

**Answer to question taken on notice on 19 September – Jessica Lobo, National Disability Services**

**Mr Kevin Conolly p12: Are people who are receiving packages under the NDIS eligible to access community transport in the same way that they were before they moved to the NDIS?**

Yes they are. With the roll out of the NDIS, 15% of total funding received by community transport operators via ADHC is already being withdrawn for services transitioning in the current year and will cease to exist completely in June 2018. Instead, Community Transport providers will be able to draw down or claim from the funding in a participant's individual NDIS package. Community Transport providers would need to register as an NDIS provider (and some have already done so) and meet all the relevant terms of business set out by the NDIA in order to claim.

NDIS participants or people with disability ineligible for the NDIS would also be able to access Community Transport using their NDIS transport allowance or mobility allowance, respectively. As mentioned, people with disability are reluctant to use this allowance as Community Transport and now too disability service organisations, charge a lot for trips in regional areas and this allowance does not go a long way.

The other problem arising for Community Transport Operators, as NDS understands it, is that relatively fewer people with disability under 65 use Community Transport than even the 15% of funding allocated would suggest. This appears to be a function of relatively low levels of demand (as people with more profound levels of disability tend to move towards larger centres in pursuit of services) and the limited capabilities of smaller, communitybased operators whose operations are overwhelmingly oriented towards the provision of aged-care services. The effect of this, appears to be that NSW state government funding for people with disability may be cross-subsidising some level of community transport service for seniors. As the state government funding tapers off over the next two years, this can be expected to impact disproportionately on the operations of regional providers whose levels of service to older people may have benefited from the degree of operational latitude permitted by the current system.