

## NSW DISABILITY NETWORK FORUM

This Update is designed to provide information on the activities of the NSW Disability Network Forum (DNF). Updates are produced regularly after scheduled DNF meetings. Contact the DNF through the NCOSS secretariat at the contact details listed below.

### November

#### **NSW Housing Overview and Issues going forward – Adam Farrar, Shelter NSW**

Adam Farrar (Shelter NSW, NCOSS Board member and member of the Social and Affordable Housing Fund Expert Advisory Panel) presented a broad brush overview of the state of the housing environment in NSW, the issues, challenges, and potentially important developments moving forward. The chronic undersupply of social housing, and the polarising effect of the congregation of social housing was discussed. In terms of the NDIS and Housing the following points were noted in the discussion:

- Nationally there is an 80-122,000 unit shortfall in affordable housing projected for NDIS participants.
- The NDIS is still likely to be relevant to housing in that it is intended to fund modifications, renovations and retrofitting, as well as meeting the costs of purpose built dwellings required for those with very specialised needs. This is expected to be in the region of 28,000 dwellings, funded via the user-cost of capital, rather than direct coverage of construction cost.
- The NDIS will fund the annual per-person cost of the raising of the capital required for the dwelling, being broadly equivalent to covering the rent that the individual might pay to cover the mortgage and other costs of the dwelling. This is intended only to be for very specialised, high-needs individuals, though there is some need yet to clarify exactly where the boundaries of high-needs are set.

#### **Independent Information Representation and Advocacy Campaign**

The DNF discussed the current progress of the proposal for a NSW Disability Inclusion Fund—a key plank in ensuring the ongoing inclusion and representation of people with disability in NSW. The Fund is aimed at resourcing projects that benefit the NSW population of people with disability but fall outside the scope of the NDIS. This may mean creating greater inclusion in educational environments and more responsive health services for instance. Discussions about the Fund are being held with key NSW decision makers. [More information about the Fund can be here found in the NCOSS Pre-Budget submission.](#)

### December

#### **DNF Housing Event**

On 2 December 2015, the DNF held a forum “Beyond Accommodation; Housing that works for people with disability” to explore how, with the right support, people with disability can have choice and control in relation to housing.

The forum was attended by over 80 people across the NSW and Federal Government, as well as from housing and disability organisations.

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The event aimed to highlight the DNF's vision of safe, secure, affordable and accessible housing, independent of disability support, which should be the primary focus for the developments taking place in relation to housing and disability.

Speakers at the event showed that with the right support, people with disability can access an array of housing options that will give them real choice and control in their lives. Four people, each with significant disability, spoke powerfully about their homes in the community, and what made it work for them. They emphasised security and well-being where they were, in the words of one speaker, "the boss". Enablers of this autonomy, choice and control included proximity to transport and relationships in community, which are at least as important as person centred paid support.

The personal experiences were complimented by speakers discussing the context of housing policy and the research discussing people with disability successfully transitioning to living in the community. To end the day, one service's story of devolution to person centred support was shared, providing a best practice example for others to follow.

Attendees reported that they benefited from the opportunity to expand their networks and hear from people with disability about what is important to them in housing.

### About the NSW Disability Network Forum

The NSW Disability Network Forum comprises non-government, non-provider peak representative, advocacy and information groups whose primary purpose is to promote the interests of people with disability. The aim of the DNF is to build capacity so that the interests of people with disability are advanced through policy and systemic advocacy.

### NSW Disability Network Forum Member Organisations:

Aboriginal Disability Network NSW  
Association of Blind Citizens of NSW  
Brain Injury Association NSW  
Deaf Australia NSW  
Deaf Society of NSW  
DeafBlind Association NSW  
Deafness Council (NSW)  
Information on Disability and Education  
Awareness Services  
Institute For Family Advocacy  
Intellectual Disability Rights Service

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW  
NSW Consumer Advisory Group - Mental Health  
NSW Council for Intellectual Disability  
NSW Disability Advocacy Network  
People with Disability Australia  
Physical Disability Council of NSW  
Positive Life NSW  
Self Advocacy Sydney  
Side By Side Advocacy Incorporated  
Council of Social Service of NSW