

NATIONAL DISABILITY AGREEMENT

Council of
Australian
Governments

An agreement between

- the Commonwealth of Australia and
- the States and Territories, being:
 - ◆ The State of New South Wales
 - ◆ The State of Victoria
 - ◆ The State of Queensland
 - ◆ The State of Western Australia
 - ◆ The State of South Australia
 - ◆ The State of Tasmania
 - ◆ The Australian Capital Territory
 - ◆ The Northern Territory of Australia

The National Disability Agreement provides the national framework and key areas of reform for the provision of government support to services for people with disabilities.

National Disability Agreement

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS

PRELIMINARIES

All Disability Ministers agreed to establish a new National Disability Reform Agenda that will place people with disability, their families and carers at the centre of services across Australia. The new National Disability Reform Agenda will introduce national tools to identify service benchmarks; plan for changing needs; identify people at risk; and work towards program and service delivery consistency across jurisdictions.

1. This agreement is created subject to the provisions of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations* and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement and subsidiary schedules. In particular, the schedules include direction in respect of performance reporting and payment arrangements.
2. The Parties are committed to addressing the issue of social inclusion, including responding to Indigenous disadvantage. That commitment is embodied in the objectives and outcomes of this agreement. However, the Parties have also agreed other objectives and outcomes - for example, in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement - which the Parties will pursue through the broadest possible spectrum of government action. Consequently, this agreement will be implemented consistently with the objectives and outcomes of all National Agreements and National Partnerships entered into by the Parties.
3. This National Agreement has been established to affirm the commitment of all governments to work in partnership, and with stakeholders including people with disability their families and carers, to improve outcomes for people with disability and to, clarify roles and responsibilities.
4. The National Disability Agreement will replace the third Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement.
5. This Agreement may be amended as necessary by the consensus of interested or affected jurisdictions.

OBJECTIVES

6. Through this Agreement, the Parties commit to the following objective as the long-term, overarching aspiration that governments should strive for in the provision of disability support services. All aspects of the National Disability Agreement contribute to, or measure progress towards:

"People with disability and their carers have an enhanced quality of life and participate as valued members of the community."

OUTCOMES

7. The Agreement will contribute to the following outcomes:
 - (a) people with disability achieve economic participation and social inclusion;
 - (b) people with disability enjoy choice, wellbeing and the opportunity to live as independently as possible; and
 - (c) families and carers are well supported.

OUTPUTS

8. The Agreement will contribute to the following outputs in support of the agreed outcomes:
 - (a) services that provide skills and supports to people with disability to enable them to live as independently as possible;
 - (b) services that assist people with disability to live in stable and sustainable living arrangements;
 - (c) income support for people with disability and their carers; and
 - (d) services that assist families and carers in their caring role.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH PARTY

9. All of the Parties to this Agreement will work co-operatively together to realise the objectives and commitments made in this Agreement.
10. The Parties commit to be accountable to the community for maximising the contribution from their areas of responsibility to achieve the outcomes of this Agreement.
11. All Australian governments are committed to their responsibilities in relation to public leadership which actively promotes the rights of individuals with disability, and encourages the community to embody these values, which are the foundation of an inclusive society.
12. It is acknowledged that the specialist disability services which are the focus of this Agreement are complemented by mainstream services. All governments recognise that achieving improved outcomes for people with disability, their families and their carers, is contingent upon the effective coordination of efforts across government services.
13. As a priority all Australian governments will strive to ensure that all people with disability have access to mainstream government services within their jurisdiction.

Shared roles and responsibilities¹

14. All Australian governments are responsible for:
- (a) development of national policy and reform directions to meet the agreed objectives and outcomes of this agreement;
 - (b) funding and pursuing research that provides an evidence base for national policy and reform directions;
 - (c) working together to develop and implement reforms to improve outcomes for Indigenous people with disability; and
 - (d) the provision of data, including a commitment to providing data for the national minimum data set and a commitment to the improvement of data.

