



Productivity Commission

Disability Care and Support Inquiry

Support for the Development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme

Prepared by Laura Dawson, *on behalf of:*

The Samaritans Foundation

27th April, 2011

Table of Contents

1.0 Executive Summary..... 1

2.0 Background..... 2

3.0 Introduction..... 3

4.0 National Disability and support scheme considerations..... 4

 4.1 Funding prevention and early intervention in Indigenous
 Communities..... 4

 4.2 National Quality Framework Development..... 6

 4.3 Block Funding..... 8

5.0 Conclusions..... 10

6.0 Recommendations..... 11

7.0 References..... 13

8.0 Appendices

1.0 Executive Summary

The current Disability care and support system is in need of major reform and the draft report put forward by the Productivity Commission is certainly favoured and long-awaited by existing disability care and support services.

Samaritans is an established not-for-profit welfare service that has been involved in the provision of Disability care and support across the Newcastle, Central Coast, Hunter and Mid North Coast regions for the past two decades. Samaritans has a vested interest in the development of a government response plan, which values the person-centered services and care that people living with a disability and their carers deserve.

Samaritans recommends that, during the inquiry into the development of a new scheme and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the following should be considered:

- That the NDIA should fund prevention and early intervention, specifically to Indigenous communities, but only in direct consultation with Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples;
- That Indigenous and Aboriginal people be involved in both the planning and delivery of the scheme- by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people;
- That Aboriginal organisations should shape and control social welfare through the NDIS to Aboriginal people and, where appropriate, in partnership with non-Aboriginal agencies;
- That the development of a National Quality Framework should be established with a person-centered focus, to improve individual decision- making power through individualised packaging;
- That comparative measures be easy to understand from the consumer point of view, for personal choice of services according to needs;
- That in the establishment of such measures, existing accreditation and licensing standards be considered in the formulation of new comparative tools; and
- That block funding may be warranted in special circumstances, following the introduction of the NDIA- especially to assure the continuation of high-level care and service provision that already exists in the not-for-profit sector.

2.0 Background

Samaritans has been supporting people with Disabilities for the past two decades. The organisation provides a range of accommodation, outreach, skills development and social networking programs throughout the Newcastle, Central Coast, Hunter and Mid North Coast regions. Samaritans is the human services arm of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle.

Samaritans offers a range of Enhanced- Living support accommodation options throughout Taree, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast, with a particular focus on ageing parents as carers.

Within the current program portfolio, Samaritans delivers a range of Adult Skills, Support, Education services, and Training (ASSET) for approximately 150 people with Disabilities and people living with a mental illness. The provision of ASSET services and supported employment has been provided in a mix of regional and metropolitan settings and has offered services and support to people from Aboriginal Communities and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The combined experience of delivering these programs provides the organisation with a sound basis to comment on the draft report for the Disability Care and Support inquiry.

Samaritans values the benefits a culturally and linguistically diverse society can offer. The organisational policies, procedures and practices ensure fair and equitable access to service provision and that all services are free from discrimination or bias.

Samaritans has established links with a range of Aboriginal and CALD services and actively seeks to engage with these organisations to strengthen the participant's cultural awareness and cultural identity.

Samaritans has an established practice of utilising, where appropriate, existing infrastructure and community networks that are offered by the local parish. In delivering regionally based services, Samaritans has developed local advisory panels that are comprised of local business people and parishioners. It is with this knowledge and community support that Samaritan has prepared the following response.

3.0 Introduction

Samaritans agrees that the current system for Disability care and support is systemically flawed, inefficient and unjust and in need of major overhaul (*refer to Appendix C*). The introduction of a new National Insurance Scheme would be in the best interests of all Australians, but especially those people living with a disability and their carers.

In Australia over the next 20 years, there is expected to be a significant increase in the number of people who are living with a disability and an alarming decrease in the ability and willingness for unpaid care (Every Australian Counts, 2011). With this in mind, the inquiry into Disability Care and Support is timely and desperately need.

Samaritans believes that one of the most important gains from the new system will be the ability of those with additional needs to have authority in choice of their options for care, with self-directed funding, as well as increased opportunity and community participation.

