

## **Baptcare response to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report into Disability Care and Support**

Baptcare welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report into Disability Care and Support and looks forward to supporting the work of the Commission to develop focused solutions for people with a disability and their carers.

As per our presentation to the Commission in Hobart on 4 April, 2011, Baptcare wishes to highlight the similarities of the Report's proposed model to the newly-implemented Tasmanian Disability and Family Support Gateway. As highlighted in our presentation, the early stages of the Tasmanian system's reform are working well, with feedback from people with a disability and their carers to date being very positive.

The Gateway is a centralised intake point for people with a disability. The intake point provides a seamless entry point to a broad range of community support services as it is delivered through a collaboration of integrated community service organisations. The Gateway provides information and options that assist people to navigate the system. Based on a comprehensive assessment, we channel people into mainstream or specialised support systems as is appropriate to their needs. We are a secondary consultation point for the broader service system and provide holistic care plans through a comprehensive partnership model.

The Gateway is responsible for:

- a. undertaking holistic assessment of support needs;
- b. providing information – linking people into the correct pathways; and,
- c. making a determination of funding allocations.

During the development of the Gateway program, Baptcare aimed to eliminate the bureaucratic nature of the existing system and put the client at the centre. The assessment tool developed as part of achieving this aim is available at

[http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/disability/projects/development\\_of\\_a\\_common\\_assessment\\_framework](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/disability/projects/development_of_a_common_assessment_framework).

An integral aspect of the success of the Gateway Program and any disability support system is the development of a partnership approach between services, as many of the support requirements sit outside of the disability service sector. The Tasmanian Gateway model created a central reference and intake point for a number of community services, such as Integrated Family Services and Disability services. To ensure the broad range of people's support needs can be identified and addressed at one central point, all the sector's key systems are represented in a partnership arrangement. A broad range of agencies are involved in the delivery of the Gateway and associated supports to develop a holistic care plan that links with all the appropriate services e.g. homelessness, domestic violence and aged care services.

### **Demand forecasting**

The predicted demand for the Tasmanian Disability Gateway was modelled on the existing service usage data from the government provider; however, it quickly became evident that the actual demand far exceeded all of the modelling. This experience was in part due to the willingness of people to engage with a non-government service provider. A considerable number of people contacted the Gateway service to explore options of care and support; people were looking to more appropriately focus available resources to better meet their needs.

### **Client profile**

Baptcare fully supports the Commission's approach to building into the proposed model the ability for people to have greater power and choice of their care and their lives. From the Gateway experience, we have seen dramatic improvements in people's lives in those instances where people control their care. At every level of the Gateway Program, we strive to offer information in a way that enables choice.

It is important to note the profile of people coming through the Gateway Program has been varied. Many people are already managing well in the community and have good supports; we have found that this cohort is linking with the Gateway to explore the potential for modifying minor aspects of their care plan. The Gateway program offers post-engagement support to this client group through a process called *Active Monitoring*. The *Active Monitoring* function is a critical element of the success of the Gateway Disability Program as it touches base with clients in a regular and planned way; it enables us to pro-actively plan changes to clients' lives, e.g. major transition points. We walk with clients as they approach major changes rather than waiting for things to reach a crisis point before any intervention is offered. An example of this is supporting a person with a disability who is being cared for in the community by carers who are aging to enable them to slowly integrate into a new care environment.

The *Active Monitoring* function allows people to re-enter the Gateway support system for advice, support or case review when the existing package of support needs is no longer appropriate. Importantly, it also provides a safety net that identifies clients whose support needs are not being met due to system failure.

Conversely, a minority of people have multiple and complex issues with limited or no established community supports. We have found that this group requires extra support and we have therefore included *Local Area Coordination* (intensive case support) to work directly with clients to resolve the issues and allow them to move to a space where they can develop an appropriate personal care plan. Often the crisis issues that need immediate support are holistic health issues such as housing or access to health treatment. Once the crisis issues are stabilised, we have found that people are more able to focus on the development of their care plan.

In the current financially-restricted disability funding environment, the Local Area Coordinators play the pivotal role of supporting people to re-draft their care plan in response to the final approved allocation of funding. In our experience, it is highly unlikely that all support requests put forward will be funded; in actual fact it is much more likely that they will receive approximately 50% of their funding requirements. It is essential that each client revisits their care plan in light of the actual allocation and work out the best supports possible within the limited resources. Some clients are better at doing this than others and the Local Area Coordinators ensure that clients who are struggling with this process get best value from the range of service providers.

### **Workforce management**

The requirements of the Gateway workforce are highly specialised due to the holistic nature of the assessments; staff must be highly trained and well linked into the local community sector to enable the collaborative partnership work and to streamline referrals.

It is essential that Gateway staff have a comprehensive understanding of all relevant Acts, excellent clinical skills and highly developed communication skills.

### **Data Management**

In Tasmania, information sharing provisions are built into the Disability Services Act. This sharing only occurs under strict conditions; for the purposes of undertaking assessment of eligibility for services and to develop a client's support plan. These are used to assist in providing a picture of support needs by assessing a person's prior engagement with the support system, identifying what has been successful and noting what has been not so successful.

