

# **Draft City of Salisbury Submission to Productivity Commission Inquiry into a long term scheme for disability care and support**

## **Introduction**

The City of Salisbury's submission intends not to duplicate other submissions but instead to raise some matters not addressed elsewhere. Reference is made to some parts of a limited number of submissions which the City of Salisbury strongly supports. The submission provides illustrations of one local government authority's efforts to improve access in the built environment and some of the challenges which it has encountered. These "environmental adjustments" are relevant to the Inquiry because they increase the options for enabling some people with impairments to become part of mainstream society and reduce expenditure on dealing with the symptoms of exclusion.

## **The fragmented "disability sector"**

An important consideration in responding to the "Issues Paper" is the effect of alternative long term schemes on the current fragmented voice of this "disability sector".

The City of Salisbury believes that the long term scheme must increase significantly the cohesion of the disability sector. A more inclusive scheme rather than one which only targets "high needs" seems a better option.

## **Reducing barriers to using mainstream solutions**

Council believes that some portion of the need for direct disability services results from barriers which prevent people with impairments using mainstream services (example, public transport) and participating in the general community (examples: mainstream employment and recreation).

For example, the requirement to fund disability specific transport and the provision of taxi subsidies can be reduced to some extent by the roll out of the DSAPT (Disability Standards for Accessible Public transport). But greater use of this public transport and a correspondingly lower need for special transport or taxi subsidies would occur if a number of related initiatives were pursued through funding from the long term scheme for disability care and support:

- Research and resulting technical development and regulatory updating of the DSAPT concerning
  - stability and restraint provision and use by bus and access cab passengers with wheeled mobility aids;
  - consequences of the rapid uptake of various motorised scooters as an alternative to wheelchairs
- Development of a system to support older drivers to make the transition to other safe, effective and quality transport options after they are required to surrender their drivers' licence;

- Development of accredited trainers and systems to provide public transport training to people using wheelchairs and scooters to provide skill and confidence (as occurs for people who are vision impaired or blind and for some people with intellectual disabilities).

### **Broader inclusive strategies which can reduce the need for some direct care and support**

- *“It is the environment that acts to facilitate integration or contribute to isolation, influencing a person’s ability to participate in society (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2003).” (quoted from the Draft National Disability Strategy released on 29 July 2010, Outcome 1, Key Policy Direction 2).*

In the draft National Disability strategy, Outcome [1] “Inclusive and accessible communities” Key Policy Directions 2 and 4 refer to some aspects of barrier removal. The City of Salisbury endorses these and recommends that any long term scheme for disability care and support should contribute to the following strategies.

#### **1) Co-funding of retro-fitting inaccessible elements in the built environment**

The Australian Labor Party election announcement of a \$5million fund to assist increasing accessibility in the built environment is the first indication by a major political party of a willingness to assist other levels of government to push back the access barriers that dominate our towns and cities. While the amount is very small it is the fact that any such funds are promised which is an encouraging novelty.

(see the attached images of access upgrades funded completely by the City of Salisbury, in spite of inadequate standards development and non-existent skill base among the building related professions).

#### **2) Neighbourhood and community inclusion strategy**

The draft National disability Strategy (NDS) includes under Outcome [1] “areas for Future Action” an emphasis on universal design and ways to improve cultural and sports participation. It also includes:

“1.2 Support the development of strong social networks for people with disability.”.

Outcome [4] “Personal and community support includes

**“Outcome: People with disability, their families and carers have access to a range of supports to assist them live independently and actively engage in their communities.””**

**In “Areas for future action” the following is stated:**

- 4.8 Promote and sustain community support networks which provide information and support to families and carers.”

Council believes that the implementation of the NDS in these areas will require a commonwealth and State funding scheme to develop neighbourhood inclusion strategies which trial and improve ways to increase the general communities’ acceptance of diversity and valuing of neighbours with impairments.

Local government is best placed to deliver such programs through its range of community centres, sport and recreation and cultural programs. Valuing of diversity depends on people getting to know each other as equals and this can be facilitated by skilled neighbourhood development staff funded through a long term disability care and support scheme.

**Participation by people with disability**

Council supports the Australian Human rights Commission’s (AHRC) emphasis on capacity building for representative disability organisations. The City of Salisbury believes that modest funding of local area forums with effective communications technologies to link across Australia can be a gathering point for people with various impairments, families and carers. These forums can generate a local voice informed by similar forums across the nation and also contribute to state and national representative bodies. Such forums can be based in regions and across clusters of metropolitan Councils.

**Funding for direct services and support versus environmental adjustment**

The AHRC’s excellent submission [No. 0072(1)] articulates the scope of a long term scheme for disability care and support based on the “social model of disability” adopted in the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities. Whatever institution manages any long term scheme will have to allocate funds between

- everyday or occasional direct personal care and support requirements
- measures to increase physical and communication accessibility and socio-economic and cultural inclusion.

Council supports direct and individualised funding to people with impairments for disability care and support. But for wider inclusivity initiatives there needs to be a rigorous audit mechanism which ensures accountability for the efficient and effective use of funds. The intent of this system should be to minimise the proportion of funds absorbed by public, private or community organisations responsible for barrier removal and maximising the inclusion outcome.

## **Other submissions**

Council highlights and supports the following recommendations from the Australian Human Rights Commission:  
Paragraphs

**[2] Accepting the social model of disability** adopted in the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

**[5] Early establishment of key institutions required to implement CRPD recommended by the DIG “The Way Forward” Report (2009) especially a National disability research body;**

**[6] Capacity development of and sustainability of representative organisations of people with disability required by CRPD**

**[7] Disability care and support also includes reasonable adjustment in the economic, social, cultural and physical environments**

**[8] Equality of women’s participation**

council also supports the excellent submissions by the Bankstown Lga and the SA Local Government Association.

## **ATTACHMENT**

The following images show some of the City of Salisbury’ environmental adjustment work often hampered by inadequate national research and standards development.



Salisbury Swimming Centre access upgrade including modification of male and female changerooms, building a unisex accessible change/toilet space, and installing a concrete ramp after widening the 25m pool. Total Cost \$



Salisbury North CAPT (Continuous Accessible Path of Travel) this is an 1800mm path with accessible kerb ramps connecting accessible shops and bus stops with aged care and wheelchair accessible housing along a 1.6km path.





In 2004 John Street in the Salisbury Town Centre presented a number of barriers to pedestrians, especially those with mobility impairments.





These images are from John Street, Salisbury in 2006 after Council had –

- Repaved the street to eliminate step entries into businesses

- Funded a staff member to educate retailers about expanding their market to include people with disabilities
- Adopted a footpath trading policy which cleared the footpath 1.8m in front of each business.



This is one of 20 council buildings which has a Counter Hearing System that provides louder volume to a customer using an ear piece plugged into the phone receiver.

Salisbury and the neighbouring City of Playford have a combined team of seniors who are hearing ambassadors. The ambassadors encourage seniors with hearing loss to keep connected with the community making use of various hearing systems.



Wheelchair access is provided to part of a junior playground one of 23 play areas where there is rubber soft fall and an accessible path to the nearby street.