The individualised support the NDIA will offer to people a range of choices in relation to the nature and scope of service and support they choose to receive.

In this submission, Samaritans will address:

- Ways in which the NDIA could support prevention and early intervention measures, specifically targeting Indigenous communities;
- The development of a National Quality Framework for disability providers and considerations on how the NDIA should support consumer decision-making through these measures; and
- Where block funding may be warranted in special circumstances after the introduction of the NDIA.

This submission acknowledges the work of Cec Shevels, CEO of Samaritans, for his ongoing support of a revitalised National Disability scheme and the initiatives of the organisation.

4.0 National Disability Care and Support Scheme Considerations

4.1 Funding prevention and early intervention in Aboriginal communities

Chapter nine

The commission seeks further feedback to the merits of the NDIA funding prevention and early intervention measures specifically targeting Indigenous communities, and how this could work in practice

(Productivity Commission, 2011)

Samaritans is of the opinion that the NDIA should fund prevention and early intervention measures to specifically target Aboriginal communities.

The rights and history of all Aboriginal people should be recognised within any reform of governmental policy.

Specifically, Samaritans urges the inquiry to consider the ways in which disability support is delivered to indigenous people throughout Australia. Aboriginal organisations should shape and control social welfare to Aboriginal people, where appropriate in partnership with non-Aboriginal agencies- essentially by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people.

Since 2009, Samaritans has participated in an early intervention program throughout Lake Macquarie in partnership with the Wandiyali organisation, to support young families, with information resources, referral, childcare and parenting programs, through a single-entry point.

The two organisations have worked together to ensure that, in the future, there is no disadvantage for Aboriginal people in the local area- privileging equal rights and shared opportunities for all in the community. (*Refer to appendix B*).

This partnership has been successful in terms of the outcomes achieved, as well as the understanding and knowledge gained from Samaritans' perspective.

In this respect, we recommend that the National Disability Insurance Agency work in partnership with representatives from the Aboriginal and Indigenous communities to overcome barriers of service delivery, in planning and initiation of the schemes rollout.

With this contribution, the NDIA will have the facilities and knowledge to respectfully and appropriately target Indigenous communities.

There is extensive research to suggest, "early intervention services reinforce positive family relationships, increase resilience, promote healthy child development and prevent child abuse and neglect" (Brighter Futures, 2007).

As a lead agency for the Brighter Futures rollout across Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, Samaritans encourages the consideration of the following points from the Brighter Futures Program (2007):

- Early Intervention programs that use multiple interventions work better than those using a single intervention strategy
- Quality early intervention programs enable the most vulnerable children to make significant development gains
- One-off interventions at a particular development stage are unlikely to have a lasting effect in protecting high risk individuals where as sustained support is more likely to deliver long term outcomes.

4.2 National Quality Framework development

Chapter eight

The commission seeks further feedback on the effectiveness of monitoring instruments and any others that could potentially be used to assist oversight of the disability sector.

The National Disability and Support scheme has proposed the development of a National Quality Framework to improve individual decision making power, surrounding care and support options for those people living with a disability and their carers.

Samaritans recognises that each person with a disability should have the opportunity to make their own decisions regarding support and care for their needs. The inquiry should develop policies and standards that “maximise consumer participation in decision making at the individual and service levels” (Disability Service Standards Working Party, 1993) and that these are available to the consumer in practical and accessible formats.

The draft report has raised a number of strategies to give people a better facility for understanding quality care through comparative measures across service providers. Such resources will aid in the promotion of accountable services across the board, as well as giving people the knowledge to assist in their personal choice.

In assuring the effectiveness of monitoring instruments, the National Disability Insurance Agency will have a responsibility to ensure the presentation of plain English discussions, so that the individual is able to work through the myriad of accreditation that surrounds disability services at present.

There must be an agreement that, to the person with a disability and their carers, any comparative measures must be easily understood, without extensive research into the merits and short comings of all accreditation and licensing measures that exist.

