

7 August 2018

The Hon. Greg Donnelly, MLC
Chair
Portfolio Committee No.2 – Health and Community Services
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By email: portfoliocommittee2@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Re: Inquiry into the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the provision of disability services in New South Wales

Dear Mr Donnelly,

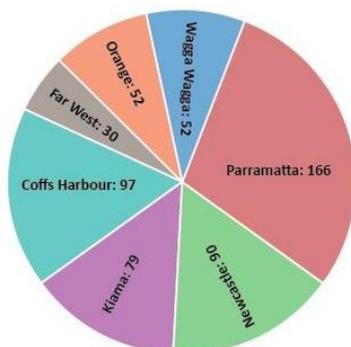
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this inquiry.

As the peak body for health and community services in NSW, the NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) works with and for people experiencing poverty and disadvantage in NSW to make positive change in our communities. For over 80 years we have supported the sector to deliver crucial services that make a difference.

This submission makes brief comment on the importance of an inclusive service system, which will decrease pressure on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). In relation to the inquiry's other Terms of Reference, we endorse the comments and recommendations of our member People With Disability Australia.

The rollout of the NDIS in NSW coincides with the closure of the Department of Ageing Disability and Homecare (ADHC). In addition to direct service provision, ADHC also took on the responsibility of mainstream service systems that had been unable to provide the support required by people with complex disability. While the responsibility for specialist disability services provided by ADHC has transferred to the NDIS, the responsibility for mainstream services will need to be shared by Departments across the NSW Government.

In 2017, NCOSS conducted consultations with around 570 people at 6 regional locations across NSW. At each consultation, we asked our members and stakeholders about priority areas including disability, to gain insights into regional challenges and solutions.



The challenges experienced by people with disability in terms of accessing mainstream services was a consistent theme of the consultations, and this feedback was incorporated into our report [What we heard: Insights and actions from NCOSS community consultations 2017](#).

In response to this, we held in-depth roundtables with our members in both disability and non-disability sectors to gain insights into:

- the challenges faced by key areas of Government due to ADHC's closure;
- the impact of these challenges on people with disability; and
- recommendations for Government to address the impact of these challenges.

The insights gained from these consultations were compiled into a report entitled [Way forward to inclusive service system: Challenges for people with disability with closure of ADHC](#), released in April 2018.

We enclose the report for your consideration, and bring your attention particularly to the Appendix on page 37. During the consultations, our members emphasised ways in which the NDIS has failed to meet the needs of people supported by their services. These issues are presented in the Appendix of the report in order to inform emerging policy and identify areas in need of adjustment.

Since the report's release, we have been heartened to see Government action on the issues identified in it. For example, we welcome the 2018-19 State Budget announcement of an additional \$4.7 million funding per annum to create three specialist hubs with expertise in intellectual disability health services.

While some challenges have been addressed, more work needs to be done to ensure the NSW service system is inclusive of and responsive to all people with disability, in line with the *Inclusion Act 2014*. Failure to maintain an inclusive service system will increase pressure on disability services and the NDIS, exacerbating the issues highlighted in this inquiry.

This report also highlights the crucial work of independent disability advocacy, information and representation organisations across all areas of Government. While we commend the Government on its recent commitment to two years of additional funding to these organisations,¹ ongoing funding is needed to ensure people with disability have assistance to navigate mainstream systems, and that these mainstream systems continue to become more accessible and inclusive. Advocacy organisations provide the NSW Government with crucial partners in the implementation of its responsibilities to people with disability under the *Inclusion Act 2013*.

If you require further information in relation to our response, please contact Ya'el Frisch, Project Officer Advocacy on 02 8960 7908 or yael@ncoss.org.au.

Yours sincerely



¹ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/the-premier/media-releases-from-the-premier/up-to-26-million-for-advocacy-groups/>

Melanie Fernandez
Acting Chief Executive Officer