

Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania

Question 1- Sector Readiness:

- A. Can the Department outline what assistance is currently provided to the sector and what assistance it intends on providing at full scheme.**

The State Implementation Team (NDIS)

The Commonwealth provided \$2.523 million to Tasmania over four years to establish and support the work of a State Implementation Team (SIT).

This funding is for a team of four people employed by Disability and Community Services to work with the NDIS trial to support the transition to trial as well as the engagement of appropriate consultants to support the work of the State team.

Some of the objectives of the Tasmanian Implementation Project being undertaken by the SIT will be to:

- Ensure the disability sector and those people who are not in the launch cohort continue to receive and provide services within the existing service systems during the launch period.
- Develop a communication strategy that informs people with disability their families and carers, the sector and mainstream services about the progress toward and potential impact of the implementation of NDIS.
- Work with NDIA and the Tasmanian disability sector to build capacity and develop sector to move to the full scheme in Tasmania.
- Assist service providers to operate within a “dual system” during the launch period, including the management of financial resources.
- Identify and address issues and concerns that may present as barriers for community sector organisations to the successful implementation of NDIS in Tasmania.
- Assist in establishing effective communication with mainstream providers to ensure the objectives of NDIS are met.
- Work with mainstream agencies to develop understandings of the roles and responsibilities, and identify boundary issues.
- Work with the relevant State and Australian Government officials to ensure safeguards and a quality standard framework is implemented with new and existing providers for the duration of the launch.

The ongoing support to full scheme and the ongoing role of the State Implementation Team is yet to be determined and is subject of discussions with the Minister and State Government and ongoing negotiation with the Australian Government.

Disability and Community Services - Workforce Development Unit

Disability and Community Services incorporates a Workforce and Development Unit (WDU) to support workforce development as a priority area to underpin policy directions and achieve reforms in the broader disability services system.

The WDU supports the policy directions and reforms through strategic leadership, planning and directions including coordination, consultancy and executive support for workforce development initiatives to support the sector workforce.

The key priorities for the WDU include:

- Working collaboratively with key sector stakeholders to enhance and/or build capacity for workforce development opportunities
- Support National and State key workforce policy directions and reforms
- Investigating opportunities to progress and support workforce planning and development activities through an independent web site
- Enhancing and value adding to existing workforce initiatives through the review of existing and proposed disability workforce activities

B. How does the work of Mission Australia and Baptcare interact with, and supplement this approach?

Mission Australia and Baptcare Inc are contracted by the Tasmanian Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to deliver a Gateway Service to the specialist disability services sector. This means that the primary responsibility of the Gateways Services is to provide an intake, assessment and referral role for people with disability, their families and carers and to assist people with disability to navigate the specialist disability service system.

The Gateway Services are not required to provide sector development activity, however the Gateway Services have played a role in assisting existing Disability Services clients within the cohort group to understand the NDIS and to make the transition to the NDIS.

C. In addition to the sector development fund, what additional steps are planned to help the sector prepare and build its capacity?

Community Sector Organisations are being supported to prepare and transition to the NDIS both at a national level through funding allocated by the Australian Government and through the State Government Implementation Team which is working with the National Disability Services Tasmanian (NDS) and have developed a targeted information, communications and engagement process for community sector organisations.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed (21.06.13) between Disability and Community Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) offering funding to the state to provide a number of sector development activities within the 2013/14 financial year.

The NDIA through the Tasmanian Government has contributed an additional \$115,000 funding in 2014/5 to continue the work of a Project Officer employed by NDS to support industry and workforce development in the sector.

The NDS (Tas), the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) and Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS) have worked cooperatively to suggest, promote and deliver sector development opportunities for providers that have been well supported.

Local level forums and activities are some of the initiatives that have occurred to assist and the sector to meet the changing demands to move from a social to a business based way of providing services required for the transition to the NDIS.

To date these activities have included:

- "Meet and greet" forums for providers to introduce services and discuss referral processes with NDIA staff. These sessions were on two occasions held across the three regions.

- Workshops for Providers – “Business disciplines in a changing disability marketplace”, provided by Sward Dawson-chartered accounts (Victoria). A total of six workshops were held in the north (3) and south (3) of the state.
- The Tasmanian Support Workers Conference was held in Hobart in November. The Conference was well supported with approximately 200 people in attendance.
- Two day workshops were held in the North West and North in October over two days with a focus on supporting people with disability to gain a “Better Life”. With further workshops held in Hobart in March 2014.
- The NDS nationally has developed a “NDIS Organisational Readiness Toolkit” to assist in preparing service providers for the NDIS. A project office is working with service providers to support and assist them to effectively prepare and plan to move into the way of service provision under the NDIS.

Further workshops and activities planned will target middle managers and support workers through providing opportunities to better understand change and develop strategies that optimise real choice and control for people with disability and develop services accordingly.

This workshop series explores a range of practical approaches for “Becoming a Person Centred Organisation”. “The Change Room – Championing Change” is a further workshop that will provide practical strategies for services to recognise and overcome barriers to change and move into a positive way of ensuring staff and families are committed to the change process.

A Conference will be held in Launceston in late October 2014. The primary focus of this conference is for support workers however it will encompass a target group of staff from across the broader human services sector and include levels above the support worker group.

It is clear the Tasmanian Disability Service Sector requires ongoing sector development to assist it to transition to a new marketised approach.

Question 2 - The committee has heard evidence regarding the limited supply of equipment, such as prosthetics, and the long wait times to access such equipment.

A. Does the Department have any strategies in place to deal with this issue including addressing what may be available to assist a person in the interim if equipment cannot be made available

In Tasmania, there are multiple schemes directed at different (and overlapping) client groups and providing a variety of standard and non-standard assistive equipment and technology and home maintenance for people with needs relating to ageing, disability or hospital discharge. Public funding for equipment is currently challenged.

Tasmanian Health Organisations (THOs), Disability Services (DS) within the Agency, and a small number of community organisations funded by both the state and Australian governments, are involved with the provision of assistive equipment and technology.

These services are not currently operating with one centralised policy, funding and governance model resulting in inequitable and inefficient service delivery across the state.

Systems and processes for the management of assets are poor and inconsistent across the state due to chronic under investment, patchy governance and outdated guidelines.

In 2009, the Steering Committee for the Strategic Framework for Equipment Provision project agreed to the development of a new service delivery platform and model.

On 21 February 2011, the Premier announced a new service model for the provision of equipment, and progress on implementing this program is being made.

The former State Government committed an investment of \$1 million per annum over four years to reform the current service provision and to provide additional funding for equipment and assistive technology. At a time when all budgets in health and human services are being reviewed and budget savings are required, investing in a system that will provide efficiencies and provide data to assist with meeting future demand is financially responsible.

The three foci for achieving the reform process are:

- the establishment of a single state-wide governance structure in order to create a single unified service with single vision and philosophy of service provision.
- the development of a suite of policies and operating procedures to govern the day to day operations of TasEquip and to ensure reforms are achieved equitably across the State,
- and the deployment of a state-wide asset management system to support reforms and to enable improved efficiencies and cost savings through more robust asset management processes and state-wide procurement practices.

The program is expected to be fully operational by December 2014. In the interim, any waiting lists are currently being managed with high priority clients being targeted for funding.

Question 3 - The committee has heard about unit pricing that the Tasmanian Government has developed for the outsourcing of disability services to the non-government sector

A. Can the department provide detailed information on how this pricing is applied to different disability services? and

Information regarding the application of Unit Pricing in Tasmania related to service type and various resources (including the prices) can be sourced from the Department of Health and Human Services Web site. The link is included below.

http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/disability/projects/resource_allocation_and_unit_pricing_framework_-_project_implementation_update

Built into the unit prices is an indirect component which covers items such as vehicle lease (in the context of supported accommodation – group homes).

Unit prices do not include a capital component for significant items (e.g. specialist vehicles, buildings).

The unit price for individual funding (based on an hour of support) does not include transport and travel times. The current individual funding program (ISPs) does not fund transport.

An extract from the Unit Pricing guidelines (Section 4) details the specifics used to calculate the unit price. The full Unit Pricing Guidelines document can be found through the website link.

“Calculations for each of the service types deemed suitable for a move to unit pricing are constructed on the basis of the observed labour cost across the sector. This observed labour cost includes amounts that reflect:

- *the varying level of staff (qualifications and experience) employed*

- the use of employment agency and/or casual staff (where applicable)
- shift penalties that account for the day (or time of day) that services are delivered
- senior staff time directed to clinical and staff supervision
- case management or service coordination time.

In addition to these observed labour costs standard uplifts for non-labour and overheads have been incorporated into the unit price and are expected to cover all expenses that are not considered direct labour or long term fixed capital costs, such as:

- travel
- training
- management expenses and corporate/facilities costs
- consumables.

The inclusion of representative allowances for all these key cost components is intended to reflect the true, total cost of contemporary service delivery.”

B. Could you also provide information on how transport and travel times are calculated into cost these units for both metropolitan and regional areas.

Public transport and travel times are not included as a separate unit price.

With the introduction of Unit Pricing, group homes were provided with an initial vehicle. The organisations are expected to cover the costs of maintenance, petrol and replacement vehicles, with the exception of wheelchair accessible vehicles. Organisations can apply to Disability and Community Services for financial assistance to purchase these more expensive vehicles.