As there is not currently one single quality framework that exists to govern all disability services, it is evident that there is significant work to be done to achieve the most desirable and fair outcomes for all people.

Samaritans would deem it appropriate to recognise contributions from existing accreditation and licensing standards rather than redeveloping entirely new ones. It would be appropriate to link "quality to the National Disability Services Standards rather than setting up alternate set of quality drivers or indicators" (National Disability Services, 2011).

In acknowledging that knowledge is power, this person- centered thinking approach will grant those people we support, the best opportunity to engage with the decision- making power that this enquiry promotes.

With the introduction of a National Early Childhood quality framework, to be inaugurated in 2012, Samaritans positively recognises that the Australian government is capable of such reform and that initiatives to ensure nationally consistent, high-quality care, are a priority of policy- making and parliamentary focus.

4.3 Block Funding

From page 40 of the draft report

"Block funding to service providers would phase out. Providers would compete for custom, as people with a disability, or their agents, could 'shop' around for the service providers that best met their support needs, subject to the resources specified in people's support packages... However, block funding may persist in exceptional circumstances, such as pilots of innovative services, in some rural areas where markets might not support the provision of any service, or where there is a need to build longer term capacity, such as Indigenous- specific services".

Samaritans agrees that "the service system needs to move away from a welfare model of service provision to a person-centred approach that sees services not as charity but as a social investment in realising the potential of people with disabilities" (Dept. Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs, 2009).

While Samaritans acknowledges and agrees with individualised packaging arrangements and welcomes the encouragement of personal choice and the power to decide, we would suggest that there needs to be an agreement for some level of core funding to maintain both existing and new, not-for-profit infrastructure.

The National Disability Insurance Agency should uphold a responsibility to fund information referral and core programs such as supported accommodation for people with higher needs.

Disability services will require ongoing government support as to steer away from the present conditions of care, improving outcomes for all people. As the Australian Medical Association explains, "there are high levels of unmet demand for disability services in Australia... disability services across the country are often poorly resourced, ill-coordinated and inadequate to the long-term health care and support needs of individuals with serious disabilities" (2011).

In consultation with the National Disability Service (NDS) and Ageing, Disability and Home Care, within the Department of Human Services NSW, Samaritans agrees that the following would be most beneficial under the new framework:

"Separating the Funding Agreement monitoring process from the establishment and verification of quality within funded NGOs - those quality systems will be an input to monitoring service outcomes together with other reporting requirements"

(National Disability Services, 2011)

Not- for- profit organisations, such as Samaritans, cannot subsist on consumer funding alone in maintaining the current high- level of services that are provided.

To initiate innovative services to enhance the quality care of people, there must be some assurance that there will be funding available on the outset and that, where required it will be ongoing.

In promoting a competitive market place where consumers will handpick their services, the newly established National Disability Insurance Agency will need to be clear in their jurisdiction of how and where block funding will continue to be allocated.

5.0 Conclusions

This submission has addressed some issues raised from the draft report surrounding Disability Care and Support under the new governing body of the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Through Samaritan's experience in providing care and support to people living with a disability and their carers, we have recommended that the inquiry consider the issues and suggestions we have raised in the reform of public policy and the initiation of the new scheme.

While the values put forward in the draft report are long awaited and highly anticipated, Samaritan's urges the specific consideration of:

- The initiation of partnerships with Aboriginal people and organisations in the consideration of funding prevention and early intervention to Aboriginal people living with a disability and their carers;
- The recognition of existing accreditation and licensing schemes and how these may be integrated in new comparative measures;
- The development of comparative measures surrounding Disability service providers which are easy to understand for the consumer; and
- The further consideration of the way in which block funding will be allocated under the new scheme.

6.0 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Funding prevention and early intervention in Indigenous communities

- That Aboriginal organisations should shape and control social welfare through the NDIS to Aboriginal people and, where appropriate, in partnership with non-Aboriginal agencies- by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people.
- That the NDIA work in partnership with representatives from the Aboriginal and Indigenous communities to overcome barriers of service delivery, in planning and initiation of the schemes rollout.

