

**INQUIRY INTO FOUNDATIONAL AND DISABILITY  
SUPPORTS AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Woodville Alliance

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**Select Committee on Foundational and Disability Supports Available for  
Children and Young People in New South Wales – Response from Woodville  
Alliance**

Woodville Alliance's Vision is: Social justice and fairness for all, and improved quality of life for the people of Western Sydney.

For over forty years Woodville Alliance has worked alongside the Western Sydney community to support individuals and families through tailored programs that promote social inclusion, health, and wellbeing. We do this by providing case management, parenting programs, group work and outreach services.

Woodville Alliance is a registered NDIS provider, committed to enhancing the quality of life for all. Our comprehensive disability support services are tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals, empowering them to live independently and participate in their community.

We focus on collaboration, inclusion, and respect, providing services to support young children, families, local communities and people with disability. We're committed to fairness and social justice, creating meaningful connections and working together to enhance the quality of life for everyone. Please accept Woodville Alliance's submission to the Select Committee which addresses each chapter of the report indicating the strengths of each section and suggestions for consideration.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Structure of this response

### 1.2. Scope of this response

### 1.3. Terminology used

#### Strengths:

- Evidence-Based Approach Uses findings from key national reviews, showing strong research and lived experience input.
- Holistic Understanding Acknowledges that child wellbeing is affected by housing, safety, culture, and support services — not just health and education.
- Focus on Vulnerable Groups Highlights the risks for children with disability in out-of-home care and those exposed to domestic and family violence.
- Cultural Awareness Recognises the higher developmental vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

#### Suggestions:

- More Family Focus Needed Could better reflect the needs and role of parents/carers in supporting children with disability.
- Service Coordination Should talk more about how families struggle with navigating siloed systems (e.g. health, education, DCJ).
- Real-Life Experiences Including voices of families would help show what the challenges look like day to day.
- Clearer Language Simpler and more consistent terms would help families and support workers understand the content better.

## 2. How many children and young people in NSW have developmental delay or disability?

### Strength:

- **Contextual Clarity** The introduction clearly explains when developmental delay or disability can be identified, which is important for practitioners and families in understanding the spectrum of diagnosis timelines.
- **Realistic Acknowledgment** Highlighting that disability is difficult to measure due to individual and parental perceptions is crucial in family services, where subjective experience often shapes support pathways.
- **Use of Authoritative Sources** Referring to the AEDC and SDAC adds credibility. These are well-regarded sources that professionals in family services often rely on for data-informed planning.

### Suggestions:

- **Add Clear Prevalence Figures** For people working in children and family services, it's useful to have a concrete estimate of how many children in NSW are affected. Consider adding key stats from AEDC or SDAC (e.g., *“According to the 2021 SDAC, X% of children in NSW were identified as having a disability...”*).
- **Make It More Action-Oriented** You could link the prevalence data to why early identification matters, e.g., *“Early identification enables tailored intervention and support, helping families navigate health, education, and community systems more effectively.”*
- **Use Accessible Language for Families** Phrases like “prompted by changes in health or behaviour, support arrangements or social circumstances” might be simplified or paired with examples that resonate with families. For example: *“...such as starting school, a new caregiver noticing learning difficulties, or behavioural challenges emerging during puberty.”*

- **Emphasize Interdisciplinary Collaboration** Since children and family services are often integrated, it would help to mention the importance of cross-sector collaboration (e.g., between health professionals, educators, and social workers) in identifying and supporting children with developmental delays.
- **Add Equity/Cultural Lens** Mention how identification and access to support can vary across communities particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, migrants, or families experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. This shows cultural and social awareness, which is key in family services.

## 2.1. Children in NSW with developmental delay

## 2.2. Children and young people in NSW with disability

### Strength:

- **Clear structure** The text is well-organized into logical sections with relevant headings and figures.
- **Use of reliable data sources** Cites credible data sources like AEDC, SDAC, and NDDA, enhancing credibility.
- **Balanced explanations** Effectively explains the complexity of measuring disability and variations in data collection.
- **Inclusion of geographic and demographic insights:** Highlights disparities between regions (e.g., remote vs metro) and by age/sex.

### Suggestions:

- **Dense and lengthy** Some sections could benefit from more concise language to improve readability.
- **Missing interpretive summaries** While figures are referenced, there's limited explanation of key findings or implications from them.
- **Repetition** Similar points (e.g., challenges in disability measurement) are repeated across sections and could be streamlined.

3. What types of supports and services are available for children and young people with developmental delay and disability in NSW, and who is responsible for their funding and delivery?

3.1. Service obligations under human rights frameworks

3.2. Jurisdiction and portfolio responsibilities for policy and service delivery

3.3. Types of services and supports available

3.4. Background on the NDIS model

#### Strengths:

- Comprehensive coverage The section provides a detailed and well-structured overview of services and responsibilities across jurisdictions.
- Clear structure Subsections (3.1-3.4) are logically ordered and help readers follow complex topics.
- Well-supported by references Strong use of legal frameworks, national strategies, and review findings adds credibility.

