

15 August 2022

Commissioners Catherine de Fontenay and Paul Lindwall
Productivity Commission inquiry into Aged Care Employment
By email: agedcareemployment@pc.gov.au

Dear Commissioners

I write to address the content of HireUp's supplementary submission, intended in their words to "correct some factual errors about HireUp" in Mable's submission. There are a number of arguments in their supplementary submission that are unclear and questions remain unanswered. It is in the public interest that all parties are transparent with their business models to best assist the Commission in its work.

Firstly, while HireUp acknowledge that "in early 2021, it briefly piloted a support coordination program using contracted coordinator," this does not explain a program launched in early 2022 enabling sole traders to offer "(NDIS) Support Coordination" and "Support Partnership" services via HireUp. Support Partnerships is "a service created by HireUp" offered by "trusted support professionals".

I have included below screenshots from HireUp's website on 9 March 2022 that promote "Be your own boss and earn more per hour" with requirements of an ABN and evidence of insurance, which clearly means these individuals are sole traders not employees. There is no explanation for why these pages suddenly disappeared shortly after they were referenced in our original submission.

Further HireUp in its supplementary submission attempts to thread the needle by implying that it is suitable to be a sole trader for certain services but not others, linking this to whether someone is "providing hands-on disability support work."

The implied argument means either:

- a) Support coordination or support partnerships is not hands on and therefore presents less risk and as such can be entrusted to sole traders, when in fact, one should argue that support coordination is critically important and failure to deliver quality support coordination is high risk for NDIS participants in terms of outcomes; or
- b) Support coordination and support partnerships services are delivered by "professionals" so sole traders should be permitted, but other "hands-on disability support work" is not professional, which undervalues and undermines the important role of disability support workers and the diverse roles in the sector.

I welcome HireUps acknowledgement of sole traders as "trusted support professionals". I also welcome HireUp's interest in expanding their business model as a demonstration of how mixed-models have a role in improving outcomes for both support providers and clients.

Secondly, it is well understood that HireUp is a registered disability provider. However, HireUp's supplementary response does not explain whether they require minimum qualifications and if and how they check qualifications of support workers as a registered provider, nor does it explain or contradict the testimony given by their Head of Service in the Aged Care Royal Commission, repeated here for convenience:

“MR GRAY QC: Sorry, I’ll come to that in a minute, but firstly, can I ask what are the steps HireUp takes, if any, to ensure that a worker offering to perform services in a particular category is an appropriate person to be providing services in that category? Is there some form of checking of their qualifications or anything of that kind?”

MS TIMMINS: No, we don’t check qualifications. We do collect those and then the person with a disability, if they have a requirement for a specific qualification for them individually, they can check those with the support worker”¹

Unlike Mable, and based on their own evidence, HireUp appears not to require qualifications for personal care services, nor have they explained how they check qualifications so participants are not left entirely with this responsibility. If they have a verification policy like Mable's that explains how they, as an NDIS Registered Provider, check qualifications for all their employed workers, then it would have been helpful if this had been clearly communicated and provided in their supplementary submission.

I note HireUp's comments regarding registered providers. Agency managed participants are required to use registered providers and cannot directly access the Mable platform. Mable does not purport to be a registered provider. However, more than 80 per cent of NDIS participants choose to self and plan manage and have the choice and control to engage unregistered providers. This is considered fundamental to the rights that underpin the NDIS. To suggest that NDIS participants don't have the capacity to make informed choices undermines the human rights and choice and control of people with disabilities.

HireUp's supplementary submission selectively quotes other submissions. There are obviously diverse views among the many submissions.

Finally, at no time do HireUp refer to the voice of the client or worker to support their claims. This is deeply regrettable as the NDIS is meant to be about participants taking control over their supports to live a good life. What it is not meant to be, is a traditional provider saying they know what is best for participants and people who provide support. This behaviour is why the NDIS was created in the first place.