Recommendation 2: National Quality Framework development

- That in the development of a National Quality Framework, the government should recognise contributions from existing accreditation and licensing standards.
- That it would be appropriate to link quality standards to those already established by the National Disability Services Standards rather than establishing new alternatives.
- That comparative measures established to contrast competing services must be easily understood, from the consumer perspective.

Recommendation 3: Block Funding

- That the NDIA will need to be clear in their jurisdiction of how and where block funding will continue to be allocated.
- That the NDIA should consider that not- for- profit organisations cannot subsist on consumer funding alone in maintaining the current high- level of services that are provided.

7.0 References

Australian Medical Association, 2011. *Long-term care and disability support*. Accessed on 11/4/11 from [<http://ama.com.au/node/6401>]

Brighter Futures- NSW Department of Community Services (2007). *About the Brighter Futures Program*. Accessed on 11/4/11 from [http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/brighter_futures_fact.pdf].

Dept. of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2009). *Shut out: the Experience of People with Disabilities and their families in Australia*. For the National Disability Strategy Consultation report, prepared by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council. Accessed on 10/4/11 from [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/community_consult/Pages/default.aspx]

Disability Service Standards Working Party (1993). *National Standards for Disability Services*. Accessed on 12/4/11 from [<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/standards/Documents/nsds1993.pdf>]

Every Australian Counts (2011). *NDIS-Revolutionising disability services*. Accessed on 14/4/11 from [<http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/about/>]

Family and Community Services (a) (2011). *Stronger together*. Accessed on 8/4/11 from [http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/about/strategies/stronger_together]

Family and Community Services (b) (2011). *Disability Action Planning*. Accessed on 8/4/11 from [http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/about/strategies/disability_action_planning].

Merrillees, L. (2011). *'It will cost but a national disability insurance scheme draws closer'*, ABC news. 20 April, retrieved from
[<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/04/20/3197010.htm>]

National Disability Services (2010). *Building and brighter future for people with a disability, their families and carers in NSW to 2016 and beyond*. For NDS NSW Submission on Stronger together II, July.

National Disability Services (2011). *NSW Quality framework*. Accessed on 12/4/11 from
[<http://www.nds.org.au/projects/article/102>]

National Disability Services (2011). *Productivity Commission's draft report welcomed*. Accessed on 12/4/11 from [<http://www.nds.org.au/news/article/1089>]

Productivity Commission (2011). *Productivity Commission- Draft report into disability care and support*. Volumes 1 and 2: February 2011.

Productivity Commission (2011). *Productivity Commission draft report into Disability Care and Support- Key Features*. Accessed on 9/4/11 from
[http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/106512/key-features.pdf]

Samaritans (2011). *Samaritans Disability Services*. Accessed on 10/4/11 from
[http://www.samaritans.org.au/page101/Services-----_Disability.aspx]

8.0 Appendices-

Appendix A

NSW Election 2011



9 Point Plan

Key Social Justice Strategies for NSW

Samaritans' Contribution to the NSW State Election in March 2011, and NSW Government commitments expected to be fulfilled in the coming months.

1. Aboriginal Self Determination

- 1.1 The rights and history of Aboriginal people should be recognised in the constitution and national day celebrations in Australia. We call on the NSW government to advocate for change.
- 1.2 Aboriginal organisations should shape and control social welfare services to Aboriginal people and in partnership with non Aboriginal agencies where appropriate.

Government response:

- ❖ *In 2010 the Coalition unanimously supported acknowledging and honour the Aboriginal people of NSW as state's first people and the traditional custodians and occupants of the land in NSW constitution*
- ❖ *Successfully called for inclusion of the Aboriginal flag in NSW legislative assembly*
- ❖ *Will close disparity gap*
- ❖ *Restore status of Department of Aboriginal affairs in the eyes of the Aboriginal community*

2. Housing and Accommodation

- 2.1 Housing NSW and registered housing providers should continue to build low-cost housing across our region. There is a particular need at the present time for dwellings suitable for families with young children.
- 2.2 The National Affordable Rental Scheme, which provides for private rental accommodation at 20% below market rental rates, should be continued.
- 2.3 A different pricing structure should be established for the payment of electricity and water bills whereby those on pensions and benefits pay a lower rate.

