

## Outsourcing Community Service Delivery

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**Physical Disability Council of NSW**  
Ordinary People Ordinary Lives

## **Response to the NSW Parliament Legislative Assembly for the Committee on Community Services**

### **Inquiry into Outsourcing Service Delivery**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services as part of the enquiry into the outsourcing of housing and home care services.

PDCN supports the ongoing expansion of community based housing and home care programs for people with disabilities and sees the role of NGOs as being in a position where they can inform government about the services and supports needed by people with disabilities.

Human service providers such as PDCN do not see the process of outsourcing negatively, but as a preferred option that clearly separates the funder from the provider. Collectively NGOs promote the following core values:

- Human rights
- Individual and community well- being
- Diversity

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self- determination
- Cooperation and participation
- Excellence
- Independence
- Inclusion
- A sustainable environment

## **BACKGROUND**

PDCN endorses a shared commitment by government departments and the human sector NGOs that need to be underpinned by the following basic fundamental principles:

- The principles of equity, access and participation
- The maintenance and further development of an independent, robust and diverse non-government sector
- Transparency and community participation in decision making
- Trust and respect in partnership arrangements
- The delivery of high quality services and the practice of effective community development.

PDCN supports the development of non- government organisations (NGO) as a significant provider of human services to enhance transparency and accountability. The NSW Government currently provides approximately 3,000 NGOs with \$2 billion dollars per annum for the provision of community health and human NGOs. The NGO sector is made up of direct service provision, community development, social justice and advocacy organisations operating across a wide spectrum of services including services for children, young people and their families, Aboriginal affairs, multicultural affairs, disability, aged care, health, housing, homelessness, education and employment.

This increase in the number of NGOs providing disability services has rapidly increased over the past thirty years with a move from institutionalised congregate care to supports available in the family home. In the mid-1990s about 40 per cent of all government spending on disability services in NSW was directed through NGOs, but by 2009/10 Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) provided 1.32 billion to approximately 900 NGOs. These reforms have been driven by

policies such as Stronger Together with a greater focus on person centered services and individualised support options.

### **Discussion**

- **State Government processes, outcomes and impacts of transferring housing, disability and home care services from Government to non-Government agencies**

PDCN supports the expansion of social housing programs that facilitate the increased availability to accessible and affordable accommodation aiming at reducing social disadvantage. The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) aims at reducing social isolation, through the following different types of housing programs:

- Public housing
- Community housing and
- Aboriginal housing

The availability of all three housing programs has significance to people with physical disabilities living in urban and rural NSW. The Home Modification Program funded through Housing NSW aims to increase social housing options for people with physical disabilities whether living in public or community housing. As part of this program Housing NSW spent \$7.3 million to upgrade 1,743 properties, improving tenants' quality of life and providing the option of staying in their existing home rather than living in a nursing home or care institution.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently the Housing NSW program assists people with disabilities, older people and carers to live safely and independently, with or without support, and hence improving their quality of life.

In response to diverse need Housing NSW has recommended a number of priorities as part of their planning, including the need to increase the number of housing stock with fewer bedrooms, and to increase the availability of accessible accommodation.<sup>2</sup> Until housing stock is readily available, PDCN stresses the importance of the availability of funds for home modifications whether for public or community housing, so that people with physical disabilities are not seen as costing too much and then being put into the too hard basket.

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Family and Community Services Housing NSW, 2010- 2011 Annual Report

<sup>2</sup> NSW Family and Community Services Housing NSW. 2007 Planning for the Future

PDCN supports the continued availability of programs such as the Home Modification Program and community housing programs to increase the availability of accessible, affordable accommodation for people with physical disabilities, who may live independently and/or need of additional community supports. For a person with a physical disability who may need additional home modifications, the terms of residency must be sustainable.

Housing NSW acknowledges the many benefits of working with community housing providers over the past 25 years. Currently community housing providers offer a range of housing programs including:

- General housing
- Crisis and emergency accommodation
- Services for renting privately.

The NSW Department of Human Services - Ageing, Disability & Home Care (ADHC) provides a range of services aimed at facilitating community living for older people, people with disabilities and their carers, including the following:

- Early intervention, skill development, therapy, and community participation.
- Respite and support for carers.
- Advocacy and information.
- Personal assistance and intensive in-home support.
- Supported accommodation in the community and in specialist facilities.

In the past these services have been primarily provided by ADHC, but PDCN supports the outsourcing of these programs to build individual and community well-being. As recently as 2010/11 ADHC employed near to 13,000 staff, with approximately 80% of staff employed by the department in direct service delivery, and annual funding of 2.5 million provided support to approximately 260,000 people either receiving services through ADHC or Home and Community Care (HACC).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> NSW Parliament – Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues (2010) Services Provided or Funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

The HACC program provides a range of services to older people, people with disabilities and their carers with a range of services including household domestic assistance, health and personal care, activities and transport, respite and home maintenance and modification, all aimed at assisting independent living and social participation. People with physical disabilities most commonly use the following HACC services:

- Domestic assistance
- Personal care
- Home maintenance and modification scheme and
- Information and advocacy services

With the introduction of person centered approaches, the person receiving the service has the flexibility in determining personal goals and how best to implement these to achieve successful outcomes. The fundamental difference with traditional to current approaches in service provision, is that the person needing the services and supports select the most appropriate service, rather than the person receiving the service being expected to fit into an existing service model. This expansion of generic mainstream services is endorsed by PDCN.

