



9.1 STATUS REPORT : NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: CAROL JEFFS, GENERAL MANAGER, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PREPARED BY: MARY MCGORRY, MANAGER ACCESS AND AGEING

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide councillors with an 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 in a Report that although we would not register as an NDIS provider, Council would transition with care as a mark of its commitment to City of Port Phillip residents who have disabilities, and employed staff, and remain informed about 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 This report updates Council and details the work done nationally and locally to respond to concerns as the Scheme rolls out, including that by Council officers in relation to the NDIS transition.
- 2.4 This report also provides specific focus on the evidence base and complexities for those with psychosocial disabilities and what is being done to mitigate them.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes this report.
- 3.2 Will receive bi-annual update reports until the end of the NDIS in kind period in September 2019.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The Bayside and Peninsula transition, of which the City of Port Phillip is part, began on 1 April 2018. The State Government has confirmed that its funding for people under 65 years who are not eligible will continue although further details are not known at this time.

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- 4.2 Locally, the City of Port Phillip committed, as part of its Council Resolution, on 6 December 2017, not to become an NDIS provider, that we would transition 'with care'. The following are the measures we have taken to deliver on this.
- 4.3 In October 2017, with support of local councils, the Brotherhood of St Laurence was awarded the contract to be the Local Area Coordinator (LAC) and the Early Childhood Early Intervention Coordinator (ECEI) for the Bayside Peninsula region which includes the City of Port Phillip implementing a default face-to-face planning approach.
- 4.4 Council has worked extensively with the Brotherhood of St Laurence (Local Area Coordinator) 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.
- 4.5 As part of the Transition Project, a program of individual reviews and preparation for the NDIS contact has been implemented by a qualified disability worker. This has significantly reduced anxiety amongst carers and participants. This program has reviewed about 70% of our 276 current clients and is still underway.
- 4.6 It 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. At the Council Report on 6 December 2017 we estimated about 25% of our under 65-year-old cohort of clients would be eligible, due to the psychosocial nature of disabilities within this cohort. We now estimate around 40% will be eligible and able to access the Scheme.
- 4.7 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 move to Commonwealth Home Support funding so the carer has funded services in their own right e.g. domestic assistance in line with the Victorian Mental Health Carers' Briefing Paper referred to above.
- 4.8 As part of the Transition Project, an NDIS Project Prepare Officer has been engaged and she has undertaken many proactive measures in partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to ensure the community is aware and able to maximise the opportunities of the NDIS.
- 4.9 As the Scheme has rolled out nationally and in Victoria, the peak bodies for mental health and many senior mental health advocates have consistently raised concerns about the ability of those with serious mental health illnesses to receive the support they need. The University of Sydney has led on developing a final report on Stakeholder identified gaps and solutions in this area Mental Health – Mind the Gap: The National Disability Insurance Scheme and Psychosocial Disability <http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/documents/mind-the-gap.pdf>
- 4.10 VICSERV and Salvo Connect have commissioned a piece of work in partnership with the University of Sydney and CMHA to produce a Victorian focussed policy research paper on the mental health landscape post NDIS transition in the light of the removal of state funding from community mental health to make way for the NDIS and the transfer of federally funded programs to the NDIS including the



Personal Helpers and Mentors Scheme (PHaMS), the Partners in Recovery (PiR) and Day to Day Living (D2DL). Locally, STAR Health has been providing these programs and has been notified of cessation of block funding.
<http://www.vicserv.org.au/vicserv-projects/current-projects/302-policy-project-mind-the-gap>

- 4.11 The concerns raised specifically about the NDIS in the Mind the Gap Report are:
- 4.11.1 Engagement and approach. Mental illness is episodic and the language of recovery has meant people or their carers have not tested eligibility or found the provision of evidence for ongoing significant and permanent impairment difficult and expensive. Phone interviews have been particularly unhelpful. People with psychosocial disability are often transient and difficult to track down and carer expertise about the Scheme has been lacking.
 - 4.11.2 Ineligibility. The Scheme was never intended to replace community mental health and/or alcohol and other drug treatment services. The reduction of funding in real terms and failing meet demographic growth from these services has been partially addressed in the recent State and Federal Government budgets but advocates argue it is nowhere near enough with significant waiting lists and times continuing and suicide remaining the highest cause of death than anything else, including road traffic accidents, for those between 15 and 44 years old
<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/suicide-still-the-biggest-killer-of-younger-australians>. Withdrawal of block funded services to transfer funding to the NDIS prior to people phasing in has also left some people with no support a problem which has particularly impacted on carers also.
 - 4.11.3 The NDIA in its Quarterly Report to the COAG Disability Reform Ministerial Council, March 2018, outlines a number of key performance measures and improvements it has made in response to such concerns :
 - a) 160,000 nationally now have an NDIS plan
 - b) Of these 44,000 are completely new and not known to services previously
 - c) A key focus has been on younger adults with complex physical disabilities having to live in residential care for older people so they can move to live independently and these outcomes are life-changing
 - d) Victoria is one third of the way through its transition
 - e) Plans for those with psychosocial disability in Victoria have gone up this quarter from 10% of plan approvals to 14%, with approximately \$40,000 going towards reasonable and necessary supports for this group thus far
 - f) 93% of Victorian participants have indicated they found the planning process good for very good
 - g) Pathway Pilots are taking place in response to concerns raised about the process for participants to collect best practice for national