Question 4 - The committee heard during its visits to the trial sites that accommodation funding and supply has been identified as a significant issue on a national level.

A. Can the department provide information on what it is doing to meet unmet housing demand?

Disability and Community Services has contributed to a national stocktake of innovative housing and accommodation options. Tasmania has nominated three models of housing that have demonstrated:

- connected communities;
- supporting productivity, security and sustainability;
- facilitating independence;
- built environment that is enabling; and
- involving people with disability in the process.

There are a number of projects currently being undertaken by Housing Tasmania, these include; the Housing in the Backyard, Mussen Close and Trinity Hill developments. All these initiatives were nominated as opportunities that have met Liveable Housing Design criteria and strengthened the range of options available to people with disability.

The proposed development in central Hobart at Trinity Hill will provide 10 units out of the 46 for people with disability.

Also 10 ground floor units in a tower complex nearby at Cornelian Bay – New Town are being upgraded to meet Liveable Housing Design Guidelines.

The State is also contributing \$500,000 towards an NRAS project to be delivered by a Northern provider, St Michaels, for 20 independent living units as well as \$3.1 million of capital and in-kind support for another NRAS project which will see a number of suitable units developed for people living with a disability out of the 120 to be delivered and managed by Centacare.

Despite these targeted efforts by Housing Tasmania demand for disability Housing is high and there are very limited Capital Funds to address this need.

B. How does the department view its responsibility to deliver supported accommodation?

Almost one third (3 543) of Tasmania's public housing tenants (13 088) are on a disability pension. Not all these people would be eligible for the NDIS.

Housing Tasmania currently has over 3 000 properties state-wide which have been modified or are easily capable of being modified to accommodate persons living with a disability.

People with a disability have a range of housing needs that include affordability, property location, size and modifications and support needs.

Sourcing sufficient appropriate housing will be a significant challenge for Tasmania. A key concern is the lack of capital funds to address accommodation issues.

The Tasmanian Gateway Services (Mission Australia and Baptcare Inc) maintain a needs register for all people with disability seeking supported accommodation and play an active role in identifying priority for any available vacancies in funded disability services.

Gateway Local Area Coordinators (LACs) also work with Housing Tasmania and community housing providers to identify independent living accommodation.

Tasmania's strained social and affordable housing system is likely to be stretched even further by the additional demand for suitable accommodation options.

However there is not sufficient information about the housing needs of disability clients.

To build an understanding of the current and future demand for disability housing, Housing Tasmania has agreed a two-stage process, using consultants, to inform the planning, development and funding decisions, and to improve the available information about the demand for housing assistance for Tasmanians living with disability.

The first stage is a housing demand and gap analysis for existing and prospective NDIS clients in Tasmania.

The second stage is a financial-based analysis and recommendations for a funding model and implementation methodology.

A final report from Ernst and Young is anticipated at the end of June 2014.

C. What is the present dollar figure that the state is contributing to supported accommodation?

The Disability and Community Services current 2013/14 budget identifies a budget of \$97.45 million allocated to Accommodation Support.

Disability Services fund accommodation for people with disability, as well as services that provide support to enable a person to remain in their existing accommodation or to move to more suitable or appropriate accommodation.

Tasmanian provides funding for three large residential facilities >20 places that are located in the North, North West and South of the state. Each facility provides 24-hour residential support in a congregate setting of more than 20 beds. A range of residential and vocational/date services, and or respite services are provided on the one site.

Group homes in Tasmania provide combined accommodation and community-based residential support to people in a residential setting. Usually no more than 6 people are located in any one house. Group homes are generally staffed 24 hours a day and the support varies according to the needs of the residents.

The accommodation provider is responsible for the overall tenancy arrangements of the property such as the lease, as well as the overall support of the people living in the house.

Additionally in-home and or programming services for people with disability to enable the person to live independently in the community can also be provided. Support is based on the individual goals and may include support with budgeting, cooking and shopping or other areas of skill development.

The person's accommodation may be privately owned, rented or otherwise provided, but is independent of the organisation providing the in-home support.

D. The committee is also interested in innovative ideas that are being developed as a result of the NDIS to deal with the accommodation shortage, particularly for those people with complex behaviour support needs.

The Intensive Support Service is a model of service developed to support a small group of clients who challenge the current service system.

Disability and Community Services funds community sector organisations to provide this service.

In order to meet the needs of people who challenge the current service system , the Intensive Support Service (ISS) model has been designed to provide:

- support of a higher intensity than that usually found in the current service system
- support that is 'non-standard' and individually tailored to more fully meet the needs of the client
- arrange of specific support environments, including transitional units, to more closely match a client's current situation
- Coordination of support across more than one program area.

Using these elements the ISS model is flexible and responsive in its supports of people with challenging behaviours. It is proactive and able to focus on providing resources to better support this client group.