The NSW Government has provided funding and resources to facilitate individualised funding to 10% of people with a disability by 2014, to be followed by 100% in 2019. To facilitate these reforms \$17 million has been provided for a Industry Development Fund to support NGO sector development through access to training, service improvement measures, merger support and exploring shared service models.

Additionally the adoption of the NSW Disability Network Forum provides NGOs providing advocacy and information services with the ability to provide systemic advocacy to alleviate disadvantage. This forum represents and promotes the interests people with a disability and provides a mechanism to advocate on common issues and concerns.

The Attendant Care Program (ACP) administered by ADHC provides a good example of the effectiveness of individualised packages for personal assistance. Applicants have the ability to choose their preferred service delivery model, and the service provider that best meets their needs. Subsequently PDCN supports programs such as ACP that facilitate and advance individual human rights and individual well-being.

- **The development of appropriate models to monitor and regulate service providers to ensure probity, accountability and funding mechanisms to provide quality assurance for clients**

Management needs to establish a clear mission statement and vision, identifying principles and values that guide the development of the service being provided by the particular NGO, whether that is for an organisation providing housing or home care services. Good governance is determinant on the following considerations:

- Board structure, policy and operations
- Leadership and strategic planning
- Legal obligations
- Contractual obligations
- Financial management
- Service policy and operations
- Risk management
- Human resources
- Service user needs

Governance structures need to be established where all stakeholders are treated equally, justly, and fairly. Policy direction needs to be developed, reviewed and amended at least annually.

Compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act (1994)* is a legal requirement of all services. Development of a disability action plan is suggested as a mechanism for an organisation to plan the elimination, as far as possible, of disability discrimination from the provision of its goods, services and facilities. For services building new housing facilities the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards and State Environmental Policy Planning for Older People or People with a Disability maybe required.

The NSW Disability Standards identifies the following considerations and requirements for human services receiving funds through ADHC;

- Service entry and exit
- Effectively responding to individual need
- Facilitating individual decision making and choice



- Privacy, dignity and confidentiality
  - Participation and integration
  - Valued status
  - Complaints mechanisms
  - Service delivery and management
  - Family relationships
  - Rights
- **The development of appropriate levels of integration among service providers in rural and regional areas to ensure adequate levels of supply and delivery of services;**

PDCN is familiar with the issues of people with physical disabilities living in regional and rural NSW. Research conducted by PDCN emphasised the sheer lack of public and community transport, and limited availability of health facilities including general practitioners, medical specialists, and paramedics and funding for the provision of aids and equipment through the Department of Health.<sup>4</sup>

As part of a State government parliamentary review into the provision of ADHC services, the challenges for both service providers and service users face in rural and remote communities was recognised. These challenges related to geographical distance, recruitment of suitably qualified people and the provision of training.<sup>5</sup> Feedback was provided by stakeholders about the following services concerning people with physical disabilities: Community Transport, the Home Modification and Maintenance Scheme and the Attendant Care Scheme. As part of this enquiry the Standing Committee provided the following recommendation regarding rural services, 'that the Minister for Disability Services investigate the cost of providing ageing and disability services in metropolitan and rural areas of NSW, with a view to increasing the funding allocation to ensure equity of service provision in rural areas, if required.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Physical Disability Council of NSW (2008) Report into the impact of ageing on the needs of people with disability

<sup>5</sup> NSW Parliament- Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues (2010) Inquiry into Services Provided or Funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

<sup>6</sup> NSW Parliament- Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues (2010) Inquiry into Services Provided or Funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

In February 2012 ADHC announced a new program called 'Ability Links,' aimed at supporting ongoing service delivery reforms across NSW. This program will provide 248 locally based support units, with a number of units catering for the needs of people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. The units will be managed by locally based NGOs that have a demonstrated capacity in community development. Whilst this program will have the potential of enhancing individual and community well-being, building local skills and capacity development, it will not necessarily resolve the shortfall in funding caused by additional employee travel costs.

- **Incentives for private philanthropy in the funding of community services**

Although Philanthropy Australia defines philanthropy as '*The planned and structured giving of, time, information, goods and services, voice and influence, as well as money, to improve the wellbeing of humanity and the community,*'<sup>7</sup> PDCN believes that the most common type of philanthropy is the donation of funds, often based on meeting the needs of the donor. Subsequently PDCN considers philanthropy as charitable where the donor may not necessarily be meeting community need, or that human services may need to modify existing programs to meet the expectations of the donor.

More importantly PDCN is concerned about the provision of insufficient government funding with an expectation that additional funds will be sought by donations to make up any shortfall, and that NGOs do not necessarily have the time and resources to access funding through philanthropic means.

- **The use of technology to improve service delivery and increase cost effectiveness**

Extensive research conducted by the Council of Social Services of NSW (NCOSS) reinforces the need to increase information and communication technology for the purposes of communications, research, knowledge management, funding and promotion as well as issues-based campaigns and advocacy processes.<sup>8</sup>

Advances in technology with the availability of high speed and high capacity broadband have provided increased opportunities for the health of people with chronic conditions to be monitored in their own homes by medical professionals. Whilst PDCN recognises that programs such as these have the benefits of removing isolation, and providing a sense of increased safety and

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<sup>7</sup> Philanthropy Australia - <http://www.philanthropy.org.au/> (26 April 2012)

<sup>8</sup> Council of Social Service of New South Wales (2008) Addressing the Information and Communication Technology Needs of NSW NGO Human Services Sector

security, that the person receiving care may feel as though his/ her personal space and dignity, are being invaded particularly when a two- way visual monitor is used.