implementation. In Victoria, the Participant Pathway being piloted in Bayside and Peninsula involves face-to-face joint planning with the Local Area Co-ordinator and NDIA Planner with the ability to see and understand the plan before it is finalised and this has seen significant participant and carers satisfaction.

- h) A Tailored Pathway Pilot has been taking place in Outer East Melbourne Area for those with psychosocial disabilities with improved participant satisfaction thus far. Tandem, the Peak body for Victorian mental health carers recommended such a pathway pilot in their NDIS Issues and Recommendations Briefing Paper in May 2018.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Working closely with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and convening a number of themed events with VALID and other Internal stakeholders to educate and prepare them and their clients for the transition, including :
 - 5.1.1 Community support – Home Support, Planned Activity Groups and Children’s Respite
 - 5.1.2 Family, Youth and Children’s Services (Childcare Centres, Maternal and Child Health and Youth Services)
 - 5.1.3 Arts Access – Fog Theatre. Approximately 13 participants and their families have been engaged with conversations about the NDIS and Fog Theatre in their plan as they are self-managing their plans. Fog Theatre will continue as part of the suite of CoPP’s inclusive arts program in 2018/19 while future viability of the program is assessed.
 - 5.1.4 Joint Council’s Access for All Abilities (JCAAA). 78 active participants and their families were contacted to advise and support them as they begin conversations with the NDIS about their plan. A total of 153 past and current participants received letters with their local contact details for the NDIS planning and informing them that Council would run an Expression of Interest to identify quality providers to continue running these programs. This process is underway and officers are discussing transition options with a shortlist of providers.
- 5.2 In addition to the above work with internal stakeholders and clients, the City of Port Phillip has worked with external stakeholders as follows :
 - 5.2.1 The creation of an NDIS Transition Network which meets regularly, with all the Councils belonging to the Bayside Peninsula region and Brotherhood of St Laurence, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
 - 5.2.2 The City of Port Phillip led a collaborative project with the Cities of Stonnington and Glen Eira to map all the relevant local services in our areas to assist the Brotherhood of Laurence in finding good quality providers for our residents.



- 5.2.3 Networks with several Councils in the North East Metropolitan Area (NEMA) who have already been through the NDIS rollout to understand issues and learnings.
- 5.2.4 Briefings with the following City of Port Phillip and wider stakeholder groups :
- a) Multifaith Network
 - b) Multicultural Network
 - c) Victorian Local Government Disability Planners Network
 - d) Port Phillip Aged Services Network
 - e) Inner South Family and Friends Carer Support Group
 - f) Stonnington SRS Works Network
 - g) Inner South Multicultural Issues Network
 - h) Inner South Rooming House Network (Port Phillip Community Group)
 - i) Port Phillip Youth Services Network with presentations by Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC) and the Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) with a focus on Youth Mental Health (Included AUSLAN interpreters and a notetaker)
- 5.2.5 We have also engaged with a variety of local providers including:
- a) Jewish Care
 - b) Sacred Heath Mission
 - c) Uniting St Kilda 101 Engagement Hub
 - d) Star Health
 - e) Uniting Care Prahran Mission
 - f) Micare
 - g) Salvation Army
 - h) JobCo Employment Services Inc.
 - i) Bayley House
 - j) Community Chef
 - k) Leef Independent Living Solutions
 - l) Albert Road Clinic
 - m) OnSide Services
 - n) Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre
 - o) Beach Road Cycles
- 5.3 The Council assisted the Brotherhood of St Laurence in finding a temporary office in Liardet Community Centre, Port Melbourne which has now led to them establishing a permanent base in South Melbourne.