By embracing human rights, individualised funding and choice and control, the NDIS and Consumer Directed Care in home care necessarily causes the market for services to evolve. If we are to improve disability and aged care outcomes and attract the diverse people and services needed in communities around Australia that will enable everyone to live independently, with dignity and choice, and be included in their community, then the entry of small businesses and sole traders

¹ ACRC testimony P-8869 and p-8879

should be embraced - whether they choose to offer services directly or via a marketplace platform. We should resist a one size fits all solution where providers or union representatives make decisions about what is best for people and what safeguards are needed. In this new consumer-led and community-led marketplace, there is an important role for safeguards for consumers and workers, and a contemporary, risk proportionate approach to regulation that supports rather than inhibits choice and control.

While vested interests raise concerns over quality and risk of new models of support, it is rarely based on any evidence. Mable on the other hand has provided or referenced evidence of the improved outcomes being enabled by diverse support models. Mable focuses on improving outcomes for people who provide support as well as people who offer support. Fundamentally, we ought to support the human rights of choice and control for people with a disability and older Australians along with recognising the importance of safeguards and protections for all parties in support relationships.

Yours sincerely

Peter Scutt

Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder
Mable Technologies Pty Ltd

Screenshots from 9 March 2022:

To provide professional support coordination services on Hireup **you must have at least 2 years paid experience as a Support Coordinator**. To provide professional support partner services on Hireup you will need at least 2 years experience in a similar role in the disability sector.

<https://hireup.com.au/become-a-support-professional>

[Join Hireup as a support coordinator or partner](#)



About featured snippets • Feedback

Natalie and Eddie: Can I get funded for art therapy?

Learn how a support partner helped Natalie apply for funding for art therapy.

[Read Natalie and Eddie's story](#)



Support partnership

The starting hourly rate for support partner services is \$60.00.

The client pays \$60.00, you get **\$38.18 plus superannuation**.

Julia and Simon: Can I pay for a school holiday camp using my NDIS funding?

Find out how Julia, Simon's mother, used our services to help understand how to better use Simon's funding to book a school holiday camp, giving him the opportunity to develop his independence and social skills out in the community.

[Read Julia and Simon's story](#)

The services you can provide on Hireup



Support Coordination

Work with NDIS participants across Australia who have been funded for support connection and support coordination.

[Learn more about support coordination](#)



Support Partnerships

Support partnership is a service created by Hireup to connect clients who don't have funding for support coordination directly with trusted support professionals.

[Learn more about support partnership](#)

How it works

1. Register

Setting up is quick and easy. Create a profile and give potential clients insight into your work, such as your skills and experience.

2. Get approved

Hireup is committed to keeping everyone in our community safe. To assist the verification process you will need to provide a few documents so we can verify you and your business.

3. Do what you love ♥

You're off! Hireup will take care of the admin so you can focus on providing support.

Pay rates

The client agrees the rate directly with you, and you receive the agreed rate less 30%. The rates below exclude superannuation, which Hireup pays to all independent professionals.



Support coordination

The starting hourly rate for support coordination services is \$70.00.

The client pays \$70.00, you get **\$44.55 plus superannuation.**



Support partnership

The starting hourly rate for support partner services is \$60.00.

The client pays \$60.00, you get **\$38.18 plus superannuation.**

Ready to join Hireup?

Be your own boss and earn more per hour supporting people with disability across Australia.

[Get started](#)

What do you need to register?

To register to provide professional support services on Hireup you must comply with the following requirements:

Australian Business Number (ABN) ^

Support professionals run their own business. This means you'll need a valid ABN and the right to work in Australia to provide support services on Hireup. [Getting an ABN is free.](#)

Certificate of Insurance (COI) ^

A Certificate of Insurance is a document issued by an insurance company or broker and verifies the existence of an insurance policy. Support professionals running their own support businesses on Hireup will need:

- public liability insurance providing coverage of an amount per event of at least \$10,000,000; **and**
- professional indemnity insurance providing coverage of an amount per event of at least \$2,000,00

If you're registering to provide professional support services on Hireup, you will be required to provide your Certificate of Insurance.