

17 November 2006

Mr Elton Humphrey
The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Humphrey

**SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE INQUIRY
INTO THE FUNDING AND OPERATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH
STATE/TERRITORY DISABILITY AGREEMENT**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference's Committee's examination of the funding and operation of the third Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA).

Since 1951, the Endeavour Foundation has provided services and support to people with an intellectual disability throughout Queensland, making the organisation the largest service provider of its type in Australia.

Currently, the organisation supports 3,000 clients and approximately 2,500 families across the state through the provision of a range of services and supports. These include 2 24-hour residential accommodation/group homes, 30 in-home accommodation support houses, 35 adult day services, 19 post school services, 25 business services as well as a range of flexible accommodation and support arrangements including respite, aged care and services to children.

Eight Local Area Committees and twenty-three Local Parent Consultative Groups across the state provide advice on key government and community issues and initiatives impacting upon Endeavour as well as directly inputting into the overall governance of the organisation.

Endeavour as a member of ACROD supports the thrust and recommendations in their submission. Endeavour's submission builds upon ACROD's submission and focuses upon some key issues this organisation wants to see addressed in the next CSTDA, to enable Endeavour to deliver more responsive and improved services into the future.

Endeavour supports over 3000 people with an intellectual disability.

We have over 200 locations around Queensland.

We were established in 1951.

Endeavour has services in the following regional locations:

- + Cairns
- + Mareeba
- + Innisfail
- + Ingham
- + Townsville
- + Ayr
- + Home Hill
- + Bowen
- + Mackay
- + Rockhampton
- + Gladstone
- + Bundaberg
- + Harvey Bay
- + Maryborough
- + Gympie
- + Sunshine Coast
- + Metropolitan Brisbane
- + Gold Coast
- + Ipswich
- + Gatton
- + Toowoomba
- + Kingaroy
- + Roma
- + Stanthorpe
- + Warwick

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Endeavour's key issues have been developed through feedback received from clients, families and staff as well as the overall organisation's experience in providing quality disability services under current and previous CSTDA agreements. These include the need for the next Agreement to deliver:

- A much improved interface between the aged care and disability service systems; particularly in regard to ageing clients;
- Adequate indexation to ensure the viability and long term sustainability of services;
- An adequate level of funding to address high unmet service need, with a priority upon ageing parents with disabled family members who have no ongoing accommodation support; and
- Improved data collection processes to assist organisational planning.

Should you require further information regarding this submission please contact Ms Paige Armstrong, Manager, Community and Advocacy Support Unit, Endeavour on (07) 3908 7277 or p.armstrong@endeavour.com.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelvin Spiller', with a checkmark at the end of the signature.

Kelvin Spiller
Chief Executive Officer

ENDEAVOUR FOUNDATION

Submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee's exemption of the funding and operation of the third Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)

Improving the interface between the aged care and disability service systems

One of the most critical issues confronting service providers' over the next 20 years will be the ability to develop and deliver quality disability supports and services for people with a disability who are ageing.

For instance, as at June 2005 Endeavour Foundation supported 75 clients over 60 years of age, 321 clients aged between 50 and 60 years and 803 clients between 40 and 50 years. Nearly half of all Endeavour clients are over 40 years of age and one in seven clients is over 50 years of age. The largest number of clients aged over 50 years is located in South East Queensland, particularly the Sunshine Coast area.

It is acknowledged that there is a range of complex arrangements currently in place for the provision of disability services, health care, home and community care and aged care across the Commonwealth, States and Territories.

However, the ability of all levels of governments to successfully pilot their way through the ageing crisis will be marked by an ability to develop seamless transitions between these services, regardless of jurisdiction or funding body.

Whilst Endeavour strongly supports the principle of 'ageing in place' the organisation has faced ongoing challenges in effectively achieving arrangements that allow people with a disability to age within their own environment amongst friends and established community and social networks.

Cross jurisdictional Commonwealth and State funding and program issues are impacting upon Endeavour's ability to access adequate and appropriate funding and supports as well as undertake transitional planning for service users wanting to retire from their Commonwealth funded Business or State funded non-vocational Day Service.

Endeavour challenges the position that people with a disability over the age of 65 are solely a responsibility of one jurisdiction. Such a policy position results in people being displaced from their "homes" (state funded accommodation support services) into Commonwealth Government facilities because they need additional "aged care" support.

This leaves people isolated from friends and their established community and social networks – at great emotional cost to the person and with little, if any, real cost saving to government. Rather costs will be shunted from one jurisdiction and system to another.

However, for many people supported by Endeavour who are ageing, current government policies leave them with no option but to move into an aged care facility when their support needs exceed those able to be provided by disability services.

Equally so, if a person needs to move into an aged care facility because of increased medical support needs they are often unable to access additional state funded day and

recreational supports – again, leaving them feeling lonely and isolated from established social networks.

As such, for people with a disability who are ageing, including those who are prematurely ageing, improved access to Home and Community Care Services (HACC) and more cohesive linkages between State and Federal funding programs and agencies would assist to support people as they age in a more cost-effective and effective manner.

Many ageing clients of Endeavour's Commonwealth funded Business Services have limited opportunities to retire, as the State funded accommodation service where they reside is not adequately funded to provide support hours during the day. Supported employees at Business Services should be able to access support and assistance to allow them to transition to retirement in a similar dignified manner that is afforded to other members of the Australian community.

Endeavour fully supports of the Aged Care Innovative Pool Disability Aged Care Interface Pilot and the work undertaken to trial new approaches to community-based aged care for people with disabilities. Given the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare have evaluated these pilots to be successful, Endeavour stresses it is essential for the Commonwealth, States and Territories to work cooperatively to ensure people can access such alternate support options.

Endeavour also challenges the position that people with a disability who access aged care support services prior to age 65 are 'double-dipping', as this policy position fails to recognise that people with lifelong disability often age prematurely and does not adequately provide for a continuum of care throughout the spectrum of life.

Endeavour is registered to provide 18 Community Aged Care Packages across Brisbane, 10 on the North side and 8 on the South side. The current client base consists of ageing parents of existing Endeavour clients, Endeavour clients who have an age-related disability and other ageing consumers in the community.

However, the organisation's ability to provide additional community-based aged care support to people with lifelong disability who are ageing is hampered again by the lack of interface between disability and aged care agencies.

Developing appropriate support models for people with a disability who are ageing continues to be a key challenge for both service providers and government alike.

Currently Endeavour is an industry partner in a research project, "*Developing an Integrative Active Ageing Model for Policy Makers and Service Providers to Support Older People with Lifelong Intellectual Disability*", in conjunction with the QUT Centre for Social Change Research, La Trobe University. Other industry partners are Queensland Office of the Public Advocate, Victorian Office of the Public Advocate, Queensland Department of Housing and Queensland Aged and Disability Advocacy Inc. This research is funded by the Australian Research Council and outcomes are expected by mid 2007.

It is acknowledged that much research and work has been conducted by a number of people within Australia and internationally. To date, this work has not resulted in both levels of governments adopting a clear policy direction that addresses these complex

inter-face issues and delivers a holistic service approach for people with disabilities who are ageing.

Endeavour stresses the next CSTDA needs to include clear strategies to effectively progress the work commissioned by the National Disability Administrators Group in 2005 on Ageing with a life long disability.

Endeavour is more than happy to work collaboratively with both levels of government on any future projects targeted to deliver real outcomes for this group in their day-to-day living situations.

Adequate indexation to ensure the viability and long term sustainability of service providers

Endeavour strongly reinforces that indexation which fails to keep pace with cost increases in service delivery is effectively an annual funding cut. Current Australian Government's indexation rates throughout the current CSTDA have amounted to funding cuts in "real service cost delivery terms" and as such, have not contributed towards the viability and long term sustainability of an industry providing vital survival services to extremely vulnerable people and the their families.

For instance, the Consumer Price Index to the June quarter 2006 increased 4.0%, with Brisbane even higher at 4.1%. The Labour Price Index increase through the year to June 2006 was 4.1%, with Queensland recording the highest all sector increase of 4.8%.

The minimal indexation figure provided by the Commonwealth of 2.1% in 2005/06, reducing to 1.8% in 2006/07, fails to adequately recognise the key impacts of operating, wage and compliance costs.

The methodology employed by the Commonwealth to calculate indexation rates is based upon some flawed assumptions, as it assumes that efficiency savings will be achieved. However, Endeavour asserts this assumption is flawed in an industry where social interaction and "hands-on" human labour is at the core of disability service provision. Current eligible CSTDA service types reflect this fact.

Additionally, the Commonwealth's current indexation model fails to take into account a number of other factors affecting the sector.

States such as Queensland are experiencing high levels of population growth and subsequent to that, strong demand for funded disability services and high levels of unmet need.

Skilled labour shortages continue to impact on service providers' ability to keep operating expenses at a minimum. This also places upward pressure upon wages. For example, Endeavour has recently negotiated a new industrial agreement with its workforce which includes wage increases of 3.8% this year for workers employed in our Commonwealth funded Business Services and State funded Disability Services.

Additionally, the Fair Pay Commission recently determined that an increase of \$27.36 per week is required for those on award wages, which means a further top-up in wages. However, Commonwealth indexation for 2006-07 delivered only 1.8% and State

indexation 3% - leaving the organisation to find the additional funds to cover these overall wage increases through fund raising activities.

Endeavour has also experienced other unavoidable cost increases in relation to essential service on-costs. Increases of particular concern have been in areas such as workers compensation; public liability and other insurances; *property maintenance and rental costs and petrol costs, especially in rural and remote areas.* Such on-cost increases are stifling the organisation's ability to build capacity and reinvest in services over the long term.

The figures presented above, combined with strong pressure from population growth, provide some indication of the inherent imbalance of the existing system.

A strong and sustainable disability sector must be appropriately funded by an indexation rate that allows service providers to remain viable and continue providing quality sustainable services to people with a disability in the long term.

Funding to address high unmet service need, with a priority upon ageing parents who have disabled family members with no ongoing accommodation support

Whilst acknowledging the contribution of both levels of government to fund disability support services, the high levels of unmet need in Queensland continues to weigh heavily on families, service providers and the wider community.

Endeavour families and carers, particularly ageing parents; continue to express concern regarding the lack of accommodation support options available when they are no longer able to care for their family member with a disability in the years to come. *What will happen to my son/daughter when we die* – is a comment frequently made by families growing increasingly anxious as they are very aware of the high unmet need for accommodation support in Queensland.

Being an organisation with a high number of ageing parents – as reflected by the ageing rates of clients, quoted at the beginning of this submission – we stress the next Agreement needs to include clear strategies to address the accommodation support needs of this group, both for the peace of mind of parents and their disabled family members.

Families have also expressed a desire for the opportunity to participate in early intervention services to provide independent living skills to ensure their family member is more adequately equipped should a change in accommodation or support options occur.

Endeavour cannot stress enough that unmet service need and under-met need, particularly in the areas of accommodation support, day and respite services continues to impact heavily upon Queenslanders with a disability and those who care for them.

The organisation acknowledges that both levels of government have invested additional funding for disability support under this CSTDA and particularly congratulate the Beattie Government for their significant injection of funds into this area.

However, Endeavour also stresses that under the next CSTDA significantly increased funding must be strategically targeted to address the high level of unmet need and ageing parents who have disabled family members with no ongoing accommodation need to be one of the priority groups targeted for funding. This is key to delivering real improvements to the lives of people with a disability and their families.

Improved data collection processes to assist organisational planning

Whilst the National Minimum Data Set collection has been of significance, its relevance to the non-government sector could be greatly improved.

Endeavour believes that there is a significant lack of data to assist service providers to develop capacity and plan for the future.

For instance, limited work has been undertaken to map future demand for service, report on the changing expectations of service users and carers, or identify future service needs.

The current data set has limited capacity to provide meaningful, relevant facts to inform organisations when planning services and managing asset portfolios.

As a result, service providers often rely on sketchy, subjective information and the quality of forward-planning in the non-government sector generally reflects these challenges.

If governments at all levels truly recognise the importance of strong financial management and responsible long-term planning in the non-government sector, the efficacy of data for future planning purposes must be greatly improved.

Paige Armstrong
Community Advocacy & Support Unit

Kelvin Spiller
Chief Executive Officer