



## **Productivity Commission: Disability Care and Support – CSSV Submissions, 2010 and 2011**

This note outlines the Commission's enquiry, and the input provided by CSSV in response to the initial issues paper and, in May 2011, in response to the Draft Report.

In August 2010, after consultation with member agencies working in the Disability services sector and carers / family members, CSSV made a submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Disability Care and Support. The Productivity Commission proposed major change to the funding and provision of disability care and support, most notably the introduction of the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**, which would provide an entitlement to services and supports for all Australians who have a permanent and significant disability.

In addition to strongly supporting the NDIS, our submission made a number of recommendations, including the need for strategies to enhance community attitudes around the **right** to inclusion and support. Reflecting the consultations with carers and organisations, we stressed that services and supports should be person centred and allow people with disabilities and their families to self-direct, and potentially cash out, their service entitlements. We also argued that service types be flexible and portable, and whole of life planning be developed, to avoid the current transitions (e.g. from children's to adult services at age 18) people with disabilities are required to make.

The need to support and respect families was highlighted in all our consultations, and in our submission.

Since the Submission in August, the Commission has released a draft report and recommendations. This has largely covered the areas raised in our submission. The Commission has outlined the proposed scope of the NDIS to fund the individualised (assessed) needs of all people who have a permanent disability, and

- have significant limitations in communication, mobility or self-care, or
- have an intellectual disability, or
- would gain significant benefit from early intervention, or
- would have large identifiable benefits from support .

A separate National Injury Insurance Scheme is recommended to support people suffering a catastrophic injury, such as motor vehicle, workplace or other accidents; crime; or medical negligence. This would be a no fault scheme and would replace a number of state based schemes, reducing the current 'lottery', where accessing compensation can depend on how an injury occurs, and which state or territory a person is in at the time.

Carers providing a large share of a person's support needs would receive their own assessment, to establish the sustainability of their care and how they can be supported. The Commission places a great deal of emphasis on supports being individualised and self-directed to the extent that the person with a disability or their family is able/ willing to take on. People would be provided with a package of supports, and would be able to choose their provider. With some conditions, people would be able to choose to cash out the support package and allocate it to specific supports that they choose and arrange themselves.

The CSSV response to the Draft Report expressed continued support for the NDIS, but concern about the Commission's reliance on a market driven approach to deliver the required quality services. CSSV recommends that further consideration be given to qualities of a service sector that is best placed to provide the services and supports desired by people with disabilities and their families. In a sector that requires a foundation of caring, respect for dignity and rights, the market may not always deliver the best outcomes, and the important role of not for profit (including church – based) organisations may diminish.

The Commission has proposed options for the ongoing funding of the scheme, either through a specific levy or consolidated revenue. They estimate the net cost of the scheme will be \$6.3 billion a year.

The Commission proposes that the scheme would commence in early 2014 in a particular region of Australia. The Victorian government made a pre-election commitment to support the scheme and possibly be part of the trial. A secretariat has been formed in Department of Premier and Cabinet to lead work on the scheme. This is an indicator of the bi—partisan support for the scheme

The Commission will submit its final report to the Government later this year. There is a strong campaign in support of the NDIS initiated by the disability services sector, and it is to be hoped that public support for the scheme will encourage the government to allocate the additional funds needed to make this innovative proposal a reality.

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