



Disability reform in Western Australia

A comparative evaluation of the two Western Australian trial site models

1. Introduction

The Agreement between the Commonwealth and the Western Australian governments for disability reform in Western Australia signed on 5 August 2013 included a requirement for an independent comparative evaluation of the services and outcomes in both trial sites to be undertaken throughout the period July 2014 – June 2016. This would be overseen by the Joint Steering Committee, and with agreed assessment criteria for comparing the operation of both trial site models.

The intent of the Agreement is that the results of this evaluation will contribute to any future disability reform in Western Australia (WA) and the legislated review of the operation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) across Australia that is set out in the National Disability Insurance Act 2013. The outcomes from the Western Australian evaluation will be available to inform future disability reform in other parts of the nation.

2. Proposal

The proposal to comparatively evaluate the two models in operation in Western Australia includes consideration of the service models, the experience and outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers.

It is important to note that the evaluation will be conducted during a period when neither trial site model will be fully operational. The design and methodology of the evaluation should be developed in recognition that the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) NDIS model and the WA NDIS My Way model will be progressively implemented during the period July 2014 to June 2016.

A Joint Steering Committee will oversee the progress and the evaluation of the WA NDIS My Way and NDIA NDIS trial sites in Western Australia. The Joint Steering Committee consists of senior officials from First Ministers' departments, disability departments and other disability stakeholders.

The day-to-day management of the project will be the responsibility of the Strategy Directorate of the Western Australian Disability Services Commission (DSC).

To facilitate a smooth transition for the future reform agenda beyond the trial period, it is intended that there be two evaluation reports during the trial period:

- interim report – to be provided to the Joint Steering Committee by December 2015
- final report – to be provided to the Joint Steering Committee by August 2016.

3. Trial site models

The NDIA NDIS model will operate in the Perth Hills area for people with disability living in the local government areas (LGAs) of Kalamunda, Mundaring and Swan.

The WA NDIS My Way model will operate in the Lower South West region for people with disability living in the LGAs of Augusta-Margaret River, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Busselton, Donnybrook, Balingup, Manjimup and Nannup (for the whole trial period 2014–2016) as well as the Kwinana and Cockburn LGAs (for 2015–16 only).

4. Terms of Reference

The purpose of this project is to provide evaluation reports which will inform decision making about the future of disability reform in Western Australia and nationally.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- compare and contrast the two trial site models
- identify any implementation issues for each model which will require attention during the two year trial (formative perspective)
- monitor and track modifications that are made to both models during the trial period and determine the reasons for the changes
- provide information on the processes and outcomes of each model to the extent possible within the available timeframe
- identify and discuss the implications of the evaluation findings for the future of the disability reform agenda in Western Australia and nationally.

The evaluation will focus on the extent to which the individual trials achieve a sustainable and effective service model and a positive experience and outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. The report will need to explicitly identify these and future implications for disability reform in Western Australia.

(a) A sustainable and effective service model

Evaluation questions relating to this assessment include:

- How flexible has each model been in responding to diversity in participant needs?
- What differences have there been in the management and administration of each trial site and to what extent have differences impacted on the achievement of NDIS objectives?

- How has each model dealt with issues related to staff attraction and retention? How do staff members perceive working under each model, in terms of personal satisfaction and their assessment that they are providing a worthwhile service?
- How effective has each model been in responding to complaints and grievances?
- How effective and useful are the policies and procedures for each model?
- To what extent have the models been able to respond to demand?
- How cost effective is each model?
- What impact has each model had on the viability, diversity and capacity of disability sector organisations in each site and the availability of support for people with disability in each site?

(b) A positive service experience for individuals

Evaluation questions relating to this assessment include:

- To what extent have participants, their families and carers in each site been satisfied with the planning and funding processes used?
- How effective has the coordination role been in each model, and how satisfied have people with disability, their families and carers been with the support they received?
- To what extent have people with disability in each model been able to access mainstream services, and how satisfied have they been with that process?
- To what extent have people with disability perceived that they are more included in the community as a consequence of each model?
- To what extent does each model offer a positive experience for participants who have not previously been accessing disability services?

