

Community Transport Organisation Submission to Productivity Commission Position Paper on National Disability Insurance Scheme Costs (June 2017)

Community Transport Organisation (CTO) is pleased to comment on the Productivity Commission position paper (June 2017) on National Disability Insurance Scheme Costs.

CTO is the peak body for community transport in New South Wales, representing and advocating on behalf of the community transport sector. In its advisory and consultative role CTO aim to ensure sustainability of sector services to vulnerable communities.

The Productivity Commission position paper raises important issues impacting access to specialist transport services, essential to maintaining objectives of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

CTO support the position paper key points and findings that cover Scheme complexity and rollout rate that result in poor outcomes and confusion for participants. CTO reiterate the need to improve processes and policy for:

- Strategic understanding of vital transport needs to access identified supports
- Plans that acknowledge transport as fundamental to achieving necessary and reasonable supports
- Considered approach to principles of costing transport for all participants

Currently, transport components and costings within participant plans are developed on little understood principles, and applied arbitrarily.

CTO are aware of factors that present as cost effective options but more likely reduce long term market choice. The rapid market shift evidences competitive practices that expose both unsustainable undercut pricing and reduced service quality. Business pressures for high needs transport providers in a thinning market will result in unviability of many existing specialist services, ultimately reducing choice for the most vulnerable.

The thinning market particularly lets down NDIS users living in rural and remote locations. Not only is choice of provider limited due to population dispersal, an inverse challenge results from the need to travel greater distance and take more time. For services costed by time and distance, transport presents as a financial burden to the NDIS.

CTO is well placed to propose a working party and research partnership to explore and identify effective levels of reasonable support for clients that are underpinned by transport solutions encompassing

- Cost
- Quality
- Support needs
- Regional and remote factors
- Cost shifting across Government jurisdictions

Please contact Dianne Hallett, CEO for further information.