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Welcome to the March 2014 edition of the Sector e-Bulletin.

This newsletter has been created by the Disability Services Commission to keep you informed about disability sector reforms, projects being undertaken and other relevant information.

Future submissions and contributions

If you have any relevant information to share with the disability sector, including resources and links relating to individualised services and supports, please email communications@dsc.wa.gov.au .

WA NDIS My Way legislation progresses

A Bill has been introduced to the WA Parliament which seeks to amend the Disability Services Act, to support and enable the trial of the WA NDIS My Way model in the Lower South West and Cockburn-Kwinana areas.

The amendments will allow for both the State's existing and new WA NDIS My Way disability service delivery systems to operate with appropriate legal standing.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Disability Services Minister, Andrea Mitchell, introduced the Disability Services Amendment Bill 2014 Bill to the State's Legislative Assembly on 13 March.

The Commission worked closely with the State's Parliamentary Counsel to draft the amendments, and also consulted key stakeholders including the Commission's Board, the WA Disability Reform Project Board and the WA NDIS My Way Reference Group.

Personalised planning supports school leavers

The Disability Services Commission is changing the way school leavers with disability will be supported as they transition from school.

These changes are in keeping with principles of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and put school leavers at the centre of the decision-making process.

From this year, rather than entering a defined program (known as Post-School Options), students will engage in a detailed, personalised planning process with their school and Local Area Coordinator.

This process will enable individuals to identify strategies and goals that will help them plan a good life for themselves.

With this more flexible approach, school leavers will have a greater range of options that help develop their skills and abilities, and increase opportunities for valued community roles and employment.

This change to the way in which school leavers are supported marks a shift from programmatic-based funding streams towards a more person-centred and individualised approach. This change focuses on greater choice and control, and planning-based resource allocation.

It is anticipated that, with the removal of the Post-School Options program boundaries, students will benefit from improved outcomes in areas such as employment, community participation, continuing education and training, and skills development.

Where funding is identified as part of a student's plan, it will be allocated for a designated period and reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to meet the individual's needs as identified in their plan.

This move to a holistic, individualised planning process will increase the number of pathways for school leavers with disability, and provide them with support to help achieve their goals

Disability Justice Centre project update

The development of a Disability Justice Centre in Lord Street, Caversham, on the border of Lockridge, is progressing to the construction stage.

The Disability Services Commission is now choosing the contractor for the demolition of the existing buildings and construction of the new centre. Building is expected to begin in April and the centre is expected to be completed by May 2015.

Legislation allowing the Commission to operate disability justice centres is expected to be debated in State Parliament next month.

The project's Local Community Liaison Group continues to meet monthly for the opportunity to contribute feedback on behalf of the community.

For more, go to www.disability.wa.gov.au > Reform > Disability justice centres or www.disability.wa.gov.au/reform1/reform/disability-justice-centres/ .

Expanding service reach

The Disability Services Commission has invited all organisations that have preferred provider status with the Commission to establish individualised services in the Lower South West to increase the choice available to people with disability, their families and carers.

The introduction of the Individualised Funding policy, the rollout of My Way and the commencement of the WA NDIS My Way trial in the Perth Hills later in the year have highlighted the need for people to have more choice in relation to the range of services on offer through various providers.

In fostering choice, there is also the need to ensure there are more service providers and/or service types available in various regions of Western Australia.

A number of service providers with preferred provider status have already taken up this option and their service agreements with the Commission reflect this.

To view the disability sector organisations operating in the Lower South West, visit www.disability.wa.gov.au > WA NDIS My Way > WA NDIS My Way model>locations > Lower South West or <http://disability.wa.gov.au/wa-ndis-my-way/wa-ndis-my-way/wa-ndis-my-way-model/locations/lower-south-west/>

Service providers who have preferred provider status with the Commission and whose service agreements with the Commission do not include the Lower South West or Perth metropolitan areas but would like to extend service provision to those areas, can email Support Officer Aaron Witton at Aaron.Witton@dsc.wa.gov.au .

Sign up for the WA NDIS My Way e-news

People who want to follow the progress of the development of the WA NDIS My Way trial can subscribe to receive monthly e-newsletter updates.

In the March issue, WA NDIS My Way News provides updates on a range of key components of the trial, which will commence on 1 July 2014 in the Lower South West region of WA and the Cockburn-Kwinana area on 1 July 2015.

