

Submission
No 310

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 9 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

To Whom It may Concern,

The introduction of the NDIS into the Early Intervention Sector has significantly impacted on support for families and children. This will cause a roll on affect for the Education, Health and Community Services.

Specific areas of concern that a once block ADHC funded service could provide include:

- Free access and support to the Early Intervention Service within their local Government area.
- Block funded service was able to support individual children from birth to school entry; whether they had a specific diagnosis or not.
- Block funded services had the ability to support families to access community therapists and services.
- Block funded services were able to establish a good rapport with parents with no time limitations or pressures to get a diagnosis, (which sometimes can take up to two years), due to grief and acceptance of the child's developmental issues.
- Block funded services were able to provide a Supported Playgroup within the community that was a soft point entry for families starting their diagnosis journey.
- Block funded services were able to assist and support parents with vital Department of Education – Early Intervention application paperwork necessary to gain access to this support service prior to school entry.
- Block funded services provided support and guidance to all families and child care staff, with regards to school transition applications, orientations and settling into the child's new educational setting.
- Block funded services provided information to all families using the service about other Government Initiatives, such as, Department of Health Chronic Disease Management Plan.
- Block funded services were able to support the entire family unit using a holistic approach focusing on all family members well-being in the community.

- Block funded services had the ability to support the child in all areas of their life, for example, in-home, playgroups and child care centres.
- Block funded services also were able to provide free educational programs/ in services for parents, extended family members and educators.
- Block funded services were able to provide meeting space for other community support groups, for example, Kinship Care, Autism and Asperger's Support Groups.
- Block funded services were able to be members of a cross service inter agency support group that together provided ideas, promotions and workshops to educate the wider community about the benefits of Early Childhood Intervention.
- Block funded services were able to provide and teach child care educators strategies for inclusion, hence, up skilling centre child care staff.
- As a Block funded service we were a not for profit service run by a local community committee.

The introduction of the NDIS has severely restricted our small Early Intervention Service that has been operating and providing care and support to the local community for 27 years. Due to the nature of the ECEI Tender, our Service was forced to solely become an NDIS Provider and is now financially dependent on NDIS Plans

Significant areas of concern include:

- Our Early Intervention Service can now only support children with an NDIS plan who choose to engage with us.
- Our Early Intervention Service can no longer provide free access to any of our expertise and support with the local community to families without an NDIS plan.
- Our support for a child from birth to school entry is now severely limited due to the amount of funding a child's NDIS plan is granted.

- Our Early Intervention Service can no longer provide free seminars and programs to families, as this requires financial funding that is no longer available.
- Previously support delivery was tailored to the needs of the child and family. Now, Early Intervention Educators are faced with working within a designated time frame that is restricted by the child's budget and funding.
- Meeting space for community support groups will now require paying a fee for use of the building.
- As NDIS has now made all services a business model; inter-agency connections and supports are no longer viable as each individual service is dependent on attracting clients and their funding to remain a functioning productive service.

The introduction of the NDIS Scheme into our semi-rural district has eliminated the community members' ability to access Early Intervention Services. It has privatised what has been a free Government Service to the local community, and hence, many children will not be sighted, assessed and supported prior to school entry, which in turn has a flow on effect to the Department of Education. The process to access Early Intervention is now no longer a drop in at your local service provider, but a long process to obtain relevant reports and assessments before any support is provided to a family in need. This process contradicts the purpose of Early Intervention which should start immediately, not being placed on a long waiting list for support services to be obtained.