Role of the Commonwealth

15. The Commonwealth undertakes responsibility for:
- (a) provision of employment services for people with disability, which includes:
 - (i) regulation, service quality and assurance;
 - (ii) assessment;
 - (iii) policy development;
 - (iv) service planning; and
 - (v) workforce and sector development

in a manner which most effectively meets the needs of people with disability consistent with local needs and priorities;
 - (b) provision of income support targeted to the needs of people with disability, their families and carers;
 - (c) provision of funds to States and Territories to contribute to the achievement of the objective and outcomes;
 - (d) where appropriate, investing in initiatives to support nationally agreed policy priorities, in consultation with States and Territories; and
 - (e) ensure that Commonwealth legislation is aligned with national priority, reform directions and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

¹ The Commonwealth, States and Territories also have various funding and administrative responsibilities for aged and community care programs (such as the Home and Community Care Program). Future options regarding responsibilities for several of these areas are currently under review by the COAG Health and Ageing Working Group. The outcomes of this review may have implications for the scope and roles under this Agreement.

States and Territories roles and responsibilities

16. All State and Territory governments are responsible for:

- (a) the provision of specialist disability services (except disability employment services), including:
 - (i) regulation, service quality and assurance;
 - (ii) assessment;
 - (iii) policy development;
 - (iv) service planning; and
 - (v) workforce and sector development

in a manner which most effectively meets the needs of people with disability, their families and carers, consistent with local needs and priorities.
- (b) ensuring that state and territory legislation and regulations are aligned with the national policy and reform directions; and
- (c) where appropriate, investing in initiatives to support nationally agreed policy priorities, in consultation with the Commonwealth Government.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS²

17. To aid public accountability, data will be published annually by the COAG Reform Council on the following performance indicators which indicate progress towards the outcomes specified in this Agreement:
- (a) labour force participation rate for people with disability aged 15-64 years*;
 - (b) proportion of people with disability who participate in social and community activities*;
 - (c) proportion of the potential population accessing disability services;
 - (d) proportion of people with disability who are satisfied with the range of disability service options and quality of support received*;
 - (e) proportion of potential population expressing unmet demand for disability support services*;
 - (f) number of Indigenous people with disability receiving disability services as a proportion of the Indigenous potential population requiring services;

² Where possible, all performance indicators will measure proportion of Indigenous people with disability, people with disability who live in regional or remote areas and older carers within the measure. Subject to the development of the data and an agreed method of disaggregation, performance indicators will also identify people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the measure.

* Indicates that data needed to assess this measure are not currently available on an annual basis and will need to be developed.

- (g) labour force participation rate for carers aged 15 to 64 of people with disability*;
 - (h) proportion of carers of people with disability accessing support services to assist in their caring role;
 - (i) proportion of carers of people with disability who are satisfied with the range of disability service options and quality of support received*; and
 - (j) proportion of people with disability receiving income support.
18. All governments acknowledge the difficulty in measuring outcomes under this Agreement, in the interim some output measures have been included. All governments will move to formulate better outcome measures and associated data collections over time.
19. Reporting requirements under this Agreement should be read in conjunction with the provisions in Schedule C to the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations*.

PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS

20. The Parties commit to continuous improvement in the performance of their respective roles and responsibilities.
21. Improvements in performance will be demonstrated by progress against the following outcomes-based, high-level performance benchmarks relevant to disability services:
- (a) an increase in the proportion of people with disability in employment;
 - (b) a decrease in the proportion of potential population with unmet demand for services*;
 - (c) an increase in the proportion of people with disability accessing services who have an individualised service plan*;
 - (d) an increase in the proportion of younger people in, or at risk of entering, residential aged care assisted with more appropriate forms of accommodation, diversionary strategies and/or enhanced services³;
 - (e) an increase in the proportion of Indigenous people with disability receiving disability services; and
 - (f) all services are subject to quality improvement systems consistent with National Standards by 2010.
22. The capacity to achieve some improvements will be limited due to funding pressures and some benchmarks are currently outside the scope of baseline delivery, with progress and achievement of these targets contingent upon the availability of additional funding.

REFORM AND POLICY DIRECTIONS

23. The Parties commit to on-going policy and reform directions in the disability sector to achieve the objectives and outcomes of this Agreement.

³ In accordance with Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Bilateral targets.

