

Submission
No 57

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

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LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL

The Director, Social Issues
Legislative Council, Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

5 August 2010

Dear Hon Ian West MLC

Inquiry into Services provided or funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC)

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to this inquiry. I congratulate the state for demonstrating accountability within NSW Government Departments.

1. a) The historical and current level of funding and extent of unmet need;

There seems to be a real shortage in money in the ADHC disability funding bucket in comparison to ADHC Home and Community Care (HACC) funding. Does this have something to do with federal versus state funding?

I keep hearing of local services receiving one-off HACC funding for capital items however when I try to refer our clients to a HACC service, I am constantly told they are operating at full capacity. Some HACC services place people in need of service on waiting lists and other HACC services in particular, Home Care won't even accept referrals.

Tax payer's money should be going into services to support people with disability and their carers to enable them to live within the community. It is frustrating that people with disability requiring domestic support (as they are unable to clean their bathroom or vacuum their home) are unable to access Home Care in NSW unless they require other supports such as personal care or shopping support. A person on a disability pension is not able to afford full fee payment for a domestic service and should be able to receive services they need and if able, have the right to shower themselves with the support of bathroom modifications. Hopefully individual funding packages may assist with this inaccuracy.

b. services provided or funded by ADHC, ADHC regional areas - There is an urgent need to plan for more supported accommodation at different levels to accommodate the increasing number of persons with a disability that will require varied levels of support.

In the central and orana west we have lots of disability services which look good on paper, however in reality there are no sufficient services for people with a disability to participate in the community.

c) flexibility in client funding arrangements and client focused service delivery. In very recent times this is starting to happen. eg having a person centred approach. Although I have recently been informed of day programs throughout the region, not delivering their service to this standard i.e. consumer choice.

d) compliance with Disability Service Standards. (attached extract NSW Disability Services Standards) This is hard to measure when there is not enough availability in services and supports for this always to be achieved. I have listed the standards that ADHC services are failing to be compliant due to lack of funding and resources or inexperienced staff.

Standard 1) access to services

Standard 2) individual needs

Standard 3) decision making & choice

Standard 5) participation & integration

Standard 6) valued status

Standard 10) protection of human rights & freedom of abuse

Recently we have become aware of some ADHC workers being slow to respond to reports of abuse, particularly in boarding houses.

ADHC fund "People with Disability Boarding House Project in NSW" although this service is not widely promoted and many disability services, disability workers and the community are not aware of this project.

e) adequacy of complaint handling, grievance mechanisms and ADHC funded advocacy services. We are the only independent advocacy and information service for people with disability, their families and carers this side of the Blue Mountains. DIAS covers the central and orana west. eg Lithgow, Bathurst, Orange, Cowra, Parkes, Forbes, Wellington, Dubbo, Narromine, Mudgee and surrounding towns and villages. Our service received funding in 2009 – 2010 of \$161,000, our statistics show we are not adequately funded for the geographical area we cover and operate with 3 part-time staff.

I consider the appropriateness for advocacy services funded by ADHC worthy of discussion. To minimise the possibility or the perception of conflict of interest, advocacy support should be provided by organisations that do not also undertake service provision to promote strong and effective independent advocacy.

f) internal and external program evaluation - In my six years with this organisation, we have only once undergone an Integrated Monitoring Framework. We do however send in quarterly statistics, annual return and annual funding acquittal and ADHC are informed our organisation is compliant with our funding agreement.

g) any other matters - It may have been beneficial for the Legislative Council to establish extensive feedback into your inquiry by sending out a survey to ADHC service providers and service users with the opportunity to keep their feedback confidential. Some funded services and service users may have concerns of retribution to their funding. This is only a suggestion and my own opinion.

ADHC unfortunately lack communicating with their funded services and this is the general census within organisations. My management committee and I have been updating our service policies in the last twelve months and have asked for feedback when forwarded copies of updated policies to ADHC. To date I have received no feedback and rarely have contact with my ADHC project officer whose office is in the same town.

On a more positive note;

- ADHC have conducted community consultations throughout the state in 2009-2010 for feedback on the next phase of "Stronger Together 2"
- ADHC are providing opportunities for staff to be trained to deliver better quality services

Please note and accept this as being only constructive feedback in the aim to improve quality and efficient services for people who are aged, frail, have a disability, their families and carers.

Yours sincerely



Susan Smidt
Coordinator

THE NSW DISABILITY SERVICES STANDARDS

Standard 1. Service Access - Each consumer seeking a service has access to a service on the basis of relative need and available resources.

Standard 2. Individual needs - Each person with a disability receives a service which is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his or her individual needs and personal goals.

Standard 3. Decision making and choice - each person with a disability has the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the events and activities of his or her daily life in relation to the services he or she receives.

Standard 4. Privacy, dignity and confidentiality - Each consumer's right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life is recognised and respected

Standard 5. Participation and integration - Each person with a disability is supported and encouraged to participate and be involved in the life of the community

Standard 6. Valued status - Each person with a disability has the opportunity to develop and maintain skills and to participate in activities that enable him or her to achieve valued roles in the community.

Standard 7. Complaints and disputes - Each consumer is free to raise and have resolved, any complaints or disputes he or she may have regarding the agency or the service.

Standard 8. Service Management - Each agency adopts sound management practices which maximise outcomes for consumers.

Standard 9. Family relationships - Each person with a disability receives a service which recognises the importance of preserving family relationships, informal social networks and is sensitive to their cultural and linguistic environments.

Standard 10. Protection of human rights and freedom from abuse - The agency ensures the legal and human rights of people with a disability are upheld in relation to the prevention of sexual, physical and emotional abuse within the service.