



SUBMISSION TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION, INQUIRY INTO DISABILITY CARE AND SUPPORT

The City of Botany Bay is a local government authority located between the Sydney CBD to the north, Randwick to the east, Marrickville and Rockdale to the west and the northern bank of Botany Bay to the south. The City includes the suburbs of Botany, Mascot, Banksmeadow, Eastlakes, Hillsdale, Daceyville, Pagewood, Eastgardens and parts of Rosebery.

The City has a population of approximately 39,000 residents, with almost half born overseas. Residents from countries such as Bangladesh, Greece, New Zealand, China and Indonesia feature strongly in the demographics of our City.

The City of Botany Bay is “committed to improving the total environment to allow all community members who live, work or use the facilities in the Council area to enjoy and benefit from the services provided”.

Specifically in terms of access, the Council “is committed to the goal of attaining a City that is fully accessible to all members of the community”.

The Council has an adopted Disability Action Plan and a fully functioning Access Committee comprising of a number of community representatives.

According to ABS statistics, 19.3% of the population has a disability. Assuming the City’s population is consistent with these statistics, some 7527 of our residents have a disability.

Through Council’s role as a community leader, a provider of services and facilities and the level of government closest to the people, this submission is made to relay a number of the observations, concerns and comments made by members of the community and Council officers responsible for service delivery.

- A greater understanding of the depth and breadth of the number of people with a disability, particularly where the disability impacts on their ability to manage the tasks of daily living, is needed before new systems are introduced;
- An apparent lack of knowledge in the community about the services currently available and the details of services funded to provide specific support services;
- Frustration over the duplication and costs involved in being independently assessed to receive various services from different service providers. Central access points and the development of a national services standards addressing eligibility criteria would assist;

- There needs to be a clear distinction between present at birth and acquired through accident and/or health condition as opposed to disabilities acquired through the natural ageing process;
- There needs to be clearer definitions of ‘what constitutes’ a disability;
- The need for greater cooperation and exchange of information between service providers through Memorandums of Understanding with appropriate confidentiality clauses;
- Importance of early intervention;
- Importance of specialised disability services to provide guidance and assistance to service providers on providing services to individuals with particular disabilities;
- Need for service providers to remain “client focused”;
- Lack of age specific programs for the ‘sandwich generation’ i.e. those that fall between services for provided for younger people and those provided for older people;
- Delays often taken to secure services, particularly in the area of home modification and home care;
- Lack of portability of services;
- Changing nature of volunteering and how this may impact of the ability of service providers to provide ongoing and quality services;
- Greater employment opportunities for people with a disability;
- Increase in the number of people, especially younger people, with mental health issues;
- Lack of appropriate and affordable residential accommodation;
- Insufficient in-home and residential respite available to carers who are often emotional and physically drained from providing care to loved ones;
- Lack of appreciation by ‘professionals’ of the carer’s input when assessing the needs and level of services required for an individual with a disability;
- Lack of understanding by medical professionals, particularly in the hospital system, of how to respond and communicate appropriately with people with a disability;
- Lack of understanding among the medical profession of ‘value of life’ of people with a disability, particularly those with a profound disability;
- Concern expressed by the ageing parents of children with a disability as to who will provide care for their child, including their emotional and spiritual care, when they are gone;
- The need for accessible, affordable and reliable transport options;
- The need for adequate numbers and appropriate training of staff working with people with a disability;
- The need for increased Federal and State funding of community infrastructure to provide increased accessibility;
- The impact of the changing nature of service delivery to older people and how that may impact on changes to service delivery in the disability sector;
- Inadequate awareness of disability issues in the community and positive images of people with a disability – focused on ability rather than disability;

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