



*Submission to the Productivity Commission
Disability Care and Support Inquiry*

Community Southwest Ltd is an alliance of 14 not for profit, non government organisations that are based in southwest Victoria. Our members employ in excess of 900 staff who deliver a range of wellbeing and community services throughout the region which include child, family and aged services, support for those with mental illness and disabilities as well as drug and alcohol issues. Additionally our members support those seeking apprenticeships and employment and provide community banking services to the region. Further information on Community Southwest and the members of the Community Southwest Alliance can be found at www.communitysouthwest.com

Community Southwest's mission is "To be a powerful influence in developing stronger, fairer and more self dependent local communities"

Introduction & Statement of Support.

The 14 members of the Community Southwest alliance strongly supports the establishment of a no fault universal insurance cover for all Australians with a disability.

We see that an appropriately funded support scheme that is outside political influence and enshrined in legislation will ultimately provide enhanced social, economic and spiritual wellbeing for the individual, the carer and the broader community.

We believe that both the local economy will benefit and that government outcomes will be enhanced as a result of the potential reduction in stress related illnesses that are commonly associated with the provision of sustained care by family members.

Observations

Australia as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities must embrace the NDIS as a way of meeting the basic rights of people with disabilities.

A strong culture of advocacy will need to be adopted throughout the industry so as the clients rights are heard and appropriately managed during the decision making processes

The best interest of the client will be served through a demarcation of advocacy support services and service providers where advocacy is not family based. We also note that there should be some monitoring mechanism available to ensure the "professionalism" and bi-partisanship of the advocate remains in place.

A high quality information and awareness raising campaign will need to be undertaken to ensure every client is apprised of forthcoming changes and opportunities.

Recommendations

The scheme should include flexibility to cater for changes in both client needs and community expectations such as health or changes to ability and for advances in Human Rights and Social Inclusion agendas.

The scheme should consider how to seamlessly integrate the needs of disabled people through to aged and acute care in a timely manner so as to maintain a level of dignity and quality of life.

That where there is identified infrastructure required to achieve NDIS & community objectives, that government considers alternatives to Government funded development such as guarantees and joint partnerships (where government funds are not immediately available).

That decisions regarding access to services or funding not be limited to a "point of time" but rather be considered in the context what will be the best outcome for the client. (consider flexibility for pre-emptive action in an effort to reduce long term costs /impart a better quality of life).

That both care-giving or advocacy organisations (either existing or new) be appropriately remunerated for the administrative (reporting and quality assurance) components of any role.

That service providers, Fair Work Australia and relevant employment advocates as part of an Award or Agreement review consider and recommend opportunities to build in an improved flexibility so as to better cater for needs of consumers, carers and employers.

(Submission Ends)