

Supplementary
Submission
No 42a

**INQUIRY INTO SERVICES PROVIDED OR FUNDED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGEING, DISABILITY AND
HOME CARE**

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Supplementary submission to the inquiry into services provided or funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC).

Ageing, Disability and Home Care has the responsibility to directly provide or fund support services for people with disability and the frail aged. It also is responsible for administering and funding the Home and Community Care (HACC) programs including:

- flexible respite
- food services including Meals on Wheels
- home modifications and maintenance
- community transport services
- home help including personal care and domestic assistance
- community health services including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry and community nursing

This submission is providing extra details in regard to issues and recommendations only for Community Transport and the Home Modifications and Maintenance Scheme, including raising issues about the impact on people with disability that access a number of support programs as well as the urgent need for all relevant government provided or funded disability support services to be undertaken with a "whole of government" approach.

Community Transport

- Issue: HACC provides funding to Transport NSW to administer the funding and management of NSW Community Transport Services, of which each service provider is required to have at least 70% of its fleet with wheelchair access. Regardless of whether the community transport services are urban, rural or regional it is difficult to find out if the community transport services are complying with this 70% of fleet policy, and with an ageing population, community transport services should be required to have 100% of its fleet with wheelchair accessibility.
- Recommendations:
 - With an ageing population, the NSW Government must ensure community transport services have at least one vehicle with wheelchair accessibility with the aim of requiring all community transport services to have *100% accessibility of their fleet with the capacity to transport at least one person using a wheelchair. To achieve this, ADHC should provide funding now to ensure each community transport service has at least one vehicle with access for one person using a wheelchair. If an existing community transport vehicle is considered too old to update with wheelchair access, then when that same vehicle is being retired (or traded in) the replacement vehicle must be wheelchair accessible and have the capacity for at least one wheelchair user.
 - Preferably, recurrent NSW Government funding should be provided to community transport service providers that can be accumulated and budgeted for vehicle replacement that could be done in conjunction with the existing vehicle trade in.

Home Modification and Maintenance Scheme

- Issue: Many people with a disability that live in their own home or in private rental properties may require major home modifications such as installing ramps, renovating a bathroom/toilet, remodelling a kitchen and/or laundry, widening doorways including wider doors etc. The Homemods Scheme (level III) provides funding greater than \$20,000 for such renovations but, due to the lack of appropriate NSW Government funding to meet the needs of eligible applicants, the program exhausted the 2009/2010 Level III budget prior to December 2009.
- Recommendation:
 - NSW Government undertake an urgent review of the Homemods Scheme, audit of all outstanding applications that have received an assessment and quotation, as well as review all current applications that have not received an assessment as yet. ADHC should seek funding from Treasury to clear the backlog of assessed and quoted home modifications as well as yet to be assessed home modifications.

Individualised Funding

- Issue: many people with disability, their families and carers receive services and programs provided or funded by ADHC. Although there is a need for appropriate fiscal accountability, and the NSW government/ADHC require data collection, sometimes this negatively impacts on the flexibility or delivery of the service or program which does not meet the needs of the person with disability, their family or carers. Many non-government organisations are successful in their tender for ADHC service or program funding but do not have the appropriate number of trained or untrained care workers to support the eligible service uses. This often results in the non-government organisation subcontracting the service to another non-government organisation which incurs extra costs that are taken out of the funding packages allocated to eligible service users which can reduce the service or program hours
- Recommendation: ADHC offer individualised funding packages/options for people with disability, their families and carers for a variety of services including personal care, respite, family support, transition to work and workplace attending care etc. Individualised funding packages/options should provide greater flexibility and achieve the intent of services being person centred and client focused. The individualised funding packages should be accompanied with appropriate agreements between ADHC and the service user including an easy to follow financial management and service to ensure accountability and reporting.

Whole of Government Approach Required When People with Disability Receive Multiple Disability Support Services and Programs

- Issues: often people with disability require multiple disability and/or community support services and programs to remain living at home in the community. The different government and non-government disability and/or community services and programs often have separate administration, eligibility, funding etc, that can have a negative impact on service users that require multiple services or programs and whereby the same services and programs are co-dependent where one cannot (or will not) be delivered without the other. Or there is a threat by one service provider to withdraw the service unless the other essential service is provided. e.g. NSW Home Care (ADHC) providing personal care support to a client, and the client's condition deteriorates and needs a lifting hoist and sling, but there is a waiting list for the client to be provided with the equipment by EnableNSW (NSW Health).
- Recommendation: the NSW Government implements a "whole of government" approach or "one-stop shop" system for people with disability, their families and carers, of whom may require various and/or multiple services and programs. This "one-stop shop" approach should minimise and simplify the administration and related operational cost of providing services and programs for people with disability. The NSW Government needs to undertake a review of the way people with disability, their families and carers access multiple Government provided or funded services with the aim of simplifying the application and eligibility process and streamline the amount of administration (and related administration and management cost).

The cost of accessing disability services and programs

- Issues: As many government services are means tested against income and assets, the application forms always seek details of applicant's income but never seek information about the applicant's expenses. The majority of people with disability have extra unavoidable costs associated with having a disability that the general society does not have including higher costs including:
 - wheelchair accessible taxis (even with applying the NSW Government's Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme it is still relatively expensive for people with disability to travel when the wheelchair accessible taxis are there only accessible transport option)
 - extra water as it takes longer to have a shower
 - extra gas and electricity due to people with neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injury not been able to regulate body temperature and having heating and cooling appliances running for longer periods of the day for longer periods of the year
 - equipment, aids and appliances as well as assistive technology
 - personal care support services and respite
- Recommendation: The NSW Government needs to address the inequity of eligibility criteria and unregulated copayment or fee-for-service for all government provided or funded services, particularly to understand the financial impact on people with disability that require multiple services and programs.