

NDIS Ready: Capacity Building for an NDIS

June 2013

NDIS Update

Welcome to the June edition of the NDIS Readiness Bulletin. This is published as part of the NDIS Sector Readiness Project which is managed by National Disability Services with funding support from the Victorian Government.

The countdown to the launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Barwon is now down to days and hours. How quickly the months have passed since it was announced Barwon would host the Victorian launch site? Anticipation, and a fair degree of stress, has been building as Disability Care Australia, the Victorian Government, service providers as well as people with disabilities, their families and carers work at a frenetic pace to prepare for this transformational change.

It is important to keep in mind that the Barwon launch is in effect an ongoing trial to inform the full roll out of the scheme right across the nation from 2015 onwards. Things will move around, some things will work and some things won't but the lessons must be learned to ensure we get the best scheme we can. And whilst it is an exciting and dynamic period, we acknowledge that it creates a level of uncertainty for service providers. We are determined to work closely with everyone with a stake in the launch to ensure the transition to the NDIS is as smooth as possible. The provision of clear information and access to experts with topical information and advice is designed to ensure that services can make well informed judgements about how to get ready for the NDIS. We do however acknowledge there will be bumps along the road and it is not an easy time for service providers.

There have been a number of important developments since the last NDIS update, in particular some key information released by Disability Care Australia in relation to how services can register for the NDIS launch and what prices Disability Care Australia will pay for services provided to participants as part of the launch. NDS has

been actively seeking input from services particularly in relation to the prices published to ensure they reflect the real costs of service delivery. We thank those services who have provided valuable input.

Further, as everyone will be aware, the Federal Government has chosen Geelong as the national head quarters for Disability Care Australia, which will bring around 400 jobs to Geelong once the scheme is fully operational from 2018 onwards. The Government has also made some key announcements with the NDIS Board and Advisory Group, with Victorian Bruce Bonyhady AM appointed as Chair of the NDIS Board.

NDS seeks price adjustments

DisabilityCare Australia recently released the launch site [prices](#). After a short period of examination and strong feedback from service providers, NDS met with DisabilityCare Australia who agreed to a number of changes including a review some of the prices listed under 'participation in community, social and civic activities'. In particular, Disability Care Australia will consider a greater range of rates for 'assistance to access community, social and recreational activities'. NDS expects these prices to be differentiated according to the time of day or week that support is provided, with a pricing structure similar to 'assistance with self-care activities' that acknowledges the penalty rates in the Award. Also welcome is the acknowledgement that providing community support for some individuals requires workers to have higher-level skills.

DisabilityCare indicated that revised price lists should be available on its website this week along with greater detail about the definitions of the support clusters and support items. It should be noted that the price list is GST free (the Government is seeking amendments to taxation legislation to confirm this).

NDS also raised concerns about the Agency's assumption that the support prices realistically include travel within 10 km. As DisabilityCare is unlikely to change this approach at present, NDS will seek to have the issue monitored throughout the launch site evaluation.

NDS sought greater clarity on how DisabilityCare will calculate the billable support hours in an Australian Disability Enterprise. Work on this issue is still underway and NDS will update members as soon as the information becomes available.

The dialogue with Disability Care Australia on prices is an ongoing one and we encourage service providers to provide any analysis through to NDS to help inform our advocacy on this important issue.

Provider Registration for DisabilityCare

The process to become a Registered Provider of Supports under DisabilityCare Australia is now open.

Providers are able to complete the online Smart Form located on the [DisabilityCare website](#). Existing providers in launch sites can expect to receive pre-populated forms which they will need to check and complete blank sections. They will also have the ability to apply to deliver additional types of supports.

In addition to the registration information located on the DisabilityCare website, a six-point checklist ([PDF 47KB](#), [Word 28KB](#)) has been developed by NDS for its members to assist in preparing for registration.

NDIS Rules

The NDIS Rules have now been finalised and are important for guiding how each person will experience the NDIS and the effective management of the scheme, now and into the future.

These rules cover issues such as:

- [Becoming a participant](#) - the requirements a person needs to meet to access a plan under the scheme including the residence and age requirements specific to launch.
- [Supports for participants](#) – includes the criteria for establishing whether a particular support is reasonable and necessary.

