

About New England HACC Development

New England HACC Development (NEHDI) is a small community-based organisation employing four permanent staff members and operating across a large and diverse geographic area. Our organisation provides support, resources, and training to community care service providers. Our mission is to improve outcomes for clients and to improve the sector.

This Submission

As a rurally based development organisation NEHDI has a particular interest in rural and remote service provision and this will be the focus of this submission. In 2007 our organisation was contracted by DADHC to conduct a research study entitled Effective Service Provision in Rural and Remote Areas. The study involved a comprehensive Literature Review, two surveys, a Discussion Paper, responses to the Discussion Paper and a wide range of consultations and individual interviews. The project was completed in 2008 and the final report accepted by the funding body. Unfortunately the Final Report has not been released. Attached with this submission is the Discussion Paper.

Since the COAG announcement of the proposed changes to Community Care our staff have consulted widely with the sector in our area. The outcomes of these consultations align closely with and reinforce the Findings from the Research Study: rural and remote service provision has fundamental differences to service provision in metropolitan areas and needs to be funded and administered accordingly.

Our primary concern about the forthcoming changes at this stage is the lack of certainty and direction for service providers. Unless this is resolved in a timely manner retention and recruitment of quality staff will become an enormous issue for the sector.

Other issues include:

- Service providers believe that there needs to be base funding to cover indirect service costs such as rent etc and that output based funding should be additional
- That service funding should be based on need and demand not on historical factors
- That there is a need for viability funding to deal with unexpected events and occurrences. This is particularly needed under the current arrangements where any unspent funds are recouped by DADHC
- That the sector would benefit from the removal of silos and conflicting guidelines – particularly at the HACC/Commonwealth packaged care interface
- That there is a need for flexible funding within rural and remote Multi Service Outlets as opposed to the current system which locks providers into set output targets
- That rural areas want to look after their own communities and support the maintenance of local community based committees
- That funding levels across all service types should enable the provider to waive fees where clients have an inability to pay
- That transport services should be funded to pick up eligible clients along designated routes rather than to service a particular community.

We look forward to seeing the outcomes of this study and hope to participate further.