Key news in the March e-newsletter includes:

- **Sector Development Fund** – The State Government has signed an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to receive \$500,000 from the NDIA's Sector Development Fund. This is for projects that drive change in the disability sector to support the trial of the NDIS and to ensure that people with disability are adequately supported in their transition to the NDIS. The Disability Services Commission will contribute an additional \$1 million to this funding to invest in community and sector development initiatives.
- **WA NDIS My Way Reference Group** - The group brings together representatives from the WA community to provide high level advice and input to the Joint Steering Committee and the Commission and Board on the implementation of the WA NDIS My Way trial.
- **National Partnership and Bilateral Agreements** - The National Partnership and Bilateral Agreements are expected to be finalised soon with the signing by the Prime Minister and the WA Premier. This follows their agreement on 5 August for disability reform in WA. The Agreements detail the arrangements for the NDIS trial sites in WA, including the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the WA Governments. The agreements are a collaborative effort between the Commission, Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury, the Mental Health Commission and the Commonwealth Government.
- **Legislative changes** – The WA Government is amending legislation to support and enable the trial of the WA NDIS My Way model in the Lower South West and Cockburn-Kwinana areas.
- **Eligibility and inclusion of people with psychosocial disability** – Discussions between the Disability Services and Mental Health commissions about the process for supporting people with psychosocial disability under WA NDIS My Way have been formalised with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two departments.
- **Legislative changes** – The WA Government is amending legislation to support and enable the trial of the WA NDIS My Way model in the Lower South West and Cockburn-Kwinana areas.
- **Communications and engagement** – The Commission's website continues to be updated with new information about the WA NDIS My Way trial. Visit www.disability.wa.gov.au > NDIS in WA.

To receive the newsletter by email each month, email MyWay@dsc.wa.gov.au with 'Newsletter subscription' in the subject line.

Accommodation services transition update

The Disability Services Commission's project to transition about 60 per cent of its accommodation services to the non-government sector began in January, when the first group of people to transition started their planning. This month the Commission will begin contacting the second group of people to start this process.

The Commission's Transition Team is meeting all affected individuals and families to work through what they would like their future living arrangements to be. The transition process is driven by the principles of choice and control, which means individuals can choose where they live and who they live with. Some people's choice may be to keep things as they are, while others may consider quite different options.

For more information, visit www.disability.wa.gov.au > Reform > Accommodation services transition or www.disability.wa.gov.au/reform1/reform/accommodation-services-transition/ or email dsc@dsc.wa.gov.au.

Forums inform WA NDIS My Way stakeholders

Stakeholders in the WA NDIS My Way trial, to commence on 1 July, are being kept up to date about the initiative via a range of forums and through the establishment of the WA NDIS My Way Reference Group.

The reference group, comprising community, Disability Services Commission and the WA Government representatives, discusses the development and implementation of the WA NDIS My Way trial site.

Monthly meetings have been held this year on 22 January, 17 February and 13 March.

For more about the group visit: <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/wa-ndis-my-way/wa-ndis-my-way/consultation-and-community-engagement/wa-ndis-my-way-reference-group/>

Commission workshops, forums and information sessions will continue in the lead-up to start of the trial.

At an information and engagement forum in Busselton in December, more than 70 people with disability, their families and carers, service providers, government representatives and interested community members heard about the WA NDIS My Way model and how it will work in the Lower South West.

For information about upcoming WA NDIS My Way events, visit www.disability.wa.gov.au > NDIS in WA. <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/wa-ndis-my-way/wa-ndis-my-way/>

Quality System being enhanced

The Disability Services Commission's quality system is being enhanced to align with the new National Standards on Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The new system, to operate from July, is about evolutionary rather than revolutionary change, and will maintain the basic structure of self-assessments, visits and follow-up actions, while bringing a more holistic approach to serious and critical incident reports, complaints, safeguarding and reporting.

A sector forum will be held on 8 April at NDS WA's Osborne Park office from 9.30am–11.30am to provide an update on quality and reporting (attendance by registration).

Further information about the quality project and forum is available at

www.disability.wa.gov.au > Disability Service Providers > Quality or www.disability.wa.gov.au/disability-service-providers-/for-disability-service-providers/

Reforms spur changes within

A range of disability sector reforms has led the Disability Services Commission to make changes to its organisational structure, functions and senior management arrangements.

Since 1 January this year, the Commission's directorate structure was reorganised into the following:

- Policy and Strategy – now Strategy Directorate
- Local Area Coordination – now Operations Directorate
- Service Contracting and Development – now Funding Directorate
- Corporate Services – now Business Directorate
- My Way team – now Disability Reform Directorate (temporary).

From January to April 2014, three services areas – Accommodation Services Directorate, Statewide Specialist Services Directorate and the Disability Justice team –are continuing to operate with their existing names. From April, these services areas will be amalgamated into the Services Directorate.

Director General Ron Chalmers said the new names reflected changes in the Commission's business focus, including its work in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), in particular the launch of WA NDIS My Way in the Lower South West and Cockburn-Kwinana, and changes to accommodation and early childhood services and supports.

"The Commission will continue to refine its organisational arrangements to ensure we have the structure and capacity to manage the ongoing business of the Commission and to progress multiple reform initiatives," Dr Chalmers said.

For more about the Commission's structure, visit www.disability.wa.gov.au > About us > Our structure or www.disability.wa.gov.au/about-us1/about-us/our-structure/

Subscribing to the Sector e-Bulletin

The Sector e-Bulletin can be forwarded on to other parties.

To subscribe to this publication, email communications@dsc.wa.gov.au .

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Contributions and feedback from agencies are welcome.