Transitional units have been developed to provide an alternative accommodation options for people referred to ISS who are unable to remain living in their existing accommodation.

The transitional units are located in the South and North West of the state and referral to the transitional units can only occur as part of a support plan endorsed by the Disability Assessment and Advisory Team (DAAT).

Question 5 – Can you provide the committee with detailed information of the Tasmanian Government's own plans in relation to workforce training and staff development in the disability sector?

Disability and Community Services incorporates a Workforce and Development Unit (WDU) to support workforce development as a priority area to underpin policy directions and achieve reforms in the broader disability services system.

The WDU supports the policy directions and reforms through strategic leadership, planning and directions including coordination, consultancy and executive support for workforce development initiatives to support the sector workforce.

The key priorities for the WDU include:

- Working collaboratively with key sector stakeholders to enhance and/or build capacity for workforce development opportunities
- Support National and State key workforce policy directions and reforms
- Investigating opportunities to progress and support workforce planning and development activities through an independent web site
- Enhancing and value adding to existing workforce initiatives through the review of existing and proposed disability workforce activities

A. In particular, what courses are currently available for those seeking entry to the sector and looking to update their skills? Are these courses state funded?

People seeking entry to employment in the disability services sector or looking to update skills can access training through the Community Services training package. This package is delivered through a number of Registered Training Organisations, including Tasmania's own provider, TasTAFE.

B. What is the capacity of RTOs to provide the courses that will be needed to add to the stock of qualified staff in the State's disability sector?

This work is being conducted at a National level through the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council -
http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/employersindustry/industryresources/communityserviceshealth/E_Scan_2014_Survey_Results_Final_Report.pdf

C. Are new training packages required? If so, how long would it take to have these operational?

This work is being conducted at a National level through the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council -
http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/employersindustry/industryresources/communityserviceshealth/E_Scan_2014_Survey_Results_Final_Report.pdf

D. In terms of Tasmanian Government's negotiations with the Commonwealth Government on these matters, what federal agencies have been involved and what has been the nature of the discussions to date?

The Commonwealth provided \$2.523 million to Tasmania over four years to establish and support the work of a State Implementation Team (SIT). This funding is for a team of four people employed by Disability and Community Services to work with the NDIS trial to support the transition to trial as well as the engagement of appropriate consultants to support the work of the State team.

The NDIA have engaged locally on workforce and training issues and have included in those discussions Tasmanian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Health and Human Services and Skills Tasmania. At a National level NDIA engaged Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (now Department of Social Services) and Department of Employment Education and Workforce Relations (now Department of Social Services). Relevant Unions were also engaged in the discussions at the time. This work is still to progress.

E. Can you include dollar amounts set aside towards this from the state or elsewhere?

Skills Tasmania has worked with National Disability Services Tas (NDS Tas) to develop an industry and skills workforce development strategy - [http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/employersindustry/workforceplans/Tasmanian-Disability-Industry-WFDSPlan_Final.pdf#Tasmanian Disability Industry Workforce Development Plan](http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/employersindustry/workforceplans/Tasmanian-Disability-Industry-WFDSPlan_Final.pdf#Tasmanian%20Disability%20Industry%20Workforce%20Development%20Plan). Disability and Community Services have funded NDS Tas in 2013-15 \$115 000 per year to employ a project officer in order to implement the plan.

The Tasmanian Government has committed \$250 000 to support the NDS Tasmanian Disability Workforce Development Plan.

Question 6 - In addition to workforce training issue (above), can the department provide information on training for the transition to work for people with disability?

Disability and Community Services have not formerly taken a funding role in transition to work programs for young people with disability, as this has traditionally been a funding responsibility of the Commonwealth.

Disability and Community Services had a small state-wide annual budget allocated to school leavers in transition from compulsory schooling to employment, education or training pathways. The funding aimed to support the persons specialist disability needs.

This program funding was transferred to the NDIS on 1 July 2013 and the NDIA Planners have worked with all school leavers to plan around the disability support requirements in transition.

The local NDIA have developed a pilot project for integrated pathway planning for students with disability on an employment pathway. The Tasmanian NDIA office will be able to provide detail about this project.

Question 7 - The committee has heard of instances where a participant is not implementing their plan because they do not understand how this is done.

Implementing a NDIS plan is the responsibility of the NDIA. Participants of the NDIS are able to access Local Area Coordinators contracted by the NDIA through the Tasmanian Gateway Services (Mission Australia and Baptcare Inc). Local Area Coordinators can assist participants, their families and carers to implement plans. If participants have particularly complex needs the NDIA have supported the funding of a complex care coordinator to assist in implementation.

For more detail on implementing plans this question should be directed to the NDIA.

