*: supports people with disability, injury or health condition to prepare for, find and keep a job in the mainstream workforce. DES providers are a mix of large, medium and small, for-profit and not-for-profit organisations that are experienced in supporting people with disability as well as providing assistance to employers to put in place practices that support the employee in the workplace.
- *JobAccess*: the national hub for information about disability employment. It provides tailored information to persons with disabilities and employers, connecting them with free government disability employment supports.
- *AccessAbility Day*: an Australian Government initiative that allows employers to connect with jobseekers with disability, who are current and active DES participants looking for work, to see their potential in the workplace. Employers can explore the concept of employing a jobseeker with disability, while also providing an opportunity for participants to gain an insight into a particular job or type of work. AccessAbility Day will be held nationally in the week 26-30 November 2018 – the week before International Day of People with Disability.
- *Disability Employment Assistance (Australian Disability Enterprises)*: While funding responsibility for employment supports is transitioning from the Department to the NDIA, the Department retains policy oversight for employment outcomes for people with disability. The Department is working closely with the NDIA as employment supports are implemented through NDIS participant's plans.

The Department is drawing on input received through consultations to develop advice to Government. It is expected consultation on specific policy options will occur towards the end of 2018 through the *National Disability and Carers Advisory Council (NDCAC)*: an independent ministerial advisory council that provides advice to the Minister for Social

Services and helps drive key government reform agendas, including the National Disability Strategy (NDS), which impact people with disability and carers. Under the NDCAC, there are three working group who progress activities and drive engagement with the sector and broader stakeholders. This includes disability employment matters.

The Department is also working with other Commonwealth and state and territory departments, the NDIA and the sector to grow the disability workforce. Activities include:

- Leveraging off existing employment and training programs such as *jobactive* and *Disability Employment Services* to place jobseekers into suitable jobs;
- Funding the National Aboriginal Community Health Organisation and Indigenous Allied Health Australia to deliver projects to identify issues and solutions to enable Indigenous organisations and job seekers to deliver NDIS services;
- Working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) organisations to develop resources which will assist NDIS providers that serve CALD participants; and
- Communication activity to support the growth of the NDIS market and workforce which was announced as part of the NDIS Jobs and Market Fund Budget measure.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Operational Guidelines

Question reference number: 3

Question:

What work is happening in the NDIA regarding the “list” that Autism appears on in the operational guidelines?

Answer:

Access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is based on a person’s functional impairment, not on their condition or diagnosis. Any person with autism eligible for the NDIS will continue to receive the reasonable and necessary supports they need.

Minister Tehan has made a public commitment that no changes will be made to the Scheme that impact on specific groups, such as people with autism, unless those changes are informed by research, evidence and extensive consultation with stakeholders and the community.

Supports for people with autism should be evidence-based and delivered using a family-centred approach that incorporates individual planning. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is engaging with a range of stakeholders to support ongoing work on improving the NDIS pathway to ensure it is delivering a quality and consistent service to people with disability.

The Australian Government recently established the Autism Advisory Group. The purpose of the Group is to inform future discussions around issues such as:

- increased prevalence of autism in the Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics statistics);
- independent work led by Autism CRC in developing a set of best practice diagnostic guidelines; and
- the NDIA’s proposal to undertake a pilot to assess which functional assessment tools are most appropriate to assist making eligibility assessments for the NDIS.

The establishment of the Autism Advisory Group is consistent with the NDIA’s commitment to take a fact-based, consultative approach to working with the sector in order to deliver quality outcomes for people with autism and ensure the NDIS is equitable, outcomes-focused, and operating in the best interests of all participants.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Transfer of Commonwealth, states and territory services

Question reference number: 4

Question: Could you update the committee on the following:

- The transfer of services to the NDIS and identified pressure points.
- How are the issues of delays in participant intake and withdrawal of services in areas before the NDIS rollout being addressed?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) continues to work closely with state and territory governments on the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) according to the phasing schedules outlined in the bilateral agreements signed by states and territories and the Commonwealth, ensuring continuity of supports for people with disability throughout transition.

The NDIA also continues to monitor markets at regional and local levels to identify potential shortages of services provision and has recently established a dedicated process for escalation of critical service issues to senior NDIA and state/territory management for immediate response.

A number of current clients of Commonwealth mental health programs have not engaged with the transition process in response to initial contacts from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). The Department of Social Services is working with the NDIA and service providers to implement a streamlined access process for vulnerable clients with psychosocial disability who require more assertive outreach to engage with and access the NDIS.

The Commonwealth has provided a commitment that no existing client of a Commonwealth funded mental health service will be left without support. Where there are potential delays in participant access or provider experience of transition is different than expected, the Department will make timely adjustments to ensure providers have adequate funding to support existing clients until they have an NDIS plan in place, or to provide continued support if they are ineligible for the NDIS up to full scheme.

Continuity of support arrangements for community mental health services, delivered through Primary Health Networks, will ensure that existing clients who are ineligible for the NDIS will continue to receive support after 1 July 2019.

Service delivery under the new \$160 million, state-matched community mental health program – the National Psychosocial Supports measure – is expected to begin from 1 January 2019, and will provide a service pathway for new clients ineligible for the NDIS.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Government approach on continuity of support

Question reference number: 5

Question: Could you update the committee on the following:

- The progress of the Maintaining Critical Supports Framework.
- The approach to providing continuity of support and the services to all people with disability beyond supports provided through the NDIS?
- The progress to address issues around ensuring continuity of support for those outside the NDIS

Answer:

Maintaining Critical Supports Framework

The Maintaining Critical Supports Framework is being implemented through four key strategies: (a) crisis response, (b) building complex pathways, (c) designing critical issues escalation and resolution pathways and (d) sector capability development.

Crisis response capabilities in New South Wales (NSW) and South Australia (SA) are currently being serviced by an after-hours phone line. The scope and operating method for a panel of providers specialising in the provision of supports to those with exceptionally complex needs is on track. The panel is expected to have four functions, namely: specialised support coordination, specialised service delivery, sector development and service consultation. The first two will be required to operate both within a crisis and proactive manner. The Advisory group has met twice to inform the Statement of Requirements (SOR). The SOR is expected to be released to the market in a select tender in August 2018.

An external Critical Services Issue Response (CSIR) agreement with NSW is expected be finalised by August 2018 and consultations with SA and Victoria are underway to finalise a similar process. This will ensure a collaborative and timely approach to resolution of systemic and Scheme design issues as they arise. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has engaged all other jurisdictions to design their respective external CSIR. All bilateral processes will be completed by October 2018, noting a review will be undertaken within six months (as previously agreed by the Senior Officials Working Group).

Sector capability building for the maintenance of critical supports will focus on individual and sector needs. Priorities identified through the recent pathway reviews for individuals, such as tools to better understand funding flexibility, are being implemented on a progressive basis. The NDIA has also developed a rigorous approach to monitoring the market, identifying potential issues and then deciding whether or not to intervene, and if so what type of intervention to use. These Market Enablement Principles aim to balance responsiveness to current market issues with advance warning and mitigation of potential future issues.

Continuity of support and services beyond supports provided through the NDIS

There are 17 Commonwealth programs transitioning clients to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The transition of Commonwealth clients is aligned with the roll-out of the NDIS and is expected to be completed by 30 June 2019 (excluding Western Australia and Northern Territory which will transition in 2020).

Most Commonwealth clients are expected to be eligible for support through the NDIS. However, some clients will not be eligible for the NDIS, such as people over 65 years of age. Clients who are ineligible for the NDIS will receive Continuity of Support through existing servicing arrangements to 30 June 2019. Arrangements beyond 30 June 2019 were detailed in the 2018-19 Budget and are summarised below.

Clients of Commonwealth funded disability programs who are ineligible for the NDIS will receive Continuity of Support from 1 July 2019. The Government is providing \$92.1 million over four years for Continuity of Support arrangements. This means clients who are ineligible for the NDIS will be supported to achieve similar outcomes, even if the arrangements for doing that change over time.

Fifteen of the 17 Commonwealth programs transitioning to the NDIS require some form of Continuity of Support. The Hearing Services Program and Continence Aids Payment Scheme, administered by the Department of Health, are continuing programs and, as such, do not require Continuity of Support.

From 1 July 2019, Continuity of Support will be provided through the following five packages:

- Clients of the mental health programs (includes Personal Helpers and Mentors, Partners in Recovery and Support for Day to Day Living programs) will receive Continuity of Support through community mental health services delivered through the Primary Health Networks;
- Clients of the carer programs (includes Mental Health Respite: Carer Services, Respite Support for Carers of Young People and Young Carer Respite and Information Service programs) will receive Continuity of Support through the new Integrated Carer Support Service;
- The Continuity of Support Fund (includes Australian Disability Enterprises, Better Start for Children with Disability, Helping Children with Autism, Outside School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability, Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children, Work Based Personal Assistance, and Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Program programs) will enable clients to continue to receive similar supports;
- Users of the National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service who are over 65 years old will continue to receive services through the program; and
- From 1 July 2020, existing Mobility Allowance recipients ineligible for the NDIS will be 'grandfathered' and continue to receive their payment until they no longer meet the eligibility criteria or exit the program.

