

**INQUIRY INTO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME AND THE PROVISION
OF DISABILITY SERVICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Silverlea Services

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SILVERLEA SERVICES

ABN 21 001 809 658

Ph:(08) 8087 7899, Fax:(08) 8088 2112,

Email: silverl@bigpond.net.au

NDIS in Broken Hill

For over 50 years Silverlea has been an active not for profit charity operating in Broken Hill supporting people with disabilities.

In the early years Silverlea provided accommodation, education, transport and employment. With Government changes in the nineties the organisation focused on creating employment and community transport. Early intervention was managed as a separate entity whilst still within the Silverlea Group. Transport was relinquished some 8 years ago.

Silverlea currently employs 25 people with disabilities and 8 F/T support staff.

Silverlea is supported by the Management Board and General Manager, Ron Hellyer responsible for the day to day operations.

The organisation predominately relies on securing contracts for services and sale of products manufactured on site in Broken Hill.

These include :

- ♦ Purified water production
- ♦ Air cooler pad manufacture
- ♦ Retail & wholesale plant sales
- ♦ Synthetic lawn installation
- ♦ Landscaping installation and maintenance
- ♦ Commercial linen service and events hire

Major contracts are held with BH Solar Farm, Essential Energy & Water, Epiroc, BH Village shopping centre, Ipstar Satellite Station, Portia Gold Mine, BH City Council, BH Caravan Park, Desert Sands Motel, Sturt Motel, and various accommodation facilities and commercial and industrial establishments.

Contracts and sales support 70% of the annual income for Silverlea with 30% subsidizing from the Federal Government. Turnover is just over \$1.1 million per annum.

Income from the Federal Government in the last financial year accounted for \$305,839 of which \$52,200 was identified for Rural & Remote assistance. Assistance is paid in advance.

The application of the NDIS shall substantially change the receipt of support income applied for in arrears. The determination that all disability services in Broken Hill are not remote applies a 20% reduction in NDIS funding claims whilst still being affected by remote costs.

Whilst the business climate has been very difficult to survive in, Silverlea is confident of proceeding into the NDIS environment and can envisage great opportunities for our employees to receive increased assistance in their lives.

The significant threat to the future of Silverlea however is the advice that Broken Hill is no longer considered 'remote' and therefore assistance for Remote classification will leave a financial shortfall of some \$52,000 plus a 20% allowance for standard fee for services. This classification is determined by the government using the Modified Monash Model recently developed geographical classification system, using up-to-date population data, which the Government can use to better address the maldistribution of medical services across Australia. It operates under the Dept of Health at www.doctorconnect.gov.au. This model is population based rather than geographical. The geographical model assigned by the ABS is used in our tax returns for determining remote allowance and many government departments for grant applications and operations funding.

This medical model identifies Broken Hill as an '**outer regional area**' and therefore not eligible for remote support. Our understanding that this model is for medical staff distribution, not for determining the costs associated with operating business in remote areas. Broken Hill has always received remote support for all government programs and the City has never not been considered remote.

Menindee which is serviced from Broken Hill remains remote and Silverton (pop 54) is considered remote.

Silverlea considers this assessment to be more than discriminatory, in fact, it would appear upon reading the map that other remote areas shall be affected also and in the end affect those with disabilities. This approach seriously compromises the viability of future support for people with disabilities in remote areas.

Additional consultants, Synergy Group, have also worked with Silverlea on the NDIS implications and collectively identified opportunities to grow under the NDIS however, the loss of remote support and the 20% allowance over standard charges appears to be financially unviable.

Silverlea cannot replace the loss of this support by sustainable contracts and the board is seriously considering the closure of the disability service.

