

QASEL RESPONSE TO  
THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION POSITION PAPER ON THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE  
SCHEME (NDIS) COSTS



QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERS.INC (QASEL)

QASEL is the peak professional association for Special Educators in Queensland. The QASEL Executive, Management Committee and State Council is representative of members across the seven education Queensland regions, in rural, remote and regional and metropolitan locations.

School leaders across Queensland are responsible for the educational and social outcomes for students with disability in our state Special Schools and Special Education programs and those students who are fully included in education programs in our schools.

QASEL welcomes the opportunity to respond through this written response to the Productivity Commission position paper on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) costs. This response will provide statements and responses where appropriate regarding relevant points for the schooling sector and then where appropriate, make recommendations on behalf of QASEL members.

**QASEL STATEMENTS/RESPONSES/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL LEADERS WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY AND THEIR FAMILIES/CARERS FROM DIAGNOSIS/EARLY YEARS TO SCHOOL LEAVING AGE:**

The legislation guiding the implementation of the NDIS should not be a 'one size fits all' for all states and territories. The formulation of guiding practices and policies relevant to the unique nature of each jurisdiction is required to ensure transparent, consistent and equitable costs to the scheme/users.

Within a geographically and demographically diverse state like Queensland, it has become evident during the rollout of the NDIS that flexibility in application of the scheme to cater for differences in e.g. socio economic circumstances of both a locality and a person with disability are highly desirable. In an inclusive model for people with a disability a more individual person-centred support approach is needed. The formulation of a scaffolding policy/framework focussing upon the individual person with a disability, their individual needs and location across the 'life' span of the NDIS is desirable, not necessarily only the existing legislation as a framework.

It will be worth the investment costs that a 'local solution' for each jurisdiction will provide. The ability to utilise flexible approaches has at its' centre the best possible lifelong outcomes for the person with a disability.

The Local Area Coordinator (LAC) employed by the NDIA to liaise with the individual and their families should be well prepared for the role. A trained and knowledgeable LAC with the expertise across the full range of disabilities is highly desirable. LACs should be supported by those with expertise in planning for the life of the person with disability. These persons should

be qualified and/or certificated to undertake this critical life planning with the person with disability and their families/ carers.

There are a number of mixed messages in the disability community, about the implementation of the NDIS, details as to what is covered by the scheme for the person with disability and therefore a lack of ability to predict certainty. The private/NGO providers are numerous and eclectic in their provisions of services and consequently there is a lack of transparency in costs to the NDIS and the individual for whom the plan is provided. The providers and the recipients need certainty in costs and revenue and transparent pricing.

Providers should need to follow a set pricing framework and make clear during the development of individualised plans for the persons with disability, what exactly is to be provided for the cost/s.

At NDIA and jurisdiction levels there needs to be dialogue and subsequent agreements made to promote the development of such a pricing/costs framework which should be a priority.

Young school leavers and also adults with disability throughout their lives should where necessary/possible, have access with the support of the NDIS to suitable accommodation options, individualised in relation to need and independence capabilities.

QASEL members are concerned that current highly valued programs and systems in Queensland are at risk as the NDIS is fully rolled out e.g. Early intervention services to families and children with disability from early diagnosis, provided through Early Childhood Development Programs (ECDPs) across the state.

These programs are invaluable in providing 'wrap around' services to families/carers of children with a disability to prepare them for formal education at school age. The Queensland Government is committed to the continuing provision of ECDPs, due to the high regard for the disability knowledge and support provided to families/carers in order to prepare these little people for their formal school journeys, at this stage until 2020. This is an education budget funded program.

Also student transport to specialist programs/provisions has historically been provided from government funding and families of students with disability are reassured by the Queensland Government that this will continue until 2019. These are examples of programs that Queensland families value and currently have 'end dates' due to the impending full implementation of the NDIS. These are also examples of programs working well, are highly regarded and that are individualised to meet the needs of persons with disability and therefore there should be a way/process to ensure their maintenance in this jurisdiction. The costs associated with these programs could be distributed through the NDIS to ensure their efficacy and continuance.

QASEL thanks the Productivity Commission for the opportunity to provide these responses with regard to costs in relation to the implementation of the NDIS.

QASEL members trust that these brief responses will provide the Commission with information which the QASEL President (contact details below) would be available and willing to elaborate upon.

**Roselynn Anderson President**

**Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders July 2017**