Implementation arrangements for the CoS packages are currently being finalised.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Provider of Last Resort for Crisis Accommodation

Question reference number: 6

Question: When will each state and territory have a provider of last resort for crisis accommodation?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is progressing work on maintaining critical supports for those requiring critical disability supports, as outlined in the response to question 5.

This work does not replace the ongoing responsibility of mainstream services, including emergency accommodation, to ensure that a person with disability has access to universal services. The NDIS requires collaboration between all jurisdictions to ensure that all people with disability have access to appropriate mainstream services critical to their wellbeing and safety, such as health and housing.

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Voluntary out of home care

Question reference number: 7

Question:

Could you update the committee on funding for voluntary out of home care. Where children have disabilities that are so severe and complex that they cannot live at home, and their parents wish to retain guardianship, will the NDIA or states fund this accommodation?

Answer:

Under the *Principles to Determine the Responsibilities of the NDIS and Other Service Systems* (the Principles), which were agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in April 2013, and reviewed in 2015, accommodation needs of children in out of home care, both statutory and voluntary, are the responsibility of state and territory governments. The Principles state that the NDIS will fund reasonable and necessary supports for eligible children with disability in out of home care.

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Specialist Disability Accommodation

Question reference number: 8

Question:

- What decision led to the advice in the SDA Provider and Investor Brief that the majority of SDA eligible participants will only receive funding to live in shared accommodation?
- Why is funding not being provided for participants who wish to live on their own or within their family unit (for example, with a spouse and children)?

Answer:

SDA eligible participant funding

Plan decisions are informed by each participant's unique goals and preferences and are made according to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act). In the case of SDA, the NDIA also makes decisions according to the Specialist Disability Accommodation Rules 2016 (SDA Rules). The SDA Rules were agreed by all governments and have been in force since March 2017.

The NDIA published the SDA Provider and Investor Brief on 24 April 2018. In relation to SDA, the NDIS Act and the SDA Rules have not changed and the Brief does not represent a change in policy. Each SDA plan decision will continue to be made on an individual basis according to the SDA Rules and the NDIS Act.

Where a participant is eligible for SDA, the NDIA will give consideration to their preferences, including any preference to live alone. The NDIA is also required under the legislation to give consideration to a number of other aspects, which may affect the outcome of a plan decision. For example, the NDIA will give consideration to the most appropriate support model for a participant and how a particular SDA type enables delivery of the model.

SDA participant preferences

When determining the appropriate SDA funding amount for an eligible participant, the NDIA will give consideration to a participant's preferences, including any preference to live alone. The NDIA is also required to consider a number of other aspects, including the most appropriate support model for a participant and how a particular SDA dwelling type facilitates delivery of the model.

While the SDA Rules prevent a parental home from being able to be enrolled and used as SDA, it is possible in certain circumstances for SDA participants to reside with family members (for example with a spouse and children) and receive SDA payments.

SDA payments are made on an individual participant basis where SDA funding is included in a participant's plan. The NDIS is not able to contribute to the housing costs of non-participants or participants who do not have SDA funding in their plans.

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Interface issues with mainstream services

Question reference number: 9

Question:

Could you update the committee on the work undertaken by the Government to strengthen the implementation of the COAG principles to determine the responsibilities of the NDIS and other service systems to address boundary issues and service gaps?

Answer:

The interactions between the NDIS and mainstream service systems are guided by the legislative framework for the NDIS (the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* and Rules) and the Principles to Determine the Responsibilities of the NDIS and Other Service Systems (the Principles), agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in April 2013 and revised in 2015.

Work to strengthen the Principles to determine the responsibilities of the NDIS and other service systems to address boundary issues and service gaps is progressing through the Disability Reform Council (DRC). DRC has directed the Senior Officials Working Group (SOWG) responsible for oversight of administration of disability matters to address mainstream interface issues as a priority, initially through four areas: health; mental health; criminal justice; and, child protection and family support and then further expanded to include school transport and personal care in schools. SOWG has representatives from DSS, NDIA, and all state and territory jurisdictions. Work is ongoing and SOWG is next due to report to DRC on progress in October.