24. All governments have agreed to create a service system which enhances the social and economic participation for people with disability and supports their families and carers. The agreed policy directions to achieve this are to:
 - (a) improve provision of the skills and opportunities to enhance the capability of people with disability to participate in social, economic and community activities;
 - (b) ensure services are person centred and provide timely access to supports based on assessed needs;
 - (c) identify, plan and respond to the development and support needs of people with disability at an early stage and at key life transition points; and
 - (d) support the role of families and carers including strengthening their informal support networks.
25. All governments recognise the importance of mainstream services in supporting the outcomes of this Agreement and will undertake further work to ensure that all people with disability have access to mainstream Government services within their jurisdiction.
26. The Parties have agreed to concentrate initial national efforts in several identified priority areas to underpin the policy directions and achieve reforms in the disability service system. They are:
 - (a) *Better Measurement of Need* – Under this priority: a national model to estimate demand will be developed by mid 2010; there will be improvements in the data collected through the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), which will provide a stronger basis for demand estimates; and improvements in the quality of data reported under the National Minimum Data Set, and jurisdiction-level unmet demand data.
 - (b) *Population Benchmarking for Disability Services* – A National Population Benchmarking Framework will be developed and initial population benchmarking of disability services, based on information available, will be achieved by mid 2010 and improve the evidence base to assist in policy, service and planning decisions.
 - (c) *Making Older Carers a Priority* – The National Disability Priorities Framework will assist Governments to target services to more vulnerable population groups based on relative need (including older carers and Indigenous people with disability).
 - (d) *Quality Improvement Systems based on Disability Standards* – A National Disability Quality Framework with a National Quality Assurance system for disability services will be developed to introduce a national approach to quality assurance and the continuous improvement of disability services by mid 2010.
 - (e) *Service Planning and Strategies to Simplify Access* – The National Framework for Service Planning and Access will be developed, focussing on providing a person centred approach to service delivery and to simplify access to specialist disability services.
 - (f) *Early Intervention and Prevention, Lifelong Planning and Increasing Independence and Social Participation Strategies* – An Early Intervention and Prevention Framework will be developed to increase Governments' ability to be effective with early intervention and prevention strategies and to ensure that clients receive the most appropriate and timely support by mid 2011.
 - (g) *Increased Workforce Capacity* – A national workforce strategy will be developed to address qualifications, training and cross sector career mapping issues and establishing the disability sector as an 'industry of choice' by the end of 2010.

- (h) *Increased Access for Indigenous Australians* – A National Indigenous Access Framework will ensure that the needs of Indigenous Australians with disability are addressed through appropriate service delivery arrangements.
 - (i) *Access to Aids and Equipment* – More consistent access to aids and equipment by end of 2012 .
 - (j) *Improved Access to Disability Care* – Systems that improve access to disability care and ensure people are referred to the most appropriate disability services and supports, including consideration of single access points and national consistent assessment processes in line with nationally agreed principles by end 2011.
27. The Parties also agree to work together on the implementation of the following Commonwealth commitments in ways which support and complement the objectives of the Agreement, noting further discussions are required about Commonwealth resources to meet legitimate financial requirements:
- (a) the establishment of a **National Disability Strategy** will be a broad policy document that guides disability policy across jurisdictions;
 - (b) a national approach to and the **harmonisation of rules for accessible parking**;
 - (c) the establishment of a **National Companion Card Scheme** to allow people with disability who are dependent on full time care to take a carer to various sporting and/or entertainment events for the price of a single ticket;
 - (d) **ensuring Younger Veterans have access to specialist disability services** – where Veteran's Affairs programs are not available the care and support needs of younger ex-service men and women with disability, will be provided under this Agreement;
 - (e) **modernise Print Disability Services** to support new technology to provide more immediate access to information and materials;
 - (f) **Community Aged Care Package election commitment** – this is a commitment to provide top up disability supports for people living in group homes who are clearly demonstrating increased needs due to ageing.
28. Further, governments agreed to consider improvements in administration of advocacy services, with a focus on improving service delivery and access to advocacy services for people with disability. Responsibility for funding advocacy services will be reviewed in this process.
29. The Commonwealth funds programs in the areas of Mental Health and Autism, which overlap with service areas under the National Disability Agreement. These services will be subject to a separate review process, where consideration will be given to whether they will be subject to this Agreement.
30. All governments agree to work together to review the priority reform areas from time-to-time in light of emerging priorities at the national and local level.