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care

Sunshine Coast Working Group

Submission to the Joint
Standing Committee on
the National Disability
Insurance Scheme

Submission to
NDIS Joint Standing
Commission

29 January 2016

SUBMISSION PREPARED BY A WORKING GROUP WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

- Sunshine Coast Region, Australian Institute of Architects
- Coast2Bay Housing Company
- Multicap
- Open Minds
- Steps Group Australia
- Sunshine Coast Access and Advisory Network
- Sundale
- Churches of Christ Care

PURPOSE:

- This submission is made by the community of the Sunshine Coast to advocate that the NDIS consider and develop responses to the following elements to facilitate successful delivery of the NDIS:
 - Consideration of regional differences in service delivery;
 - Development of a centralised data system;
 - Universal design requirements;
 - The re-implementation of NRAS;
 - Provision of tenancy support services;
 - Consideration into the provision of supported care; and
 - Provision of emergency accommodation for persons with a disability.

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Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a new way of providing support for people with permanent and significant disability. Under the NDIS, eligible people will have choice to access supports related to their disability. Service providers will have an agreement with the person with a disability who is purchasing their services. It is believed that the NDIS will create a more competitive market.

The community of the Sunshine Coast would like to advocate that the NDIS consider and develop responses to the following elements to facilitate successful delivery of the NDIS:

1. Consideration of regional differences in service delivery;
2. Development of a centralised data system;
3. Universal design requirements;
4. The re-implementation of NRAS;
5. Provision of tenancy support services;
6. Consideration into the provision of supported care; and
7. Provision of emergency accommodation for persons with a disability.

While the housing plan for the NDIS has not yet been released, the indications are that the NDIS will provide referrals to services such as health, public housing, public transport and mainstream education and employment services. It is likely that housing for NDIS participants will be a responsibility of States and governments' affordable and public housing strategies with most participants needing to access housing in the private market or through social housing. This is a segment that is currently under enormous strain due to high levels of demand and low levels of provision.

We believe that access to suitable housing is a fundamental requirement for all members of our community. It is imperative that housing for people with disability is accessible and located in areas with access to services and facilities. This should include transport as well as support networks.

Regional Differences

Regional differences need to be considered in relation to the rollout of NDIS. The provision of disability services in regional areas provides greater challenges than in urban centres due to issues related to geography, access, distribution of service providers, settlement patterns, transport and limited competition.

The 2011 Census reported 5% of the population of Sunshine Coast were classified as having a profound or severe limitation in one or more of the core-activities with a need for assistance. This is an increase from 4.2% which equates to over 3,000 people since the 2006 Census.

Many of the Localities of Interest identified with the highest levels of disability have limited access to goods and services, transport, service provision and facilities. Examples include:

- Golden Beach
- Currimundi
- Sippy Downs
- Mapleton
- Bli Bli
- Wurtulla

Centralised Data System

It is necessary to understand the quantum and demand for services in responding to opportunities presented by the NDIS and when planning for provision of disability services. There is currently no centralised system for collection of this data. This need is further compounded as the eligibility criteria for the NDIS are a subset of the disability cohort as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This makes planning for service provision less accurate and subject to untested assumptions. To understand the dynamics within our community and to effectively plan and fund for delivery, a centralised data system is required.

Housing Analysis and Data

Identifying the housing needs and criteria for people with disability is imperative to ensure future housing is suitable and located within access to support and transport services. Funding through the NDIS could be considered to assist in identifying such criteria. Any study should be focused on identifying the locational criteria and the design preferences for people with disability.

Universal Design

We strongly support Liveable Housing Australia's goal of championing the adoption, by 2020, of a Silver rating for accessibility in the construction of all new homes. We further support the recommendation that the Gold rating be incorporated into the construction of all new social and community housing. We believe that including key liveable housing design features in the construction of all new dwellings promotes equity by increasing the provision of safer, more comfortable and easier to access homes for everybody, every day, at all stages of life and further aligns with a number of government priorities and will also assist to achieve other broad social policies including ageing in place and the reduction of accidents and injuries.

By mandating these requirements into the Building Code it will increase the supply of suitable housing and also makes economic sense. This is because the cost of building to universal design upfront is 22 times more efficient than retrofitting when an unplanned need arises (Livable Housing Australia 2015).

NRAS

The delivery of the federal government NRAS program resulted in a substantial increase in the provision of affordable housing. On the Sunshine Coast, a number of these homes that were provided as part of NRAS were designed for people with a disability. This resulted in a positive impact on the supply for housing for persons with a disability who were not eligible for social housing but were still at significant risk. The other significant benefit of NRAS was that disability housing was integrated into mixed-tenure, market housing. Residents with a disability were not visibly separated from the housing market thereby reducing stigma associated with specialised disability housing options.

It is likely that the NDIS will stimulate housing demand as more people will seek to live independently. Most of this demand will be for rental properties due to income profiles. The re-instatement of NRAS would assist this group in accessing appropriate, affordable and integrated housing.

Emergency Accommodation

The provision of emergency accommodation is an important element of housing provision. It assists people in immediate need. The use of emergency accommodation is a stop gap for people before finding a more permanent solution to their housing requirements. The specific provision of emergency accommodation that is suitable for people with disability is required. There is currently a deficit of any emergency accommodation that is available to cater for people with disability. The investment in purposely built emergency accommodation for people with disability needs to be considered.

Tenancy Support

The provision of tenancy support can assist tenants to build tenancy management skills, meet their tenancy obligations, maintain a connection to community and link the tenant with any other more specialised support services that may be required. Ultimately supports engaged throughout a tenancy, has demonstrated an increase in the likelihood of that tenancy being sustained. These services are crucial and are not usually identified as a cost of service provision.