



# MontroseAccess

## Inspiring Quality Lives

### **NDIS Joint Parliamentary Committee Address by Linda Apelt, CEO - 13 March 2015**

#### **Introduction**

For more than 80 years MontroseAccess has been helping young Queenslanders with physical disabilities that require therapy and support. We provide respite, physiotherapy, speech pathology, family support and occupational therapy tailored to individual needs.

MontroseAccess operates four service centres across SE Qld and a highly qualified outreach team enables us to assist people throughout the state, including in rural and remote areas.

Our significant strengths and points of difference include our specific services for rare conditions, that we do not duplicate any other service and that we provide services for people who have no other option for support. We are family centred, community based and have an interdisciplinary team approach to ensure each client is appropriately supported.

We have worked concertedly for the past few years to develop a comprehensive **NDIS Transition Strategy** which has the support of our Board. It encompasses these elements to ensure that we are NDIS ready:

1. A forward looking strategic plan
2. Redefined charitable purpose and financial strategy
3. New Customer Relations Management information system
4. New Finance and back end corporate information system
5. New Enterprise Agreement
6. Re-engineered business processes to allow fee for service across the organisation and offer our services to the wider community
7. Staff training in adopting cultural change in professional practice and in business processes
8. New branding and marketing strategy to best position our organisation nationally in a competitive market
9. Strengthened corporate governance and business partnerships.

Several matters are vitally important in making services accessible and ensuring the financial sustainability of service organisations like ours. Our **key points** of concern about the NDIS that we wish to raise are:

- **More detail** is required on the planned rollout of the NDIS in Queensland, including timelines, location of trial sites and potential cohorts of clients who will be part of the first stage in Qld.
- **Social and family support** is integral to the services we provide to clients as we look at their situation in totality, e.g. their family unit (siblings, parents), educational setting and workplace. Under NDIS these supports are typically not funded. Instead they look likely to fall into the Tier 2 category (termed Information, Linkages and Capacity Building in the recent working paper). We feel this misses a significant element of a person's support and should form a part of their Individual Funding Package. Direct family support is the foundational pillar of social support in our society, yet is not specifically recognised in the NDIS. Helping families to cope with the onset of disability and the impact on families' lives requires recognition.
- There are still elements of the **NDIS pricing** schedule that are not consistent with the true cost of service provision and there should be further scope for discussion around ensuring the schedule better reflects the actual market cost of service provision.
- The potential future **impacts on philanthropy** for registered charities like ours, i.e. the perception is building in the community that NDIS funds the activities of charities in our sector. This is not the case and it only partially covers the costs. A clear challenge over coming years will be to convey our charitable purpose and how philanthropy can assist us in expanding and supplementing the services offered to clients to provide a more holistic experience and greater quality of life options.
- How will the **timing** of the rollout schedule in Qld (and other states) impact potential participants and providers in the period between scheme commencement and regional rollout?
- **Client impacts and management** requires closer consideration to enable sustainable business operations, e.g. how therapists may claim for missed appointments, travel to deliver outreach services to locations or covering specialist therapists who have knowledge of rare conditions.
- **School and community** involvement is also important to maintain and nurture so we can continue to deliver funded services in those environments where children spend most of their time.
- A major issue is **housing and accommodation**, as those with significant disability require assisted housing and the growing demand for development of more accessible housing is increasingly urgent.

Thank you for inviting our feedback.

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