6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Affected Staff

- 6.1 As the NDIS transition has implications for the employment conditions of our staff, a careful strategy has been actioned in conjunction with the People and Culture team.
- 6.2 The strategy is underpinned by our commitment to 'transition with care' which also applies to our own staff to ensure that they are supported and kept informed throughout the process.
- 6.3 Regular meetings and correspondence confirming to staff and their unions that there is enough work with older clients and those not eligible, to keep most of community support staff employed at their current banding and hours.
- 6.4 Impacted staff are being offered redeployment or redundancy options including the ring-fencing of vacancies to staff at risk of redundancy for them to express interest prior to advertisement. The work with staff is being done in consultation with the Australian Services Union (ASU).
- 6.5 Increased focus in the L&D areas of the employment plans of affected staff to boost training opportunities including funding training in how to establish their own business in the NDIA environment for those considering that.
- 6.6 We procured a panel of 3 registered community sector agencies for casual staff to reduce reliance on agencies and provide easier transition of clients who become familiar with those staff and agencies. These agencies are also offering casual employment hours to our direct care staff.

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.

Vulnerable residents

A number of initiatives aim to ensure our most vulnerable residents are not left behind in the NDIS transition :

- a) Specific information sessions for clients with mental health and psychosocial disability and their carers to augment individual contacts
- b) Meeting with local providers such as Sacred Heart Mission, Star Health, Salvation Army and Uniting
- c) Highlighted the issues to the Brotherhood of St Laurence Local Area Coordinator to ensure they link with local agencies
- d) Linked the Brotherhood of St Laurence to Sacred Heart Mission to develop a simpler eligibility process (Access Request Form) for hard to reach clients that attend local agencies such as Sacred Heart Mission
- e) Presentation held at Park Towers targeting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and vulnerable groups in May 2018
- f) Information from the Homelessness Services forum shared with internal networks, key agencies and service providers

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7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The Productivity Commission Report of 19 October 2017 has stated the national cost of the NDIS will be \$22 billion per annum and the Scheme is within budget each year it has operated. The recent Federal Budget announcements by the Treasurer, Scott Morrison, also confirms the Scheme is financially on track.
- 7.2 Metro Access funding (for the Building Inclusive Communities Program) has been extended by the State Government for a further 12 months until end June 2019. Following this, the NDIS model will offer Local Area Coordination (LAC) and Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) in place of the Metro Access program.
- 7.3 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.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

In addition to the above measures, community information sessions have been arranged as follows :

Pre-planning session for FOG theatre	January 2018
Information session for JCAAA families	February 2018
Information sessions for people with mental illness and psychosocial disability facilitated by Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)	February 2018
Presentation by the BSL LAC at the Multicultural Forum	February 2018
Information session for families with children living with disability (Association for Children with Disability)	March 2018
Information session for Young People living with disability facilitated by the Youth Disability Advocacy Service	March 2018
Information sessions in Greek, Russian and Polish during Cultural Diversity Week	March 2018
Getting ready for your planning meeting sessions arranged by NDIA and BSL	March and April 2018
Information session at the Park Towers Housing Estate facilitated by Brotherhood of St Laurence LAC	May 2018



Targeted session organised for Youth Services Network facilitated by VMIAC and YDAS

May 2018

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 This report aligns with Direction1: We embrace difference, and people belong and section 1.3: Access to services that support the health and well-being of our growing community.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 COMMUNICATION

A comprehensive communications campaign to raise awareness of the NDIS, promote information sessions, encourage testing of eligibility and introduce the Local Area Coordinator has included:

- a) Councillor notes and emails of relevant articles
- b) Internal and external emails, letters and meetings
- c) Newsletters – Insights, C&ED newsletter, Divercity, CoPPTHis, CoPPAN. Real News, BSL newsletter and Port Phillip Youth Network newsletter
- d) BSL NDIS Information booth at Beach Access event – 9 December 2017
- e) Information booth at Midsumma Festival – 14 January 2018

11.2 Intranet articles and establishment of Council website pages and a feature website slider promoting Mayoral welcome of BSL to Port Phillip

- a) NDIA launch at St Kilda Town Hall with local MP Martin Foley – 13 April 2018
- b) Social media campaign promoting the rollout

11.3 NEXT STEPS

- 11.3.1 An NDIS Expo is planned for 19 July at St Kilda Town Hall between 10 am to 3 pm.
- 11.3.2 Over 60 providers will showcase their services. There will be information sessions from key agencies and performances by people with lived experience of disability.
- 11.3.3 The event will be promoted widely to encourage people with disability, their families and carers to attend to get ideas and assistance with their NDIS plans.
- 11.3.4 Further sessions and work is planned for vulnerable groups including the residents at Park Towers Housing Estate and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

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- 11.3.5 The NDIS PPO 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.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

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

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ATTACHMENTS Nil