#### Suggestions:

- Dense language Some sections could be simplified or broken up for better readability, especially for general audiences.
- Repetitive at times Certain points (e.g. about confusion/lack of accountability) are reiterated multiple times, could be more concise.
- Missing practical examples Could benefit from short case studies or real-life service navigation examples for clarity.
- Visual aids needed Diagrams or infographics (especially for NDIS tiers or APTOS responsibilities) would enhance understanding.

#### 4. What are the issues with current supports and services and what has been proposed to address these?

##### 4.1. Recent major reviews

###### Strengths:

- Well-referenced Strong inclusion of recent and relevant reviews adds credibility and currency.
- Clear relevance Direct links to children and young people with disability are highlighted effectively.
- Community-informed Emphasis on lived experience strengthens the impact and legitimacy of findings.

###### Suggestions:

- Slight repetition Mentions of review submissions and participatory input could be more concise.
- Timely updates Includes very recent reports (2023-2024), demonstrating up-to-date research.
- Could benefit from synthesis Summary of key findings/recommendations from each review would enhance usefulness and readability.
- Missing direction Lacks an overarching summary of “what’s been proposed”, would benefit from bulleting or listing reforms or system improvements.

##### 4.2. Identified issues, gaps and barriers with services and supports for this cohort

###### 4.2.1. Theme: Lack of accessible supports outside the NDIS

###### 4.2.2. Theme: Difficulty navigating complex service systems

###### 4.2.3. Theme: Need for advocacy supports

#### Strengths:

- Comprehensive structure Clearly organized by themes, which helps with readability and understanding.
- Evidence-based Strong use of data, review findings, and statistics supports the key points and adds credibility.
- Well-integrated recommendations Effectively ties recommendations to each identified issue.

#### Suggestions:

- Some repetition Ideas about lack of coordination and funding appear multiple times; could be streamlined.
- Figures mentioned but not shown Refers to figures (e.g., Figure 9, 10, 11) without visual content here, summary descriptions could help.
- Heavy and dense Some paragraphs are long and text-heavy; breaking them up could enhance clarity and engagement.
- Lived experience voice missing More direct quotes or short case examples could humanize the issues.
- Forward-thinking Emphasizes foundational supports and system reform, showing a proactive approach

#### 4.2.4. Theme: Lack of accessible information

#### 4.2.5. Theme: Lack of accessible and coordinated early intervention supports for children and families

#### Strength:

- Thorough analysis The text presents comprehensive findings from both the NDIS Review and the Disability Royal Commission (DRC), covering systemic gaps clearly.
- Strong evidence base Cites relevant data, reports, and figures to support key points, enhancing credibility.
- Clear identification of issues Each theme and issue are logically structured and easy to follow.



- Useful recommendations Actionable and specific recommendations are tied directly to the issues raised.

#### Suggestions:

- Repetition Some issues (e.g., lack of access to peer support, gaps in early intervention) are repeated across sections; could be streamlined.
- Length and density Text is very dense—consider simplifying or summarising for broader accessibility.
- Figure references Figures are referenced but not shown—consider integrating visuals or summaries of them.
- Voice of families/children Including direct quotes or testimonials could humanise the findings and strengthen impact.
- Jargon Phrases like "NDIS Review Action 1.8" are helpful for policy experts but could be confusing for general readers, add plain language explanations where possible.

#### 4.2.6. Theme: Barriers to inclusive mainstream education

#### 4.2.7. Theme: Lack of life transition supports for young people

#### Strengths:

- Clear identification of a critical developmental stage (adolescence) and its long-term impact.
- Evidence-based: Cites strong statistics and lived experiences to highlight service gaps.
- Recommendations are relevant and practical, addressing both foundational and systemic barriers.
- Highlights multiple transition points, not just education-to-employment.

#### Suggestions:

- Some repetition with earlier themes (e.g., disjointed systems) could benefit from tighter integration or cross-referencing.
- Could include youth voices or case examples to make the issue more tangible.

- Terminology like “foundational supports” may need brief clarification for general readers.
- “9 to 21” age range in recommendations feels broad, could specify tailored approaches for younger vs older youth.

#### 4.3. Timeline for reform

#### 4.4. Commitments regarding foundational supports

##### Strengths:

- Provides a clear, chronological overview of key reform milestones and commitments.
- Strong detail on funding, timelines, and government actions—shows momentum and transparency.
- Incorporates community feedback, showing responsiveness to lived experience and stakeholder engagement.
- Emphasis on co-design, local delivery, and inclusive principles (e.g. trauma informed, culturally safe) is well-aligned with best practice.

##### Suggestions:

- Could benefit from clearer sectioning or subheadings to help digest dense information.
- Some repetition around foundational supports and timing, streamlining would improve readability.
- The age focus (0–9) is specific, but broader application for older cohorts might need clarification.
- Inclusion of a visual (e.g. timeline or funding breakdown) would make complex content more accessible.