- [Children](#) – covers who can be a child’s representative and when a child can represent themselves.
- [Nominees](#) – includes when it is appropriate to appoint a nominee, who can be a nominee, and duties of a nominee.
- Facilitating the preparation of participants plans - explains the process by which participants will be phased into the scheme through agreements with the relevant jurisdictions.
- [Registered providers](#) – explains the process for registration of providers of supports.
- [Plan management](#) – covers self management of funding for supports under a participant’s plan such as the timing and manner of payments by DisabilityCare Australia, and how travelling overseas affects a participant’s plan.
- [Protection and disclosure of information](#) - describes safeguarding the privacy of people whose information is held by the Agency
- [Government agreements](#) - You can access the Intergovernmental Agreement for Launch and Bilateral Agreements with accompanying appendices

For further information on Legislation, Rules and government agreements please see the [DisabilityCare Australia](#) website.

Federal funding announced to assist disability service providers

Minister Macklin chose the NDS Victorian State Conference to announce more than \$2 million in funding for National Disability Services (NDS) as part of the Federal Government's Sector Development Fund.

This funding will see NDS expand carecareers and the NGO Readiness Assessment Tool across all six launch sites beginning with those commencing on 1 July 2013. Both projects were originally developed by NDS with funding from Ageing, Disability

& Home Care , an agency of the NSW Government's Department of Family & Community Services.

[carecareers](#) together with the related ProjectABLE initiative seeks to raise the profile of the disability and community sector workforces and attract people to work in these fields. The initial expansion responds to the immediate challenges of recruiting and retaining workers in the DisabilityCare Australia launch sites while laying the foundations for a fully implemented scheme.

The NGO Readiness Assessment Tool provides organisations with an assessment on their readiness to move into DisabilityCare Australia and is effective in ensuring organisations remain resilient, viable and responsive in the new environment. As part of the funding commitment NDS will provide support to organisations wishing to complete the assessment and assist with creating business development plans based on the results.

DisabilityCare Board and Advisory Council announced

The Government has appointed Bruce Bonyhady as inaugural chair of DisabilityCare Australia. A respected and well-known advocate of the NDIS, Bruce recently stepped down as chair of Yooralla. He will be joined on the nine-person board by former NDS board member and chair of the National Workforce Committee, Geraldine Harwood.

Rhonda Galbally has been appointed as the Principal Member of the Independent Advisory Council. Rhonda is a long-time advocate of the rights of people with disability and chairs the National People with Disability and Carer Council. The Chair of NDS WA, Joan McKenna Kerr, and NDS Chief Executive, Ken Baker, have also been appointed to the Advisory Council. The Council will advise the DisabilityCare Board and the Board must provide that advice to the Ministerial Standing Council on Disability Reform.

A full list of members of the Board and the Advisory Council is [available](#).

Barwon area Transition to DisabilityCare: phasing arrangements.

From July 2013, approximately 4000 people with disability are expected to transition within the first year of the Barwon area launch. About 1000 people with disability will be transitioned across by the end of the launch period in June 2016.

It is an ambitious program with approximately 320 people with disability to be transitioned each month in the first year. This is broken down by the following programs:

- **Jul - Sep 2013**
 - People with existing assessments who are registered on the DHS Disability Support Register (DSR) that require individually funded support and children with existing assessments that require Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS).
 - People who have not previously received disability services or people receiving only existing Commonwealth services and the majority of new participants
- **Aug - Nov 2013**
 - Future for Young Adults (FFYA) program participants and those in receipt of Individual Support Packages (ISP's), excluding those who are also supported accommodation or residents of Colanda (the institution at Colac).
 - Participants of ECIS , Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Support Services (PDRSS) and eligible Home and Community Care (HACC) who are also FFYA and ISP participants
- **Oct - Mar 2014**
 - Disability services participants who are not included above and who are receiving services from other programs including Respite, Flexible

Support Packages, Therapy, Independent Living Training, Outreach Support and Case Management.

- ECIS, PDRSS and eligible HACC participants who are also participants on the above programs
- **Mar - Apr 2014**
 - Eligible HACC participants not included in the above
- **Apr 2014**
 - Supported accommodation participants
- **May- Jun 2014**
 - PDRSS participants not otherwise included in the above
- **Jun- Jul 2014**
 - ECIS participants not otherwise included in the above
- **Sep 2014**
 - Colanda residents

The State and Federal Governments have reached agreement on the process and priorities contained within a number of appendices to the Bi-lateral Agreement

- Schedule B - Bilateral Agreement for NDIS Launch between the Commonwealth and Victoria
- Appendix D - Victorian Planned Intake of Participants
- Appendix E - Balance of Cash and In-Kind Contributions in Victoria
- Appendix F - NDIS Launch Transition Agency Workforce Arrangements - Barwon Launch Site

More information about the Intergovernmental Agreements and DisabilityCare can be found on the [NDIS website](#).

