

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2014-15 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 5

Question No: 573

Topic: NDIS

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Moore asked:

Work is required inside and outside the scheme to enable the NDIS to work with mainstream programs such as health, education, employment and justice. People with disability will require involvement of these mainstream programs to enable them to engage as valued members of their communities and take up the social and economic opportunities the scheme hopes to deliver for them.

- a. What is the scheme's strategic plan for the development of NDIS interfaces that will allow the scheme to meet its social and economic objectives?
- b. Does the Disability Ministers Reform Council support the proactive engagement of disability services programs with mainstream programs?
- c. Does the Disability Ministers Reform Council support the NDIS's proactive engagement and collaboration with mainstream programs? What role does the Department of Social Services have in this work?
- d. Have development of mainstream interfaces been discussed only at government-government levels. What engagement has been done with community organisations and networks to develop mainstream interfaces?
- e. What role does the government or the NDIS see for community organisations who are non-providers? (eg the Consumers Health Forum, Principals Associations, Community Legal Centres, disability peaks)?
- f. How are the priorities of the National Disability Strategy being linked to the work on interfaces?
- g. Who is responsible for implementing and governing the interfaces? Who leads this work?

Answer:

a. What is the scheme's strategic plan for the development of NDIS interfaces that will allow the scheme to meet its social and economic objectives?

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (the Act) and *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Supports for Participants) Rules 2013* (established under the Act), provide the legislative framework to guide assessment and determination of the reasonable and necessary supports that will be funded for participants.

The relationship between the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and mainstream services is covered under the Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) for the NDIS trials. Under the IGA, the Commonwealth and states and territories have agreed to:

- ensure the launch of the NDIS will not lead to any unnecessary reduction in mainstream services that will increase demand in the NDIS;
- identify and report issues to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) or Ministerial Council (Disability Reform Council) or responsible government where trial arrangements are unintendedly impacting mainstream services; and

Senate Community Affairs Committee
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SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2014-15 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

- support the NDIA to coordinate and promote links between the NDIS and mainstream services.

Mainstream interfaces remain a key priority on the Council of Australian Governments and Disability Reform Council review agendas.

b. Does the Disability Ministers Reform Council support the proactive engagement of disability services programs with mainstream programs?

Yes.

In April 2013, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the *Principles to Determine the Responsibilities of the NDIS and Other Service Systems* (the COAG Principles) and arrangements needed to operationalise them, that aim to provide clarity about which supports can be provided or funded under the NDIS, and which are more appropriately the responsibility of other service systems.

Commonwealth and state/territory officials and the NDIA are currently working collaboratively with agencies responsible for mainstream services to review the Applied Principles. The review will contribute to understanding the impact of interactions between service systems in light of evidence from trial.

c. Does the Disability Ministers Reform Council support the NDIS's proactive engagement and collaboration with mainstream programs? What role does the Department of Social Services have in this work?

Yes.

Agencies responsible for the delivery of mainstream services and key stakeholders are being consulted as part of the review of the Applied Principles and Tables of Supports. This review is being managed by the Department of Social Services.

d. Have development of mainstream interfaces been discussed only at government-government levels. What engagement has been done with community organisations and networks to develop mainstream interfaces?

The COAG Principles were developed and agreed to by all governments and aim to provide clarity about which supports can be provided or funded under the NDIS, and which are more appropriately the responsibility of other service systems. The COAG principles were informed by engagement with community organisations during the design of the NDIS.

e. What role does the government or the NDIS see for community organisations who are non-providers? (eg the Consumers Health Forum, Principals Associations, Community Legal Centres, disability peaks)?

The Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services, currently provides funding to a number of national disability representative organisations. These member-based organisations play an important role in providing independent advice about the development and implementation of the National Disability Strategy (NDS), the NDIS and other reforms impacting people with disability. As the implementation of the NDS and NDIS progress, disability and other peak bodies and associations will continue to play an important role through the provision of member based 'grass-roots' advice.

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2014-15 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

f. How are the priorities of the National Disability Strategy being linked to the work on interfaces?

Through the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, all governments have agreed to the vision of an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

The commitment of all governments under the National Disability Strategy to drive improved performance of mainstream services in delivering outcomes for people with disability helped inform the COAG Agreed Principles.

g. Who is responsible for implementing and governing the interfaces? Who leads this work?

Through the *National Disability Strategy* and the *COAG Agreed Principles to Determine the Responsibilities of the NDIS and Other Service Systems* all governments have responsibility for the governance and implementation of mainstream interfaces.