## 5. What major structural factors will continue to shape the service system?

### 5.1. Informal carers

### 5.2 Workforce Supply

#### Strengths:

- Provides a comprehensive, ecosystem-level view of structural challenges affecting disability supports.
- Strong integration of data and evidence (e.g. stress levels, workforce shortages, financial stats).
- Clearly links carer wellbeing, workforce limitations, and provider sustainability to service effectiveness.
- Highlights intersectional challenges like cost of living and "sandwich carers" well.

#### Suggestions:

- Quite text-heavy; could benefit from more visual aids (tables, infographics) for faster absorption.
- Some sentences are long and dense—can be simplified for better readability.
- More focus on potential solutions or successful models could balance the problem-heavy tone.
- The shift between sections could be signposted better for smoother flow.

## 6. What does the evidence say about best practice supports and interventions for this cohort?

#### Strengths:

- Clearly outlines the goals and scope of the review, linking it to national strategies.
- Strong inclusion of diverse voices (e.g. academic, clinical, lived experience, First Nations).

- Well-structured aims, principles, and practices, comprehensive and evidence informed.
- Emphasizes culturally safe, trauma-informed, and family-centred approaches.

Suggestions:

- Dense with text, could benefit from visual summaries (e.g. diagrams or flowcharts of principles/practices).
- Consider simplifying or splitting long sentences for clarity and accessibility.
- More details on how the final framework will be implemented or evaluated would add value.
- Could briefly highlight what gaps in current practice this new framework aims to address.

## 7. What frameworks can be used to evaluate service availability, accessibility and effectiveness in this context?

### 7.1. Minimum standards for safe and quality services

Strengths:

- Clearly structured breakdown of relevant service systems (health, disability, education).
- Good inclusion of key regulatory bodies and their roles in ensuring service quality and safety.
- Effectively highlights alignment with national policies and legal obligations (e.g. Disability Discrimination Act).
- Mentions data gaps, which is important for improving evaluation and accountability.

Suggestions:

- Could benefit from a summary table or visual comparing standards across sectors for quick reference.
- More emphasis on how these standards impact access and outcomes for people with disability would add value.

- The language is formal and dense—consider simplifying for broader accessibility.
- Could briefly mention how families and carers can engage with or navigate these regulatory frameworks.

## 7.2. The national disability policy and outcomes framework

## 7.3. A framework for service system and population factors that relate to access

to services

## 7.4. Data limitations and barriers to effective evaluation

Strengths:

- Clearly explains the limitations of current national and state disability frameworks in addressing the needs of children and young people with developmental delay.
- Effectively introduces a well-regarded conceptual framework from health, tailored to a disability context.
- Balanced discussion of both supply-side and demand-side barriers to access.
- Comprehensive overview of existing data limitations and ongoing improvement efforts (e.g. NDDA).
- Good use of tables and frameworks to explain complex ideas clearly.

Suggestions:

- Could benefit from more practical examples or case studies to illustrate how the conceptual framework applies in real-world disability settings (e.g. early childhood, school).
- Slightly dense in parts, could improve readability with subheadings or infographics to break up text.
- Consider suggesting how the committee might adapt the national framework or data systems to be more child/youth specific.
- Table 4 is informative but may be clearer if presented graphically (e.g. a matrix or flowchart).

- May want to highlight more directly the implications of data gaps for policy decisions or service planning.

## Appendix A. Definitions of key terms

### Strengths:

- **Clear and Accessible Definitions** are generally well-written in plain language suitable for a non-specialist audience.
- **Comprehensive** Covers a broad spectrum of key concepts relevant to disability, development, and diagnosis.
- **Useful Legal Distinctions** Highlights both general and legislative definitions, which is helpful for clarity and practical application.

### Suggestions:

- **Slight Redundancy** Some concepts (e.g., developmental concern vs developmental difference) slightly overlap; could be streamlined.
- **Heavy on Text** Dense in places; could benefit from headings, bullet points or visual aids to improve readability.
- **Good Use of Sources:** Incorporates credible references like NDIA, DSM-5, WHO, and relevant legislation.
- **Clarifies Context:** Appropriately distinguishes between clinical and legal/programmatic use of terms.

## Appendix B. Examples of types of government-funded supports and service available in NSW

### Strengths:

- **Comprehensive and Well-Structured** The document clearly categorizes a wide range of government-funded services across developmental needs, making it easy to navigate.
- **Target Audience Defined** Each support lists the target group, cost to user, and funding/delivery source, which is very user-friendly.

### Suggestions:

- Repetition Some sections (e.g., "Advocacy") appear duplicated; this could be streamlined for clarity.
- Dense Formatting The formatting is text-heavy with minimal spacing; consider using clearer tables or bullet points for readability.
- Lack of Visual Aids Tables or infographics could enhance clarity, especially for visually oriented readers.
- Inclusion of Research Reference Citing survey results to highlight the difficulty of accessing detailed service info online strengthens the credibility of the scan.
- Acknowledges Limitations Clearly notes the scan isn't exhaustive and relies on publicly available data, which adds transparency.