Barwon NDIS Readiness Project

NDS Victoria has been funded by the Victorian Government to work with service providers operating in the NDIS Barwon Launch area to support them practically to prepare for the transition to the NDIS. The project comprises Engagement and Communication activities (such as this Bulletin, and monthly Barwon based meetings), and a range of targeted workshops. NDS is working in collaboration with VICSERV and Early Childhood Intervention Australia (Vic Chapter).

NDS is now convening the monthly Barwon NDIS Readiness Network meeting. At the well-attended June meeting, service providers heard updates from DisabilityCare Australia, the Victorian Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Most of the discussion was focused on transition issues, such as provider registration and pricing.

In May and June, Tim Flowers, partner with Seward Dawson Chartered Accountants, facilitated the successful Business Disciplines in a Changing Disability Market workshops. This ran over two half days with homework in between and reached 59 participants representing 33 organisations. 100% of participants said that this workshop would help their organisation better prepare for transition to a competitive market.

The Business Process Review Workshop was also instigated in response to member demand, this time for practical information and support around IT and business processes. Marcus Harvey from Infoxchange facilitated the workshop, which again resulted in 100% of participants indicating that the session would help their organisation better prepare for transition.

Further workshops are scheduled in Barwon over the coming weeks, to address: Partnerships (10 July); Marketing (25 July); Children and Young People (7 August).

NDIS Readiness Case Study: An Engaging Approach

Whilst we have all been aware of the impending launch start date for some time, many of the details about how the launch will work in practical terms have only been finalised recently. So how have disability providers helped their communities to understand everything that is going to affect them? We asked one provider in the Barwon Region, Kids+ Foundation, to tell us how they tackled this issue.

Kids+ Foundation provides specialised early intervention therapy and support programs for babies, children and young people with cerebral palsy and similar physical disabilities, and their families. They recently celebrated their 10th birthday with their 14 staff and are now providing services for approximately 70 children with disabilities.

Why is it important for Kids+ Foundation to engage with the community?

“Our community is our families” explains Sarah Olliff, Executive Officer of Kids +.

“Our focus and cornerstone for all our communication is for our families. We wanted our families to understand that DCA is all about the family’s choices and their involvement in this process.

“Kids+ is in partnership with the families as we are only one part of their lives and with the huge transformation that DCA will bring we wanted them to be informed in the best way possible.”

How did you go about developing your engagement strategy?

The current strategy was developed over the last nine months and involved extensive discussions with the board and executive management. A plan was developed to make available funds with the main aim to keep the Kids+ families as fully informed as possible of all the changes coming and how they can make the most informed choices when DisabilityCare is available to them.

It was recognised that expertise was required so Jacqui Pierce of Jacqueline Pierce & Associates, who has extensive knowledge of the sector and communication planning came on board in April 2013.

In the initial stages Jacqui consulted with Sarah and her colleague, Michelle Piggott, Family Support Officer, to make sure that all communication options were developed together.

“These women know their families and were able to recognise what would work and what wouldn’t. That kind of information is invaluable” said Jacqui.

Has there always been an engagement strategy?

Kids+ has always recognised the importance of communicating regularly with their families and this has taken the form of regular one on one updates. In the past as there were less system changes communication was generally one on one and centred on what Kids+ can do with some limitations, goal setting for the children and what needs are to be addressed.

“Michelle’s role was all about communication and was to ensure that we listened and supported our families during their time at Kids+” said Sarah.

Did you research strategies and if so did you utilise any tools or particular articles.

There was no strategy to research tools or articles as the approach was to engage with the families in the first instance as soon as possible. It was the results of the survey to families that led the communication strategy into developing the streams for communication and the tools to enable informed choices.

What is the current family engagement strategy?

The current engagement strategy commenced with a survey to all families on what they already knew, how informed they felt and what they wanted to know. These findings led to:

- a weekly bulletin (four to date)

- follow up phone calls to all families
- two workshops which included DCA speakers
- the development of 3 tools to be used in the workshops to help families work out their goals and aspirations under DisabilityCare Australia.
- all families have also been approached to take up the option to seek a one on one meeting with Sarah and Michelle as well

Still to come are updates on websites and a more up to date brochure explaining about Kids+.

Continuing their philosophy of families first, Kids+ is also developing a tool for families on how to assess a quality service and service provider.

This communication strategy will continue over the next 12 months as it is anticipated that there will be many settling in issues for DCA and more changes to come. The campaign strategy is to remain flexible, innovative and relevant to individuals and families.

