



ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 20 FEBRUARY 2019

9.1 NDIS STATUS UPDATE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: TONY KEENAN, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide councillors with a status update on the issues, impacts and responses of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) program and how the City of Port Phillip is assisting our community to transition with care.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Council was briefed last year about the National Disability Insurance Scheme which is the biggest social reform since Medicare. On 6 December 2017, Council endorsed officer recommendations that we would not register as an NDIS provider and Council would transition clients with care as a mark of its commitment to City of Port Phillip residents who have disabilities. Council would be informed of progress.
- 2.2 The NDIS and the State Government response to its roll out have both modified over time as learning is harnessed.
- 2.3 The report on 4 July 2018 updated Council on the work done nationally and locally to respond to concerns as the Scheme rolls out, including work done by Council officers in relation to the NDIS transition.
- 2.4 This report provides the requested bi-annual status update and an update on the evidence regarding complexities for those with psychosocial disabilities in accessing NDIS and what is being done to mitigate the difficulties for this cohort. This includes having plans that meet their 'reasonable and necessary' needs.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes this report.
- 3.2 Will receive a further and final report after the close out period of the NDIS transition, ending on 30 September 2019.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The City of Port Phillip continues to engage in a range of measures to maximise the outcomes of the NDIS for our local eligible residents, not just existing clients of the Council. The State Government has confirmed that its Home and Community Care funding for people under 65 years who will not be eligible for NDIS packages will continue, although further details remain unknown at this time.



The City of Port Phillip continues to provide direct services to existing and new clients under 65 years of age who are not eligible for NDIS.

- 4.2 The report on 4 July 2018 informed Council of the measures undertaken to that date to transition existing clients and staff 'with care.' Since that time the following activities have been undertaken:

○ **Port Phillip NDIS Expo**

In order to reduce the risk of market failure for NDIS provision locally, on 19 July 2018, a Port Phillip NDIS Expo was held which introduced over 600 residents to more than 70 service providers with the inclusion of Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

○ **Relationship with Brotherhood of St Laurence - Local Area Coordinator (BSL)**

Officers have worked extensively with the BSL to support people living with disability to transition with care to the NDIS or to find other support services for people who are not eligible.

BSL are now located in City of Port Phillip and have set up their full team, comprising of a Senior Manager, two Senior Local Area Coordinators, a team of Local Area Coordinators, Duty Officer on rotation, staffed reception and a Linkage Coordinator.

Officers have continued to link BSL with local networks and providers which includes the Inner South Rooming House Network, targeting our most vulnerable residents, and with public housing. This joint work is recognised as unique to councils in the region.

4.3 **Transitioning of Council Services**

Home and Community Care (HACC) Clients under 65 years

Over the course of the past 12 months, Council has reviewed all its clients under the age of 65 years. This was a total of 269 clients. This program has involved fully informing potential participants and carers about the criteria for meeting access to the NDIS and how to prepare for the planning meeting to maximise the funding of 'reasonable and necessary' supports.

Initial thinking, as indicated the Council report on 6 December 2017, was that about 25% of the under 65-year-old client cohort would be deemed eligible for the NDIS. The most current data indicates total of 44% of this client cohort have been deemed eligible with many having their plans approved which is much higher than initially anticipated.

There have predictably been some complex and hard to reach residents who have been unable to be contacted by the NDIA to test eligibility. Specific assertive outreach work continues to be done with these residents, some, but not all, of whom are existing clients using Council services, and their case managers (if involved) to support them to engage and test eligibility.

Where there are older carers of younger adults likely to transition to the NDIS we have ensured that the carer element of service provision can continue to receive support by moving them to the Commonwealth Home Support Program. This will ensure carers have funded services in their own right e.g. domestic assistance often identified as a need for older carers in the Victorian Mental Health Carers' Briefing Paper.

These latter two initiatives are also unique approaches for councils in the region.



Community Based Respite, formerly Joint Councils Access for All Abilities (JCAAA)

Council has operated a program to provide respite for clients (JCAAA). As part of the commitment for Council to transition with care, officers conducted an Expression of Interest (EOI) process in April 2018 for potential NDIS registered service providers, interested in running similar programs. This was so that the current participants of these programs can continue to engage in age-appropriate, weekend and holiday group activities. Specific criteria were included in this EOI process to mirror the Department of Health and Human Services Quality Standards and two local service providers were successful. In June 2018 Jewish Care and Bayley House were advised of Council's desire to proceed with transitioning the former JCAAA programs to them. Jewish Care offer the Saturday Night Fever monthly discos and the Holiday Arts program to participants, and Bayley House will offer the Hype and Fresh excursion-based programs.

At the current rate of transition, most participants will have NDIS plans by December 2018. The transition plan has Council running respite programs until the end of January 2019 and then the service provider partners will work with Council officers to run programs during February – April 2019. This will then run independently from May 2019.

Officers have communicated extensively with participants and their families throughout the transition of JCAAA programs. Jewish Care and Bayley House are also wanting to employ the support staff who have been working on these programs as casuals with Council.

Positive responses have been received from participants, carers and supporters, thankful for the continuation of these much-loved programs under the management of Jewish care and Bayley House. At the recent State Government ISO audit of Human Services Standards, the auditor noted this level of support was 'out of the box' and the best she'd seen in the Region.

4.4 Hard to Reach Groups and Access to the NDIS

Mental Health

The issues identified in the last NDIS Report to Council regarding residents who experience psychosocial disability as a result of mental health problems, and access into the NDIS have been responded to nationally by the NDIA. Mental Health Australia published a Report - Optimising Psychosocial Supports in October 2018. This report resulted in the NDIA implementing the following improvements:

- Proposals to amend aspects of the NDIS Price Guide to recognise the distinctive characteristics of psychosocial support services
- A preferred approach to assessing the needs of people with psychosocial disability when planning support packages
- An approach to constructing typical support packages to support need associated with varying levels and duration of psychosocial disability.

A new psychosocial disability pathway has been developed and is being implemented to make it easier and more relevant to gain access and achieve suitable and recovery-focussed plans. Officers are supporting residents with mental health problems to access the NDIS using this new pathway.



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Public and Social Housing Residents

Officers have been actively engaging public and social housing stakeholders to ensure residents have access to information during the NDIS transition period and determining any gaps or services needed for those not eligible. DHHS have recruited a Manager for the South Melbourne Community Capacity Building Project that will assist in tenant engagement for housing estates at Park Towers and Dorcas Street.

Council officers have been facilitating joint working between the BSL and the Inner South Rooming House Network, convened by the Port Phillip Community Group, to resolve issues that rooming house residents may experience in accessing the NDIS, and ways to mitigate these. This includes a Verbal Access Request process that has been put in place by the NDIA to improve access for participants from hard to reach groups.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) has provided an update to the Council's Multi-Faith Network and Multicultural Forum, providing an opportunity for our CALD communities to take up free NDIS information sessions that are culturally specific. Council has also linked ECCV with MI Care (Migrant Care) and plan for any relevant sessions as the need arises.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Community

Council officers and BSL have been engaging in several ways and venues with the local ATSI community, in collaboration with STAR Health to improve knowledge about the NDIS and potential engagement with the Scheme.

4.5 **Local NDIS Participant Outcomes**

FOG Theatre participant story

A parent of a Fog Theatre participant wrote on 5 September 2018 to express her thanks for assistance provided by officers in preparation for his NDIS planning meeting. Permission has been given to include the quote below :

“Thank you so much for all your help. The meeting went really well. Mark attended for the first half hour and was just fantastic. He spoke with a strong, clear voice that amazed not only me but the other 3 in my 'support team'. Mark had quite a lot to say about the importance of Fog and the opportunities he has had already and the potential for more in the future. We all watched Mark's film '3.15 to Brunswick' and the planner seemed very impressed. Mark was so chuffed! I also brought up the ABC audition opportunity and of course our Fanaticus poster boy experience. I emailed all of what you sent to me beforehand so I checked that the lady had received it.”

Outcome: On 23 September Fog Theatre was approved as part of Mark's NDIS self-managed plan.

Case Vignette: Current Home and Community Care Client of Council

Prior to transition, a participant who is now self-managing his NDIS plan, was in receipt of 3 hours per week as a client of Council, as part of the entry-level Home and Community Care Program funded by the State Government. His parent reports the NDIS has been life-changing for them as he has core supports to assist with community access on weekends and support most evenings with showering.



5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders:

In addition to the individual and outreach work with clients, families and residents, Council has continued to actively collaborate with the following new and existing stakeholders:

- Bayside Peninsula NDIS Transition Network
- Multi-Faith Network
- Multicultural Network
- Port Phillip Aged Services Network
- Inner South Family and Friends Carer Support Group
- Inner South Rooming House Network (Port Phillip Community Group)
- Port Phillip Youth Network
- VALID
- ECCV Access and Support Regional Network (new)
- Responding to Diversity Network (new)

NDIS Registered Providers:

We have continued engagement with a variety of local providers including:

- Jewish Care
- Sacred Heath Mission
- Uniting St Kilda 101 Engagement Hub
- Star Health
- Uniting Care Prahran Mission
- JobCo Employment Services Inc.
- Bayley House
- St Kilda Community Housing (new)
- Wominjeka BBQ hosted with the local ATSI community and STAR Health

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The concerns noted in the report on 4 July 2018 about the ability of those with serious mental health illnesses to receive the support they need under the Scheme are receiving the national focus from the NDIA and this is augmented locally by the assertive engagement approaches described above.
- 6.2 The risk of market failure locally for NDIS registered support co-ordination, for participants, is being mitigated by Council continuing with phasing-in Method 1 so that Council support remains in place until support co-ordination is found, and officers encouraging local community sector organisations which provide case management to consider registering with the NDIA for this line item of provision.
- 6.3 As the NDIS transition has implications for the employment conditions of our staff, a careful strategy continues to be implemented in conjunction with the People and Culture team and the union.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 This Council opted for Method 1 of State funding withdrawal for eligible clients to preserve funding and stability of services until the end of the in-kind period at 30



September 2019. Financial modelling has commenced to consider the impact of the first funding withdrawal from the State after that time, with detailed information kept about the actual hours of support that will transfer to the NDIS. The Council's estimated loss of income at this stage is approximately \$400,000, more than half of which is funding children's respite which has already transferred to the NDIS as this was not part of the in kind arrangement.

- 7.2 Vacancies for the staff who provide direct care service for clients under 65 years who are not eligible for NDIS, and for clients over 65 years as part of Commonwealth Home Support Program are being carefully monitored to protect the existing cohort of staff from job losses or reductions to their guaranteed hours.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 None

9. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 9.1 This report aligns with Direction 1: We embrace difference, and people belong and, within that, access to services that support the health and well-being of our growing community. It is in line with the Social Justice Charter and the Disability Access Plan ensuring the best possible access to the NDIS for people with disabilities in the Municipality.

10. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

10.1 TIMELINE

- 10.1.1 Transition continued until 30 September 2019

10.2 COMMUNICATION

- 10.2.1 A comprehensive communications campaign continues to raise awareness of the NDIS, promote information sessions, encourage testing of eligibility and promote the role of the Local Area Coordinator. Staff will continue to identify risks and opportunities to ensure that the transition to the NDIS is smooth and treats our staff and community with care.
- 10.2.2 Work will also continue as noted above to identify and support residents from hard to reach communities to access the Scheme.

11. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 11.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

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ATTACHMENTS Nil