



March 2014

Message from the Director General

I am pleased to welcome you to the first e-news update on the WA National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) My Way trial.

Commencing on 1 July 2014 the Disability Services Commission, in collaboration with disability service organisations and mainstream agencies, will be introducing the NDIS in regional Western Australia, followed by the Perth metropolitan area on 1 July 2015.

This e-newsletter will bring you the latest news to keep you informed about our progress as we enter this unique trial period.

As many of you know, on 5 August 2013 the Prime Minister and the Premier of Western Australia signed an Agreement for disability reform in our state. Throughout negotiations the State argued for a model which allows the best features of our existing Western Australian disability services system to be retained. This includes early engagement in good planning processes, decision-making at a local level, a strong focus on natural support networks and inclusion in the community, minimal bureaucracy and, very importantly, an ongoing partnership approach with the non-government sector.

The resulting Agreement allows Western Australia to participate in a two-year trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme using two models which will be independently evaluated to compare the merits of each model. The evaluation's outcomes will help inform the future of disability reform in Western Australia and at the national level.

The State Government's WA NDIS My Way model will be used in two locations: Lower South West (from 1 July 2014) and Cockburn-Kwinana (from 1 July 2015). The Commonwealth Government's National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) model will operate in the Perth Hills area at the same time.

The WA NDIS My Way model builds on the strong features of the current Western Australian disability services system. It has been developed in consultation with more than 1,300 people including individuals with disability and the broader disability sector.

My Way's objectives have always been about putting people with disability in the driving seat, so that they can make their own decisions about the supports and services they access and what a good life looks like for them. This is achieved through individualised, self-directed supports and services which increase choice and control for people with disability, their families and carers.

My Way also sets out to build stronger connections with community and services to enhance individuals' sense of belonging to their local neighbourhood.



With just over four months until the trial commences it is a busy and exciting time in the disability sector. I look forward to keeping you informed about the journey we are on and receiving your feedback.

For the latest information about WA NDIS My Way, [visit the NDIS in WA page](#) on the Commission's website.

Regards
Dr Ron Chalmers
Director General
Disability Services Commission

Sector Development Fund

The State Government has signed an agreement with the Commonwealth Government that will see it receive \$500,000 from the NDIA's Sector Development Fund. The funding will be used 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 be contributing an additional \$1 million to this funding to invest in community and sector development initiatives.

The funded activities focus on enhancing capacity building and information provision to individuals, families and carers and service providers; enhancements to WA's Quality Assurance system; and readying the disability sector's workforce for the NDIS.

Further information will be provided on the Commission's website as it becomes available.

WA NDIS My Way Reference Group

The first monthly meeting of the WA NDIS My Way Reference Group was held on 22 January 2014. The purpose of the Group is to bring together representatives from the Western Australian community to provide high level advice and input to the Joint Steering Committee and the Disability Services Commission and Board on the implementation of the WA NDIS My Way trial.

The Group also functions to assist with communication to the disability sector and broader community on the development of the WA NDIS My Way trial. Group members are assisted to do this through the provision of a monthly Progress Report which provides an update on key aspects of the WA NDIS My Way trial.

The Group is chaired by Disability Services Commission Director General Dr Ron Chalmers and membership includes those who represent individuals with disability, their families and carers, disability sector organisations, WA government agencies and Commission staff.



The first meeting saw the drafting of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and discussion on the Bilateral and National Partnership Agreement negotiations, the WA NDIS My Way model and communications and engagement protocols.

The Group's ToR and Minutes are available on the Commission's website. For more information, [visit the WA NDIS My Way Reference Group page](#).

National Partnership and Bilateral Agreements

Further to the 5 August 2013 Agreement for disability reform in WA, the National Partnership and Bilateral Agreements detail the arrangements for the NDIS trial sites in WA, including the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the WA Governments. In addition, they outline the role to be played by a Joint Steering Committee which will be established to oversee the progress and evaluation of disability reform in Western Australia.

The National Partnership Agreement supports the trial of the WA NDIS My Way model being implemented by the Disability Services Commission using State legislation in the Lower South West and Cockburn-Kwinana. Operating in parallel to the National Partnership Agreement will be the Bilateral Agreement which will govern how the Commonwealth's National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) model will run in the Perth Hills.

The finalisation of these detailed Agreements has been a collaborative effort between the Disability Services Commission, Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury, the Mental Health Commission and the Commonwealth Government. The final agreements will be signed by the Prime Minister and Premier of Western Australia.

The negotiations are nearing completion and the Agreements are expected to be finalised in the very near future.

Eligibility and inclusion of people with psychosocial disability

Discussions between the Disability Services and Mental Health Commissions regarding 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.

Under new guidelines, the transition to WA NDIS My Way will mean a significantly increased number of people will be eligible to access care and support, including people with a psychiatric condition that results in substantially reduced psychosocial functioning.

A My Way Coordinator with experience and specific skills in this area is currently being recruited to join the Lower South West team. The new My Way Coordinator will work in close partnership with local mental health services to explore community



based support for eligible people.

Although the criteria and assessment process for people with psychosocial disability is yet to be finalised on a national basis, a number of NDIS principles will be used in the WA NDIS My Way Lower South West trial site to assist in decision making around access and eligibility. These include functional impairment and support to enhance community participation.

Legislative changes

The West Australian State Government is making amendments to legislation 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 amendments have been drafted in consultation with key stakeholders, including the Commission's Board, the WA Disability Reform Project Board and the WA NDIS My Way Reference Group.

The Disability Services Amendment Bill 2014 was introduced to Parliament on 13 March 2014 and preparations for the amendment to the Disability Services Act Regulations are underway.

Key stakeholders will continue to be consulted and kept informed of progress.

Communications and engagement

Website

The Commission's website continues to be updated with new information and now includes **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** and a **service user guides** section. The service user guides provide information about disability sector organisations operating in the Lower South West. Additional FAQs and service user guides will be added on an ongoing basis.

Workshops and forums

The Commission has been holding a number of workshops, forums and information sessions in the lead up to the 1 July 2014 trial commencement.

December 2013 saw people with disability, their families and carers, service providers, government departments and interested community members attend information and engagement forums in Busselton and Kwinana.

The forums provided an opportunity for attendees to hear more about how the WA NDIS My Way trial will work, including the My Way decentralised funding and planning processes.



The beginning of 2014 has seen further engagement with mainstream agencies and the non-government sector.

For information about upcoming events, [visit the Consultation and community engagement page](#) on the Commission's website.

The news that matters to you

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