Has this strategy improved your family engagement and how have you measured this?

Following the release of the second bulletin Sarah phoned every family to find out whether they found the information useful and in a format they liked. Feedback was positive apart from a few people who were reporting information overload. In response, the bulletins have continued aside for a few families who now have a separate communication plan.

What hasn't worked so well and why? Are there any lessons you can pass on to our readers?

“Our families are from all different backgrounds, demographics and educational levels” says Sarah, “so we had to make sure our communications were able to reach them all.”

Jacqui clarified further saying: “Our bulletins are in hard copy, on emails and shortly to be on our website. We recognise that people take in information in all different ways such as reading, listening or visual forms. We don’t want anyone missing out just because we couldn’t link them in to their best form of communication. Never make assumptions. Ask, listen then do”

Is there anything further either of you would like to add?

“Though our families are the cornerstone of our strategy we haven’t forgotten the wider community” said Sarah. They explained that all the bulletins are distributed to staff and all board members, there has been meetings and discussions with DisabilityCare both at a local and national level and interaction with other providers has been via local network meetings, various conferences and forums.

“The next steps are to engage with health professionals” Jacqui went on “and to get some conversations started about sector development capability”.

Jacqui added that it was important for the sector to maintain the sense of partnership. By carers, providers and people with a disability collaborating together we all have a better chance of ironing out the bugs and addressing the pitfalls as they occur.

“We need to keep the movement alive.”

Upcoming key events

Partnerships in a competitive environment

Facilitator: Jackie Moden

10 July 2013, 10am – 4pm

Geelong Conference Centre

Adams Court, Eastern Park Geelong

Register [online](#) by 3 July

Spaces are limited to existing disability support providers in the Barwon area

Issues for Statewide Services involved in the DisabilityCareAustralia launch – Scoping Meeting

NDS is hosting a meeting with statewide members interested in exploring issues arising from their participation in the launch site.

Date: 10.30am – 12noon, Wednesday 24 July

Venue: NDS, Level 10, 369 Royal Parade, Parkville

RSVP: to angela.elmore-spiers@nds.org.au

Marketing Workshop

Facilitator: Martin Szakal, Bendigo PR

25 July 2013, 9.30am – 4.30pm

Venue: Barwon region, details TBA

Registrations due to open in early July

AICD Foundations of Directorship: Disability

NDS Victoria has brokered a partnership with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) to offer NDS Victoria Members a discounted price for the successful Foundations of Directorship Certificate Program: Disability.

Program details are available on the [NDS website, AICD Program](#)

Early bird for September intake is available until July 24th

Venue: AICD Victoria Division, Level 21, 459 Collins St, Melbourne

Register [online](#)

Designing and Implementing Organisational Change Strategies Program – Current program fully subscribed; waiting list for possible further program open

Service Quality Australia in partnership with NDS, is offering organisational leaders in the disability sector an opportunity to participate in the 10 half day program 'Designing and Implementing Organisational Change Strategies'. This program ([PDF 797KB](#), [Word 68KB](#)) runs over 6 months with 10 half day programs, from the NDS office in Parkville. The current program is fully subscribed, but there is a [waiting list](#) to register interest in a possible future program.

Children and Young People: Navigating a Pathway through Disability Care

Facilitator: Jackie Moden

7 August 2013

Registrations due to open in mid-July

Wisdom from the wider world

As all organisation wish to communicate effectively with their community, there are several websites out there which have been designed to help organisations do just that.

The Americans have set up a site for government employees [GovLoop](#) which has some useful information on communicating with citizens, in particular an accessible online book [Innovating at the Point of Citizen Engagement: 7 Government Stories](#)

The NSW Environment and Heritage website lists [7 ways of engaging the community](#) covering topics such as *Identifying and approaching existing groups*, *Developing a group or network from scratch*; *Different community engagement methods* and also provides links to resources such [as Analysing your stakeholders](#) and various case studies. Mosman Council has developed a [Community](#)

[Engagement Strategy](#) that lists 15 key elements on their checklist. Overall short, punchy and to the point.

As to the engagement challenges that the disability sector is currently facing the publication [Our Growing Understanding of Community Engagement](#) may be more relevant. [Tamarack](#), An Institute for Community Engagement based on Ontario, Canada, founded in 2001, is a charity that develops and supports learning communities to help people collaborate and to co-generate knowledge that solves complex community challenges.

Become an NDS Member

In this period of significant change, NDS Membership offers a vital flow of information and support. See our [website](#) for details.

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