(c) Outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers

The final evaluation report will synthesise the above information, in combination with policy analysis, to assess:

- the extent to which each model enhanced the target group's access to reasonable and necessary supports and services
- the extent to which each model contributed to equity and fairness for people with disability, with particular reference to funding processes
- the effectiveness of each model in managing the interface between specialist disability services and mainstream services for the benefit of people with disability
- the extent to which each model enabled participants to achieve positive outcomes
- whether either model worked particularly well (or less well), for some groups of people (e.g. children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with cognitive disability)
- the extent to which each model enhanced choice and control for participants.
- the extent to which there has been an appropriate balance between choice and control, and safeguards, for vulnerable people in each site
- the extent to which informal supports for people with disability have been enhanced by each service model

- whether there have there been any other changes, including unintended changes, in the lives of people with a disability as a result of each model
- the most significant differences in outcomes and experience for people with disability in each trial site (taking into account the different transition processes occurring in each site)
- the extent to which each model has enhanced the supports and services available for supporting families and carers
- the extent to which each model increased/decreased the workload for families and carers.

(d) Implications for future disability reform in Western Australia

Elements covered in this analysis would be:

- the financial sustainability of each model
- whether each model could be effectively scaled to a state-wide service
- the effectiveness and efficiency of each model
- the experience and outcomes achieved by people with disability in each model
- the degree to which each model promotes individual choice for people with disability, while at the same time providing appropriate safeguards for vulnerable individuals
- the extent to which each model promotes the retention and/or expansion of the informal support networks available for participants
- the extent to which each model promotes the on-going engagement and contribution of mainstream supports and services in the lives of participants
- the diversity of people with disability who access each model
- the extent to which each model responds appropriately to diversity in the Western Australian population
- the impact of each model on specialist disability support providers and mainstream providers
- the relevance of each model to state and national policy directions in human services provision.

5. Method

It is anticipated that a range of methods will be used to collect the information needed for the evaluation. This would be preceded by the successful respondent developing an evaluation framework which would include a program logic model.

The Joint Steering Committee, with the input of the successful respondent, will develop an appropriate data protocol to manage the exchange and use of State and Commonwealth data for the purposes of the evaluation.

The DSC contract manager will assist the successful respondent in obtaining regular information about the progress of the national evaluation, and align information gathering with the national approach wherever relevant.

The methods to be used by the successful respondent might reasonably be expected to include the following, or some equivalent approach, as a minimum:

- a series of qualitative interviews with service users to assess their experience and outcomes over time within each model
- observation and analysis of planning and funding processes in each trial site
- analysis of policy and procedural documents
- interviews with planners and Local Area Coordinators/My Way Coordinators in each trial site
- surveys or interviews with disability service organisations and mainstream service organisations in each trial site
- interviews with stakeholders and senior policy makers.

It is expected that the successful respondent would undertake some form of scenario development process to assist in examining implications for disability services reform in Western Australia and nationally.

The above methods might be modified following negotiations between the successful respondent and the DSC after Contract Award.

6. Process and governance

The process will be overseen by the Joint Steering Committee.

The Joint Steering Committee may nominate a working party to assist in the overview of the evaluation process on its behalf.

The tender process and day-to-day management of the project will be undertaken by the West Australian Disability Services Commission. For the purposes of good evaluation practice and probity, the contract manager will ensure the supervision and administration of the evaluation is kept separate from the DSC's operational activities related to the trial site models.

7. Timeline

The dates of major project milestones are as follows:

- development of tender, tender process, selection of consultants: **December 2013 to May 2014**
- consultants commence: **June 2014**
- interim report: **December 2015**
- final report: **August 2016**
- final presentation to Joint Steering Committee (if required): **August 2016.**

8. Progress reporting

Interim milestone and reporting formats will be developed in conjunction with the successful respondent and is likely to include a fixed number of progress reports.

9. Other regular meetings

The successful respondent will be required to attend meetings as agreed between them and the contract manager.

10. Key Performance Indicators for the conduct of the evaluation project

- Provision of the interim report within the required timeframe that meets the satisfaction of the Joint Steering Committee.
- Provision of the final report within the required timeframe that meets the satisfaction of the Joint Steering Committee.
- The conduct of all interviews, surveys, data collection and analysis in a professional, efficient, appropriately sensitive and cost-effective manner as deemed by the DSC contract manager and the Joint Steering Committee.

Due to the importance of the services required, the DSC reserves the right to terminate the Contract should the contractor fail to meet any of the above KPIs.

Guidelines for the conduct of any contractor personnel assigned to this Contract will be provided by the DSC upon Contract Award.

11. Deliverables

1. An interim report which will include: identification of any formative issues which should be considered in the implementation of trials; summary and interpretation of data collected for the first twelve months of each trial site; initial identification of policy issues relevant to the development of future disability services reform in Western Australia and nationally.
2. A final report which will include: the methodological and evidentiary basis for findings; a response to the Terms of Reference in section four above; and an executive summary identifying key findings.
3. A presentation, if required, to the Joint Steering Committee which will include: a brief summary of key findings; and an analysis of the potential policy implications of the study.

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