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Disability employment

Question reference number: 10

Question:

- Is there a plan to guide the decoupling of NDIA and DSS delivered services in the employment space?
- What does Quality & Safeguarding look like in the NDIA employment landscape? (currently DSS undertakes audits of sites on a 3 yearly cycle)
- Will DMI assessments still be required in the future and what will they look like under the NDIA?
- The NDIA has discussed an employment first approach, how can providers support this shift in culture and make this successful?
- How is the Government intending to meet the National Disability Strategy's outcomes developed by COAG for employment?

Answer:

Employment

There is no 'decoupling' of employment-related services between the NDIA and the Department of Social Services (the Department). The Department continues to administer the Disability Employment Services (DES) program to support people with disability to seek employment in the open labour market, while funding for employment supports that are currently provided by Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) is transitioning to the NDIS. The NDIA and the Department are working together to ensure that participants in the NDIS are able to exercise choice and control over their employment options. This includes ensuring that NDIS participants continue to be supported to access the DES program where they wish and are eligible, or to seek supported employment where they wish and are eligible.

Quality and Safeguarding

Current arrangements under the *Disability Services Act 1986* (DSA) will continue for supported employment providers (ADEs) through certification and audits against the National Standards for Disability Services.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) is working with the Department on the transition of compliance requirements for ADEs where there are concurrent obligations under the DSA and the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act).

The NDIS Commission commenced operations on 1 July 2018 in New South Wales and South Australia and will commence from 1 July 2019 in other jurisdictions apart from Western Australia, which will commence from 1 July 2020. The establishment of the NDIS Commission is aligned with the full scheme implementation of the NDIS in each state and territory.

Providers who are registered with the NDIA immediately before the commencement of the NDIS Commission are automatically transitioned to the registration and audit arrangements under the NDIS Commission. These will be phased into the registration and audit requirements outlined in Part 3A of the NDIS Act and the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018*.

Providers are required to undergo an audit against the NDIS Practice Standards to apply for and renew registration with the NDIS Commission. The nature of the audits will vary according to the size and scale of the organisation, as well as the risk and complexity of the supports and services delivered. Participants will be invited to participate in the audit process which will take place every three years to maintain registration and include annual surveillance audits.

DMI assessments

The transition of ADE funding into the NDIS changes the way ADEs are funded, from case-based funding to individualised reasonable and necessary supports available to eligible NDIS participants.

The NDIA is currently mirroring the Department's funding model for ADEs, based on existing Disability Maintenance Instrument (DMI) levels or organisational averages for new entrants to ADEs. A new funding model is needed for supported employment under the NDIS.

The NDIA is working closely with the Department, providers and peak bodies on a funding model for supported employment under the NDIS, including the future of the DMI. The NDIA has committed to resolving funding for employment supports by 1 July 2019.

Employment first approach

An employment first approach recognises that all people can work, regardless of ability, with the right job and the right support. Commonwealth, state and territory governments, including education services, the NDIA and its Partners in the Community, NDIS providers, including DES and mainstream employers, disability employment peak bodies and research institutions, are key contributors to improved economic participation.

The future market will be 'demand-driven', meaning organisations must market themselves as providers of employment services for all NDIS participants who have funding in their plan to purchase employment supports. The NDIA envisages a more open market in a mature NDIS, and stronger pathways may be established between 'open' and 'supported' employment.

The rollout of the NDIS to full Scheme presents opportunities for existing and new businesses to expand and diversify, as greater choice in employment settings and supports is available to NDIS participants. Providers of supported and open employment should undertake business planning for the future, including the transition to the NDIS.

Providers will also need to understand and apply best practice to building foundation employment skills for people with intellectual or cognitive disability, which may be different to their employees before the NDIS.

Providers will need to work with participants and their families to build confidence and trust, providing supported work experience and skill development activities that enable the participants to succeed, by building confidence in their new identity as a worker.

National Disability Strategy's outcomes developed by COAG for employment

Reforms to the DES program in the 2017-18 Budget seek to increase the number of people with disability in long-term employment. These reforms took effect on 1 July 2018, and the changes to DES include:

- improving participant choice and control
- engendering greater competition and contestability between providers
- improving financial incentives through a new risk-adjusted funding model and a new payment for achieving employment of at least a year
- trialling expanded DES eligibility for school leavers with disability, and
- indexing provider payments.

Website enhancements to the JobAccess service are currently underway to include new content, improved resources and online training for employers, and promote good practice in disability employment.

Following a successful pilot in December 2017, AccessAbility Day will be held nationally in the week 26-30 November 2018 – the week before International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD).

