

Summary of key issues discussed at 5 April 2016, CEO Round Table Committee Meeting



Attendance, apologies, welcome and opening of meeting.

Present

Marcus Stafford (Chair), Julie Waylen, Fiona Beermier, Matt Burrows, Ron Chalmers, David Hogg, Debbie Karasinski, Rob Holmes.

Apologies

Paul Coates, Sue Ash, Justine Colyer, Darren Ginnelly, Tony Vis, Leanne Pearman

In attendance

Robyn McWaldron and Anna Rasmussen (minutes)

Update on the NDIS My Way Trial

- R Chalmers advised as at 30 March 2016, there are 2,255 people in the trial; 1,300 located in Cockburn/Kwinana and 955 in the Lower South West. These figures are significantly lower than the intended target but are in line with numbers from the NDIA Perth Hills Trial, which are also below target. This continues to suggest that original target figures were overestimated and that the actual number of people in WA eligible to participate in the trials is lower than this target.
- D Karasinski noted that indigenous communities in remote areas may have a significant number of eligible participants. R Chalmers explained as there has been Local Area Coordinators on the ground for many years, it would be apparent if there were significant numbers of eligible participants that have been missed.
- Members queried whether the disparity between estimates and actual figures would result in budget implications. R Chalmers noted that there may be implications for Commonwealth agreements and that, where some national figures are overestimated, others may be underestimated.
- J Waylen discussed the recent Premier's comments around concerns for national budget "blowout". D Hogg queried whether additional unfunded participants were entering the scheme. R Chalmers advised that the Disability Services Commission (DSC) funds around 60% of participants within the WA NDIS My Way trial, with all high-cost individuals included within the scheme. Comparably, the NDIA Perth Hills trial currently includes ~10 high-cost participants, with ~300 still to enter the scheme. Both trials are currently tracking at average national costs.
- In response to query from M Stafford around why WA NDIS My Way trial costs seem lower in comparison to the NDIA Perth Hills trial, R Holmes provided that trial sites vary in average package costs and are geographic and regionally specific.

Full Scheme Implementation

- M Stafford noted that there is anxiety from the sector around the way forward as the trial period nears its end. R Chalmers noted that anxiety is understandable until an agreement is made between the Commonwealth and State in full or interim. There is solid work occurring between Commonwealth and State on an official level around what the ultimate operational and governance model will be in WA with consideration around a rollout pattern. There is a loud call to refrain from pre-emptive decision-making until the trials have run their full course. Minister Porter is resolute that trials will not end on June 30 2016, and it is fair to say there is a lot of talk and interest in the expansion of trials geographically during 2016/17.
- R Chalmers advised his belief that a bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and State around the future direction for WA might be signed within a matter of months. The next few weeks should outline a picture on what is to happen on 1 July 2016, and within a few months the plan for the next half decade to follow.
- M Burrows advised members of angst within trial sites about potential rollback. Participants are concerned they have undergone significant change and are anxious about having to undergo yet another transition. Some trial participants have lost 50% of their funding, and are concerned it may lessen further. R Chalmers explained that there is an interest in providing a rollout announcement as soon as possible, which will lessen anxiety and negative speculation.

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC)

- R Chalmers advised that a high level ILC framework is currently available and will apply nationally, interpreted state by state. The 5 part framework will run on modest Commonwealth funding and there is opportunity in 2016/17/18 to use existing state funds to help these 5 areas. A meeting with NDS is scheduled for 13 April 2016 to determine strategic investment direction in the Western Australian disability sector for the coming financial year.
- D Karasinski queried whether the state will put money towards ILC issues after the first two years, expressing concerns there may be a lack of funding. R Chalmers noted he thinks it's becoming clear that state government will still have to fund, in some way, the disability states as there will still be those who are ineligible for the scheme who have needs and other disability areas that require continued funding, such as the Disability Justice Centre and Disability Access and Inclusion Planning.
- R Holmes queried whether the model will provide supports relating to technological upgrades/system changes and whether there is anything under the ILC framework that assists with such. He noted providers are concerned their systems may not be able to collect and report as required, or connect to portals, etc. Ron Chalmers advised that it is unlikely that the WA NDIS My Way scheme will make funding available to Disability Sector Organisations to upgrade IT systems. The issue of what IT requirements are necessary is as yet undetermined.

New organisational arrangements in the Disability Services Commission and implications for the sector

- R Chalmers informed members that letters have been sent to CEOs advising that the Commission is currently undertaking a restructure. The restructure will run a four directorate model: Policy and Planning, Sector Engagement and Development, Funding and Business, and Local Operations. The Office of the Director General will be moving to the Campbell Street office, Halcyon House Level 3, 1 Campbell Street, West Perth WA 6005.
- The Policy and Planning directorate will be led by Ms Simone Spencer, with ongoing work with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury, and continued positive engagement with Commonwealth Officials.
- The Sector Engagement and Development directorate will be led by Ms Marion Hailes-MacDonald with a sole focus on the interface between the DSC and Disability Sector Organisations.
- The Funding and Business directorate will be led by Mr Sam Ciminata and is responsible for all funding around systems, reporting and recording, and information technology.
- The Local Operations directorate is led by Ms Robyn Massey, with focus around on-the-ground teams, coordinators and other staff; a public interface.
- R Chalmers also advised that the DSC's Services branch is undergoing significant change, moving out to the sector to function similar to that of a medium-sized non-government organisation. The Services branch will be located in Myaree and will run with the same pricing framework, cluster and reporting frameworks as the sector.