Government response:

- ❖ *Increase affordable social housing to prevent homelessness*
- ❖ *Improve services culture at Department of Housing*
- ❖ *Review Aboriginal housing to ensure adequate housing conditions are met*
- ❖ *Release 10,000 Landcare blocks over 4 years in Illawarra region*
- ❖ *Regional relocation grant of \$7000*
- ❖ *Extend stamp duty concessions to empty nesters*
- ❖ *\$250 annual rebate on electricity bills for lower income families*

3. Children

- 3.1 The innovative “Safe at Home” scheme should be extended right across the state. This is a scheme where instead of the affected parent and children fleeing a domestic violence situation, the affected parent and children stay in the home and the offending spouse leaves.
- 3.2 The successful Brighter Futures program, which supports parents bringing up young children under 9, needs to be extended as a key strategy in reducing the state’s worrying child protection notifications.
- 3.3 All people working as volunteers with children, young people and other people who are vulnerable should undergo mandatory screening checks.
- 3.4 We should ensure an equal start in life for all children by providing free elementary education in early learning centres from the age of 3.

Government response:

- ❖ *Increase early intervention for families with children at risk*

- ❖ *Transfer DoCS Brighter Futures & OOHC to non government sector*
- ❖ *Support capacity building for NGOs*
- ❖ *Improved support to young people leaving care*
- ❖ *Integrated service delivery across government departments*
- ❖ *Promote partnerships with NGOs*
- ❖ *Review staying home – leaving violence program (2/3rds success rate)*

4. Young people

- 4.1 The high school curriculum in NSW should be overhauled to ensure all students receive meaningful education including trades and vocational education. When students leave school they should be guaranteed paid work or further vocational training. Unemployment of young people is a tragic waste of human resources.
- 4.2 There should be increased support services for young people who are having difficulties at home or at school to ensure that they remain in their own community and are supported to contribute fully to community life.

Government response:

- ❖ *Pre-schools from community services to Dept of Education*
- ❖ *Use screening assessment to identify K-2 students at risk of not meeting literary & numeracy standards*
- ❖ *Additional 900 teachers to enhance Reading Recovery program targeted at K-2 students*
- ❖ *Reallocate 300 K-2 support teachers to provide more intensive support to students in upper primary early secondary*

5. Disability

- 5.1 The State Government's successful 10 year Stronger Together Program must be extended to cover the second five year period.
- 5.2 Disability services all around the country are underfunded and in constant crisis. We strongly support the concept of a national disability insurance scheme for people with disabilities.
- 5.3 Communication technology and internet access should be promoted to and provided for people on a disability pension, particularly for those who wish to enter the workforce or further study but lack the opportunity to do so.

Government response:

- ❖ *Choice, voice & control for people with a disability (PWD) and their carers*
- ❖ *Emphasis on quality of life outcomes for PWD and their carers*
- ❖ *Individual funding to enable the individual to develop the services they wish to have and when*
- ❖ *Capacity building in NGO sector including workforce development & infrastructure*
- ❖ *Regional emphasis to ensure ongoing sustainability of services*
- ❖ *Commitment to \$2 billion growth funding to support phase 2 of 'Stronger Together'*
- ❖ *Support for federal NDIS*

6. Employment

- 6.1 We recommend that the work for the dole scheme be replaced by work for the minimum wage scheme. Minimum wage could be paid to people for jobs funded by government.
- 6.2 90% of today's employment and education opportunities rely on people possessing basic computer and internet skills. We need to provide easy access to state funded programs and technology to help people who wish to enter or re-enter work or study.

Government response:

- ❖ *Skilled workforce best achieved through equity & excellence in education*

7. Post Release

- 7.1 Imprisonment should no longer be an option for low level non violent crimes. NSW has double the number of prisoners compared to Victoria, however our crime rate is the same.
- 7.2 To tackle NSW's recidivism rate of 43% there needs to be improved funding for services to help people find a job and somewhere to live when they leave prison.