The Government is consulting a range of stakeholders on the future of supported employment. Stakeholders who have participated in targeted workshops, group discussions and interviews and contributed to a public discussion paper include:

- people with disability and their family members
- Australian Disability Enterprises
- other and emerging supported employment providers
- Disability Employment Services providers
- peak associations
- disability advocates, and
- researchers.

The Department is drawing on input received through these consultations to develop advice to Government. It is expected consultation on specific policy options will occur towards the end of 2018.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Transition to Market

Question reference number: 11

Question:

- The not-for-profit sector typically lacks commercial acumen. Is there a plan to support the sector with the delivery of training or through recruitment of commercial consultants?
- The disability sector has limited information to inform future service delivery design. Is there a plan to expand the scope of information provided to the sector to enable its transition to a new service delivery model?

Answer:

In relation to sector development support, see response to question 2.

The Better Market Information Project jointly commissioned by the Department of Social Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is designed to provide more detailed market demand estimates to better inform service providers. This addresses concerns that a lack of information may potentially inhibit disability service providers from entering, expanding or diversifying in the NDIS market. Market information is scheduled to be released to the sector by the end of 2018.

In addition, the NDIA will develop a Market Position Statement for Western Australia to inform market stakeholders and help current and prospective providers prepare for the opportunities of the NDIS.

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: COAG and Disability Reform Council Agenda

Question reference number: 12

Question:

The DRC's last communique was released on 30 April 2018. The communique discussed progress on a number of issues currently on the DRC's agenda. Could you update the committee on the following:

- Independent Pricing Review? The Council noted feedback received from the disability sector for further work in relation to different cohorts and agreed to progress this work;
- work with the NDIA to transition from state-based to national service delivery;
- the review of SDA pricing and payments;
- the development of the new National Disability Strategy post 2020; and
- the Commonwealth's updated full Scheme arrangements, which form the basis for negotiating the new Intergovernmental Agreements for full Scheme NDIS

Answer:

Independent Pricing Review

The NDIA has accepted in-principle all the recommendations of the McKinsey Independent Pricing Review (IPR).

Work is currently underway to implement the recommendations. From 1 July 2018, the NDIA began implementing the first 10 of the 25 recommendations from the IPR on NDIS pricing arrangements. These include:

- a new 2.5 per cent temporary loading on attendant care prices;
- increases in price caps for a range of supports;
- a new option for Short Term Accommodation to allow for 1:3 support worker to participant ratio; and
- more flexible arrangements for provider travel and appointment cancellations.

The NDIA has established a Pricing Reference Group to aid implementation of these reforms.

The NDIA is consulting further with provider groups and experts from the sector on the implementation of the remaining recommendations.

Updates on progress will be published on the NDIA's website (ndis.gov.au), and will be reported to DRC.

Transitioning from state-based to national service delivery

The DRC Communique of 30 April 2018 provided an update on the transition of state-based to national service delivery arrangements regarding the escalation of critical cases and coordination with mainstream services.

The NDIA is engaging bilaterally with each state and territory to design their 'external' Critical Services Incident Response process for coordinating the escalation of critical Scheme issues to ensure effective coordination of services with the NDIA. With their recent transition to full scheme, the NDIA will initially work with New South Wales and South Australia to examine examples of issues that have required escalation to date.

Review of SDA pricing and payments

At the last DRC meeting it was agreed that a review into the Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Pricing and Payments Framework would be undertaken in its third year of operation (1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019).

The Department has commissioned KPMG to review the SDA Pricing and Payments Framework. The DRC agreed to consider the outcomes of the review at a future meeting in late-2018.

The development of the new National Disability Strategy post 2020

Work on the development of a national disability framework for beyond 2020 has commenced.

The Department has engaged the Social Policy Research Centre of the University New South Wales to undertake an independent targeted review of the National Disability Strategy. The review will report at the end of August 2018. The findings of the review will contribute to the development of a discussion paper and online survey for public consultation.

A National Disability Reform Steering Group has been established to oversee the development of the framework. Membership includes representatives from disability representative organisations, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the National Disability and Carers Advisory Council, the NDIA and Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments.

The Department, in consultation with stakeholders, is developing an engagement and consultation plan. Public consultation is expected to commence in late 2018.

Commonwealth's updated full Scheme arrangements

New South Wales and South Australian full scheme agreement commenced on 1 July 2018.

The NSW and SA Agreements provide a responsible approach to NDIS commitments, reflect governments' shared roles and responsibilities and incorporate key findings of the Productivity Commission's 2017 Review of NDIS Costs.

The Commonwealth is committed to finalising agreements for full Scheme arrangements with other States before the end of their respective transitions.