

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016**

**Ref No:** SQ16-000756

**OUTCOME:** 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

**Topic:** Aids and Appliances - General

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Kakoschke-Moore, Skye

**Question:**

- 1) If the NDIS has the intention of supporting people's independence, why do aids and equipment for people aged over 65 not fall within this category?
  - 1a) Will there be an exemption so people who are vision impaired can access appropriate aids and appliances?
  - 2) The Royal Society for the Blind, provides a number of services to people who are vision impaired. They are concerned that there are no block funding available to their service, but that some services had received it under the NDIS. What disability services have received blocked funding under the NDIS?
    - 2a) Will this process be reviewed to allow the Royal Society for the Blind to access funding to purchase aids and equipment?
  - 3) Can you confirm that the Home Care Packages Programme can be used to purchase aids and equipment, particularly those who are blind and vision impaired?
    - 3a) Can you confirm that the Commonwealth Home Support Program can be used to purchase aids and equipment?
  - 4) If both schemes can be used to purchase aids and equipment, why are their respective webpages on the My Aged Care website silent about this?
  - 5) How do you anticipate elderly people with disability would be aware that they can access aids and equipment through both schemes?
  - 6) Has the Government reviewed the Home Care Package to determine whether it could meet the needs of people who are vision impaired, but who do not fit into the eligibility of a home care package?

**Answer:**

- 1) Eligibility to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is limited to people under the age of 65. However, when a participant passes the age of 65 they have the option of continuing to receive their supports through the NDIS or choosing the aged care system. The choice is theirs.

The age-related eligibility criteria of the NDIS is aligned with the Productivity Commission report on 'Disability Care and Support' which, in designing a national disability scheme, considered that the existing division of responsibilities between the disability and aged care systems would remain. The NDIS is not intended to replace the health or aged care systems.

- 1a) The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* allows people with degenerative conditions who are under the age of 65 to enter the scheme, and stay there, as they age.
- 2) The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has two parts:
  - NDIS plans for eligible people with a disability, and
  - Information, linkages and capacity building or ILC.

People with disability may access supports either through their NDIS plan or through ILC activities, depending on the individual's support needs.

#### Funded supports

NDIS participants have an individual plan that outlines their goals and funded supports. The NDIS funds supports that are reasonable and necessary to support people achieve their goals. NDIS participants can choose how to manage the funding for the supports in their plan.

Disability service providers do not receive block funding for delivering funded supports for NDIS participants. Under the NDIS, participants have the choice and control to decide where, when and how they would like their supports delivered.

#### Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC)

In July 2015, all governments agreed to the ILC Policy. The ILC Policy describes the kinds of activities that will be funded in ILC in the future.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (the Agency) has now been given the ILC Policy Framework to implement. The Agency is doing this through the *ILC Commissioning Framework*.

The *ILC Commissioning Framework* is the action plan for ILC. The Framework explains:

- the role of ILC in the NDIS;
- the outcomes expected for ILC;
- how activities will be selected and funded; and
- how performance will be measured and managed.

ILC will not start on one date in the future. It will start at different times in each state and territory. The Agency will release information about those dates at the same time as the ILC Commissioning Framework. The Australian Capital Territory is the first jurisdiction to move into ILC. The grants process will open in January 2017, with funding to flow from 1 July 2017.

The ILC budget will build up slowly over the next few years to approximately \$132 million when the full roll out of the NDIS is complete in 2019-20.

ILC funding will be distributed through grants. Organisations will have to apply for funding to carry out activities. Organisations will have to explain in an application how their proposed activity fits into the Activity Areas described in the ILC Policy, fits one or more of the five Focus Areas identified by the Agency and delivers one or more outcomes for people with disability.

The Agency will shortly release the ILC Commissioning and Program Guidelines for ILC. Both documents will provide more information on the grants process under ILC.

- 2a) The NDIS is the new way of providing support to people with disability in Australia. The goal of the NDIS is to increase the social and economic participation of Australians with disability. The Agency is a corporate Commonwealth entity whose role is to implement the NDIS.