Government response:

- ❖ *Alternatives to prison for minor offences*
- ❖ *Review of sentencing laws*
- ❖ *Greater discretion to judiciary*
- ❖ *Reduction in time in remand*
- ❖ *Drug treatment centre in prison*
- ❖ *Acknowledgment that 'law and order' campaigns have failed*
- ❖ *Computers in cells*
- ❖ *More support for homeless people refused bail*

- ❖ *Reduce numbers in prison*
- ❖ *Increase support for people leaving prison*

8. Health and Wellbeing

- 8.1 There needs to be improved integration of the NSW health services, drug and alcohol services and mental health services to ensure easier access for vulnerable people. Integration of information systems should also be given high priority.
- 8.2 We should increase the mental health budget from the current level of 6% to 13% of our health budget as it is in New Zealand. We also need to build the capacity of the community based NGO mental health service sector.
- 8.3 There needs to be more control over the advertising of alcohol, as well as online gambling and junk food promotions targeted at children.

Government response:

- ❖ *A commitment to improve integration between government departments and partnerships between government and non government sector*

9. Transport

- 9.1 We call on the NSW Government to ensure that community transport providers are adequately funded to be able to provide a service to all people experiencing a range of transport disadvantage.
- 9.2 There is a requirement for transport concessions are better targeted and contributed to social inclusion policy objectives of the NSW Government.

Government response:

- ❖ *A commitment to double the funding for community transport across NSW*

Appendix B

MEDIA RELEASE

11/12/2009

"The Station" is officially opened

Brighter Futures Partnership Responds to Need

Samaritans and Wandiyali were joined by the Minister for Community Services to launch their new headquarters for the Brighter Futures team in Lake Macquarie. "The Station" will allow the partnership to be more effective in reaching those in need in the community.

Coordinator for the Samaritans Brighter Futures programme, Marett Gale, said the headquarters will also provide a space to involve everyone in the local community.

"The new location allows us to look more intentionally at innovative ways to reach out to the community. Wandiyali are already running a Brighter Futures playgroup and CALM a mobile toy library. Samaritans have plans to start up a support group to help parents understand their tween as well as hold community information nights on, for example, how to support children with epilepsy," she said.

The Hon. Linda Burney (Minister for Community Services and Minister for Women) was joined by Cec Shevels (CEO Samaritans) and Steve Killroy (CEO Wandiyali) to plant a tree to represent the growth of the partnership.

Fennel Bay Public School Choir and Didgeridoo group provided entertainment which was enjoyed by those in attendance. The Samaritans Foundation and Wandiyali have formed an important partnership to deliver this service together to both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people in the Lake Macquarie region.

Samaritans CEO, Cec Shevels said Samaritans and Wandiyali are making a commitment to work together towards a future where there is no disadvantage for Aboriginal people and all local citizens enjoy equal rights and shared opportunities to participate fully in community life.

"Our shared vision is for communities where there is reconciliation and dignity for all people as well as respect for the traditional owners of the land and their cultures. Working together will go a long way to achieve reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in our region," he said.

Appendix C

From:

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2009). *Shut out: the Experience of People with Disabilities and their families in Australia*. For the National Disability Strategy Consultation report, prepared by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council. Accessed on 10/4/11 from [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/community_consult/Pages/default.aspx]

Main findings—an analysis of the submissions

The discussion paper asked people with disabilities and their families, friends and carers to identify the main barriers to their full participation in the economic and social life of the community. The following table summarises their responses.

Area where barriers experienced	Percentage of submissions ¹
Social inclusion and community participation	56
Disability services	56
Rights, justice and legislation	39
Income support and the cost of disability	37
Employment	34
Accommodation	32
Families and carers	30
Education	29
Transport	29
Health and wellbeing	29
Built environment	27
Disability services—workforce issues	21
Aids, equipment and assistive technologies	20

As some responses referred to multiple ideas, analysis of the responses enabled multiple ideas to be coded. There are therefore more themes than submissions and percentages add up to more than 100 per cent.