Baptcare has worked closely with the Tasmanian Government to implement the Disability Services reforms. Underpinning this work is a functional consumer information management system that allows multiple entry points and data interrogation. Further development work needs to be done in this area to achieve a highly integrated data set to support a holistic view of the services system.

The data management system provides evidence of need and demand and assists with the planning for future system development.

### **Intersections with other services systems**

In response to the Commission's request to consider where Baptcare sees the boundaries between the mental health sector and the NDIS, we maintain that there should be no disaggregation of systems. A centralised entry point is critical for the creation of a holistic and seamless service response. This should also be reflected in the intersection with the aged care sector.

As a leading provider of both aged and disability services, Baptcare is acutely aware of the negative impact caused by the current arbitrary boundaries created by the siloed funding streams and disaggregated service systems. For example, when a person with a disability reaches a point where the introduction of age related services is required, the current arrangement requires them to have an entirely new intake and assessment process. This is time and cost consuming for the sector and causes undue stress on the client.

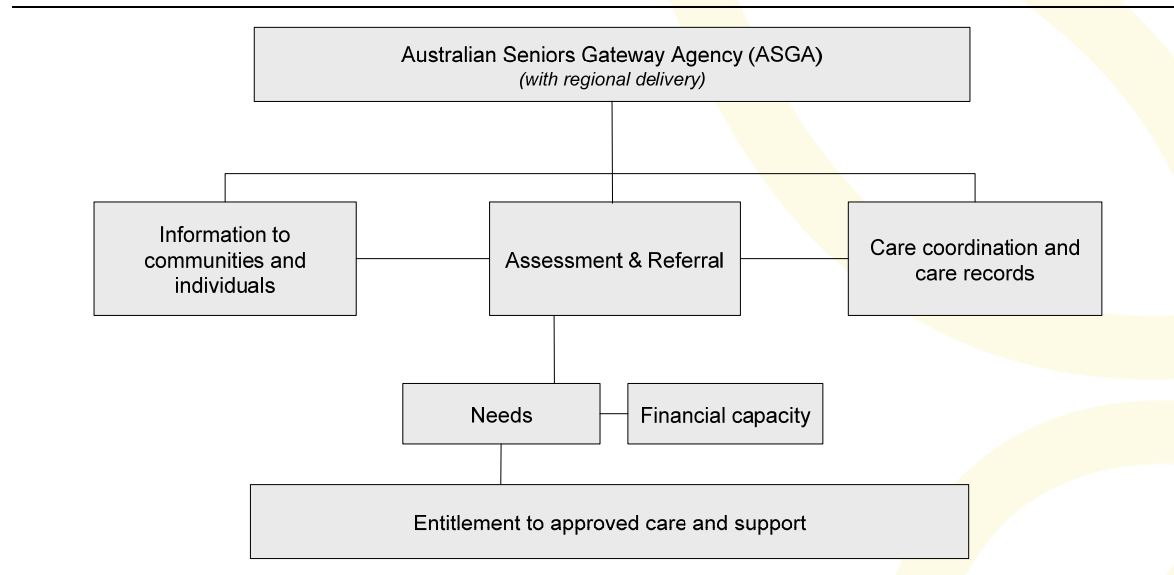
Baptcare is in a unique position to develop and trial innovative service models that are person-centred and provide a seamless experience for consumers as their care needs change over their life journey.

From Baptcare's experience, we see that the creation of a Gateway enables a more holistic view of a person where there are no arbitrary barriers relating to age, disability type or health status. More importantly, it is the collaborative partnership that maximises access across the full continuum of support.

Baptcare notes the synchronicity between the model proposed under the Productivity Commission's draft report 'Caring for Older Australians' and the Disability Care and Support model, as both models propose the establishment of a Gateway.

The Caring for Older Australians model has the Gateway responsible for maintaining the national aged care information base, and for delivering assessment and care coordination services (figure 2) and assessment. Baptcare believes consideration should be given to bringing the Disability model together with the Caring for Older Australians model. This would achieve a more holistic service response that will see the development of care plans that respond to an individual's changing care needs seamlessly over their life.

Figure 2 **Australian Seniors Gateway**

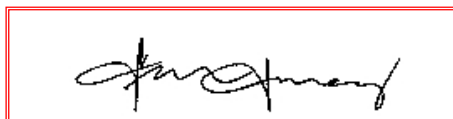


Baptcare strongly recommends: that the future intake and assessment model be located within the local community; be a centralised point of access for people; and holistically responds to support needs through a partnership model with a broad range of community and specialist service providers.

Furthermore, we invite the Commissioners to visit the Gateway to observe the system and gain a greater understanding of the complex partnership arrangements that underpin the program's success.

Whilst visiting Baptcare we can provide the following information as per your request:

- forecast and actual demand data;
- assessment processes and tools (including case studies);
- prioritisation and profile tool;
- data regarding the number of new clients entering the system who had not previously had contact with government services;
- software data collection systems;
- information on client accessing the system with co-morbidities; and,
- breakdown on percentage of contact by phone and face to face contact.



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