The NDIS has two parts:

1. Individual NDIS plans for people whose permanent disability has a significant impact on their ability to take part in everyday activities; and
2. Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC).

People with disability may access supports either through their NDIS plan or through ILC supports, depending on the individual's support needs.

#### Individual NDIS plans

NDIS participants have an individual NDIS plan that outlines their goals and funded supports. The NDIS funds supports, including aids and equipment, that are reasonable and necessary to support people achieve their goals.

#### Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC)

ILC funding will be distributed through grants. Organisations will have to apply for funding to carry out activities. Organisations will have to explain in an application how their proposed activity fits into the Activity Areas described in the ILC Policy, fits one or more of the five Focus Areas identified by the Agency and delivers one or more outcomes for people with disability.

Aids and equipment do not fit under the ILC Policy and therefore will not be funded under ILC. Aids and equipment will be funded out of individual NDIS plans.

Activities funded through ILC will also need to work effectively with services and supports provided through the aged care system, but it will not replace those services. The Agency is aware, for example, that some organisations work with both people with disability and people over age 65. People under age 65 will be prioritised in ILC, while similar services and supports funded through the aged care system will meet the needs of those aged over 65.

- 3) Whilst aids and equipment may be purchased or leased using home care package funds, it is envisaged that care services would be the predominant expense of any home care package.

Aids and equipment, including vision impaired services may be purchased from the Home Care Package, however the care and services:

- provided must be identified in the care plan based on the consumer's assessed care needs;
- must fit within the available budget for the package level;
- should not compromise the primary care needs of the consumer;
- should be discussed between the provider and consumer and agreed to; and
- meet all the relevant requirements of the *Aged Care Act 1997*.

- 3a) Yes, under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) '*Goods, Equipment and Assistive Technology*' service type, eligible clients are able to access financial support (\$500 to \$1,000 per financial year) to assist with the purchase of aids and equipment such as reading aids.

- 4) The following link on the My Aged Care website has specific information about aids and equipment for Home Care Package Programme.

<http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/aged-care-services/home-care-packages/home-care-packages-care-and-services>

The CHSP webpage on the My Aged Care website lists some examples of services that are available under the CHSP. The My Aged Care website does not provide a complete list of CHSP services. A complete list of CHSP services is included in the CHSP Programme Manual. A copy of the CHSP Programme Manual is available at:

<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care-publications-and-articles-fact-sheets/commonwealth-home-support-programme-programme-manual-2015>

- 5) My Aged Care is the central point of contact for consumers should they require information on aged care services available to them. The My Aged Care contact centre staff asks consumers who are seeking aged care services a range of questions over the phone to form a picture of their needs and care arrangements to inform them of the next steps. Depending on the aged care information and details that are provided, arrangements are made for an assessment of the consumer's needs by a trained assessor (usually an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) for the Home Care Packages Programme or Regional Assessment Service (RAS) for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme).

Depending on the consumer's level of care needs and the programme they are eligible for, consumers are informed by the ACAT or RAS of the services that they can access and are entitled to. While the CHSP provides entry level services, the Home Care Packages Programme provides a more comprehensive range of care and services for older people with higher level care needs.

**Note:** state and territory governments operate specialised aids and equipment schemes to assist people with disabilities, including older people. It is expected that consumers will continue to be able to access specialised aids and equipment schemes where there is a need for support.

- 6) The Australian Government subsidises many different types of aged care services under the *Aged Care Act 1997* and Home Care Packages Programme is one of them. The Home Care Packages Programme is for people who have complex needs that can only be met by a coordinated package of care.

In order to access a home care package, a person needs to first be assessed and approved as eligible by ACAT. ACAT assessments are comprehensive and holistic, independent and client-focused. As part of the process, a person's physical, medical, psychological, cultural, social and restorative care needs are assessed to determine the type of services and supports that would be most appropriate to meet the person's needs.

The Home Care Packages Programme provides package of services tailored to meet a person's specific care needs. A person's care plan is based on assessed care needs and developed in partnership with provider and consumer.

The Home Care Packages Programme is part of the Government's continuum of care for older Australians. The programme is positioned between residential aged care and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme.