



Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Seniors
Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland

Our reference: DSSNQ/17/00468

1 William Street Brisbane 4000
GPO Box 806 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7170
Email
disabilityandseniors@ministerial.qld.gov.au
northqueensland@ministerial.qld.gov.au

29 MAR 2017

Ms Angela MacRae
Mr Richard Spencer
Commissioners
Review of NDIS Costs
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2600

Dear Commissioners MacRae and Spencer

I refer to the 2017 Productivity Commission inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Costs and the issues paper the Commission has released to assist individuals and organisations to prepare submissions.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly address some of the issues raised, specifically:

- the preservation of the scheme's intent and scope
- governance as the key mechanism for States to be effective stewards in partnership with the Commonwealth, and
- interface with mainstream services.

Preservation of the scheme's intent and scope

Queensland strongly supports the NDIS retaining its original intent and scope as described in pages 3-5 of the issues paper.

People with disability, their carers, family and friends have been eagerly waiting for the NDIS because for too long there has been inadequate support to live the best lives they can. Previous disability systems have failed these people.

The Productivity Commission found that the NDIS is also important from an economic perspective. This is through the creation of tens of thousands of jobs in the disability sector which, coupled with greater support allows people with disability, their carers and families to enter employment and make a greater economic contribution.

Governance and DisabilityCare Australia Fund (DCAF)

At full scheme the Queensland Government will contribute \$2.03 billion per year to the NDIS in Queensland, just over half of the total costs of \$4 billion for Queensland. Governance mechanisms allow for Queensland to be involved in key decisions about how the scheme should operate.

For more than a year, the Commonwealth has tried to tie the provision of DCAF funding with States' role in governance or with an increased risk for the scheme. What has been proposed by the Commonwealth is that States concede their governance role in order to accept DCAF funding on a proportional basis, or increase their risk for full access to DCAF. Queensland has openly rejected any option to tie access to DCAF with changes to governance or risk.

The DCAF arrangements and governance mechanisms are the foundations of the scheme. All governments negotiated and agreed these based on many complex factors. Queensland specifically considered its unique characteristics, including the decentralised nature of its population, and high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Any changes to either governance or risk that are tied to access to DCAF would escalate risk to the scheme, given that all policy and budget preparations are based on the existing arrangements.

Interface with mainstream services

Feedback from stakeholders and individuals indicate that the interface with mainstream services can often be confusing for all parties. My Queensland Disability Advisory Council has advised me in particular about concerns with the interface with health, mental health and education systems, and the limited information available to clarify this issue.

I look forward to the release of the Position Paper in May 2017 and providing detailed feedback on the proposals put forward at that time. In the mean-time I understand you are speaking directly to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and I trust they will provide you with any Queensland specific information required.

If you require any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Carolyn Nicholas, Chief of Staff in my Office on 07 3719 7170.

Yours sincerely

Coralee O'Rourke MP
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Seniors
Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland