Australian Government

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Part A:

Services and Support for People with Disability

Program Guidelines

January 2012

Preface

These guidelines provide the framework for the implementation and administration of Services and Support for People with Disability.

The Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA or the Department) has a suite of documents (the **Program Guidelines Suite**) which provides information relating to the program. They provide the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in the program and form the basis for the business relationship between FaHCSIA and the funding recipient and can include:

- **Part A: Program Guidelines** provides an overview of Program and the Activities relating to the program;
- **Part B: Information for Applicants** provides information on the Application, Assessment, Eligibility, Selection and Complaints processes; Financial and Funding Agreement arrangements.
- The **Application Form** to be completed by applicants applying for funding during a selection process if there is one. Information on application processes will be available on the FaHCSIA website at: www.fahcsia.gov.au/grantsfunding/currentfunding/Pages/default.aspx.
- **Part C: Activity Information** provides specific information on the Activity, Selection Criteria (if an application process is being undertaken), Performance Management and Reporting. This part should be read in conjunction with the Draft Funding Agreement for the Activity and the Standard Terms and Conditions. Note – not all activities have a Part C.

FaHCSIA reserves the right to amend these documents from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.

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Information about the Services and Support for People with Disability Program

1 Program Overview

Disability and Carers
The Australian Government helps to support people with disability, their families and carers, through programs and services, benefits and payments.

The Services and Support for People with Disability Program provides support to people with disability, their families and carers, through grants and funding to organisations that deliver services for people with disability.

Under Services for People with Disability, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) funds a number of services for people with disability and their carers, including supported employment services, advocacy, a national booking service for Auslan interpreting services, print disability services, support services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families, support services for children with Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, cerebral palsy, moderate or greater vision or hearing impairments, respite services, accessible communities and supported accommodation for people with disability.

FaHCSIA is also working closely with the state and territory governments on 10 key priority areas under the National Disability Agreement.

1.1 Program Outcomes

To provide supported employment and improve access to information, advocacy and services for people with disability so they can develop their capabilities and actively participate in community and economic life.

1.2 Program component objectives:

Services for People with Disability
To provide social support and community-based care for people with disability, their carers and their families, to promote independence, self-reliance and participation in the community.

Services for People with Disability (Special Account)
The purpose of the Services for People with Disability (Special Account) is to manage receipts and expenses on projects which relate to the National Disability Agreement.

1.3 Aims and objectives

Outcome 5 - Disability and Carers aims to provide an adequate standard of living, improved capacity to participate economically and socially and manage life transitions for people with disability and/or mental illness and carers through payments, concessions support and care services.

The Services and Support for People with Disability program aims to provide access to improve access to information, advocacy and services for people with disability so they can develop their capabilities and actively participate in community and economic life.

2 Responsibilities and accountabilities under the program

This section sets out the responsibilities and accountabilities of FaHCSIA, the funding recipients or applicants seeking to apply for funding in the course of a funding round and the role of the Minister.

2.1 FaHCSIA responsibilities and accountabilities

Under this program FaHCSIA, through the program delegate, is responsible for:

- Identifying suitable service provider(s) to deliver the activity(ies);
- Providing clear and concise advice to the service provider in relation to the program;
- Working in partnership with the service provider to ensure that the program is implemented;
- Providing support and assistance to the service provider and contributing to the provision of effective, efficient, quality services to the community;
- Providing constructive feedback to the service provider;
- Providing the service provider with a clear and concise funding agreement and ensuring the service provider is accountable to Government in the terms agreed in the Funding Agreement;
- Administering the operation of the program in a timely, accountable and efficient manner;
- Ensuring that the outcomes contained within the program guidelines are being met; and
- Evaluating the service provider's performance against program outcomes.

2.2 Service provider responsibilities and accountabilities

Under this program the service provider will be responsible for the following:

- Adhering to the Terms and Conditions of the Funding Agreement;
- Providing quality services which are effective, efficient, and appropriately targeted;
- Working collaboratively to deliver the program;
- Contributing to the overall development and improvement of the program such as sharing best practice and participating in Action Learning;
- Ensuring Indigenous Australians have equal and equitable access to services;
- Complying with all relevant legislation;
- Meeting the obligations and accountabilities as stated in the Funding Agreement between FaHCSIA and the service provider;
- Providing a complaints handling mechanism; and
- Conducting the service consistent with any Code of Conduct that may apply within the program.

2.3 Role of the Minister

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has overall responsibility for the Program. The final decision about locations, sites and proposals will be made by the Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers on advice provided by FaHCSIA.

3 Risk management strategy

The service provider(s) will be subject to a financial viability check and risk management assessment prior to negotiating a Funding Agreement with FAHCSIA. FaHCSIA will only enter into a Funding Agreement with a service provider that is considered to be low risk to the Government.

Monitoring of service delivery will focus on addressing areas of risk that have the most impact on the Program outcome.

As part of the overall risk management strategy for the Program, FaHCSIA requires the service provider to:

- Identify and document risks in delivering services related to the program;
- Identify and document risk control strategies; and
- Implement adequate and effective policies and procedures to manage risks and achieve the control strategies through the funding period.

As part of FaHCSIA's Common Business Model, funding agreements are managed according to a risk management approach. Funding recipients are assessed to identify low, moderate, high and extreme risks with appropriate treatments identified. Risks are assessed in regard to governance, financial management, viability, performance management and issues management.

The recommended service provider(s) will be subject to a financial viability check and risk management assessment prior to negotiating a Funding Agreement with FAHCSIA.

4 Program Performance Framework and Reporting

FaHCSIA will assess the performance of the program against the reporting framework and timelines outlined in the Funding Agreement.

4.1 Performance management and evaluation

FaHCSIA will assess the performance of the program and how it may be evaluated in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

4.2 Performance framework and reporting

FaHCSIA endeavours to focus on outcomes, however other information, not related to outcomes includes information that can be used to:

- Monitor the ongoing operation of the program for evaluation of services; and
- Track issues that may affect the operation of the program.

FaHCSIA's Performance Indicators focus on three key questions:

- Did it make a difference?
- How well did we do it?
- How much did we do?

Program Key Performance Indicators

- Number of supported employees who achieve an employment outcome (at least eight hours per week for at least 13 weeks from commencement in a supported employment place);
- Percentage and number of individuals, parents and carers who report that they were assisted to access choices and options that enabled them to manage their needs;
- Percentage and number of supported employees/clients likely to have reduced reliance on income support payments (sufficient income to affect Disability Support Pension);
- Percentage and number of clients from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Percentage and number of clients reporting that the services received were appropriate to their needs as parents/carers.

Program deliverables

- Number of children with disability, including autism, receiving support services;
- Number of supported employees assisted by supported employment services;
- Number of people with disability provided with direct advocacy support.
- Number of carers of people with severe or profound disability assisted with short term or immediate respite; and
- Number of clients receiving Outside School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability Services.

4.3 Financial Reporting

All activities under Services for People with Disability will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles, the FaHCSIA Funding Agreement(s) and will aim to maintain viable services. Service providers must only use funding for the purpose for which it was provided and act to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth.

4.4 Evaluation

Service providers will be required to provide information through regular reporting milestones outlined in the Funding Agreement. Providers will be notified if they will be required to provide information either through their regular reporting arrangements or specifically for an evaluation.

FaHCSIA may undertake or commission a review or evaluation of the program/activities. FaHCSIA will give reasonable notification to the service provider of any review or evaluation that may take place. Evaluation strategies will incorporate assessment of improved access and outcomes for Indigenous people.

4.5 Feedback

The performance of the program and therefore its reputation will be heavily dependent on the operation of the service provider(s). It is essential that an open and cooperative relationship is fostered between FaHCSIA and the service provider(s).

FAHCSIA will develop a two way feedback process that will provide the service provider with an open channel of communication. This will enable both parties to be kept up to date on all performance issues and other developments or to discuss any operational issues that may arise.

The service provider is expected to contribute to this process by providing FaHCSIA with information on key learnings and emerging issues.

Information about the activities

5 Program Activities

5.1 Activities under Services for People with Disability

In 2011–12, total administered program funding for Services for People with Disability is $339,532 million. The administered program funding forecasts for 2012–13 is $346,807 million; for 2013–14 $351,142 million and for 2014–15 $317,623 million.

5.1.1 Accessible Communities

The Accessible Communities activity provides grants to local governments to improve the accessibility of public buildings and spaces for people with disabilities such as playgrounds, gardens, art spaces, swimming pools, senior citizen centres, footpaths, ramps, and public toilets.

Under this activity small infrastructure capital funding grants of up to $100,000 (to a total of $5 million for 2010–11 only) was made available to local governments to improve community infrastructure, including new construction, major renovations or refurbishment of assets.

5.1.2 Better Start for Children with Disability Initiative:

The Australian Government will invest $147 million in funding over four years to provide services and support to children up to fifteen years of age with disabilities that affect their development.

As of 1 July 2011, children aged up to 6 years who have been diagnosed with a moderate or greater vision or hearing impairment, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or Fragile X syndrome have been able to access funding and Medicare rebates for early intervention treatments and therapies.

Components of the Better Start for Children with Disability initiative:

- Early intervention services

Early intervention funding of up to $12,000 (up to a maximum of $6,000 per financial year) is available to eligible children for services such as speech pathology, audiology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychology. Eligible children must be registered before they turn 6 and families will have until their child turns seven to use the early intervention funding. This targeted early intervention in the pre-school years aims to complement existing services and to assist these children to have the best possible preparation for transition to school.

- Registration and Information Service (RIS)

The RIS, managed by Carers Australia, is funded to confirm eligibility and register eligible children for the early intervention funding, and to provide parents and carer with information about early intervention service providers on the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel. The Advisors also provide parents and carers with information about other sources of assistance to which they may be entitled.

- Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel

A panel of early intervention professionals has been established to provide improved access to early intervention services for eligible children.

- New Medicare items

In addition to the early intervention funding children with these disabilities under the age of 15 will be able to access new Medicare services for diagnosis and allied health treatment under this program.

A Medicare rebate for the development of a treatment and management plan will also be available for children under the age of 13.

Medicare rebates will be available for up to four allied health diagnostic services and for up to 20 allied health treatment services per child in total. Treatment items can be used by children up to the age of 15 provided a treatment and management plan is in place before the age of 13. The Medicare component of the initiative is managed by the Department of Health and Ageing.

5.1.3 Cinema Access Implementation Plan (Including the Accessible Cinema Advisory Group)

The Cinema Access Implementation Plan (the Plan) will provide improved access to cinemas for Deaf, blind, vision and hearing impaired people. The Plan entails a commitment from the four main cinema chains (Hoyts, Village Cinemas, Event Cinemas (Greater Union Birch Carroll and Coyle), and Reading Cinemas) to fast track implementation of new audio description and captioning technology for at least one screen in each of their complexes over the next four years.

Under the Plan, FaHCSIA will provide $470,000 to the four main cinema chains during 2011–15. This money provides a contribution toward the estimated total cost of $2.2 million of acquiring new technology in a five way partnership with the cinema chains. FaHCSIA will also contribute $30,000 during 2010-14 toward some of the costs for disability and media advocacy non-government organisation (NGO) representatives to attend the Accessible Cinema Advisory Group (ACAG), as well as providing Auslan interpreters for the ACAG meetings. Membership of the Group comprises cinema industry and NGO sector representatives, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and FaHCSIA, with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy as an observer.

There are no Government tender or selection processes associated with this initiative, and Part C is not applicable. The technology associated with the Plan coincides with the move taken by the main four cinema chains to adopt a digital cinema platform. Although the conversion to digital cinema offers long term benefits to enhanced cinema access for people with vision or hearing impediments, source selection of the accessible technology is being managed by the cinema chains who are a party to the Plan. The cinema chains are utilising their combined purchasing power to facilitate their migration to digital cinema and their acquisition of accessible technology for installation in at least one screen for each of their cinema complexes over the next four years.

5.1.4 Disability Employment Assistance

Under Disability Employment Assistance, Australian Disability Enterprises are funded to provide supported employment assistance to people with severe to moderate disability who need substantial ongoing assistance to maintain their employment.

Funding for Disability Employment Assistance in 2011–12 is forecast at $210.9 million and is recurrent funding.

5.1.5 Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund

The Support Accommodation Innovation Fund activity provides capital grants totalling $60 million over three years (2011–2014) for community organisations, non-government organisations, state and territory disability authorities and governments to construct 150 new supported accommodation or respite places. Projects could include renovations to existing homes, pooled resources to build contemporary accommodation services close to community and health services, or the modification of established accommodation within the community.

Supported accommodation and respite places will be targeted at adults with severe or profound disability in need of supported accommodation or respite who may be on waiting lists and who may have ageing carers. Organisations/disability authorities/governments accessing the capital funds guarantee funding for the ongoing support costs associated with filling the new places.

5.1.6 Helping Children with Autism

The $190 million Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) package was announced in October 2007 to address the need for services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families and carers.

In 2011 an additional $29 million was provided to meet the increased demand for early intervention services bringing the total Australian Government commitment to over $220 million.

The objectives of the HCWA funding are to:

- provide families with best practice early intervention support services including financial assistance, as well as providing education and support through better access to these services; and
- enhance the service system to increase the availability of best practice early intervention services, advisory services, education and support, and relevant information.

Initiatives funded under HCWA package include:

- Early Intervention service
  The Early Intervention service provides assistance for families of eligible children aged up to 6 years diagnosed with ASD to access funding of up to $12,000 (maximum of $6,000 per financial year) until their seventh birthday. To be eligible for the Early Intervention services a child must be seen by an Autism Advisor and be deemed eligible to access the service before their sixth birthday.

- Autism Advisor service
  The full-time equivalent of 32 Autism Advisors are funded nationally to provide specific information and support for parents and carers about access to early intervention funding and appropriate early intervention services. Autism Advisors provide a link between clinical diagnosis and access to early intervention and support services.

- ASD Playgroups (PlayConnect)
  The playgroup initiative referred to as PlayConnect will establish a minimum of 150 playgroups providing play based learning opportunities for children aged up to 6 years with ASD or ASD like symptoms.

- ASD Website
  The ASD website provides information, online resources and interactive functions to support parents, carers and professionals. The website informs families and carers about better support for their children in the post diagnosis stage. It also provides information that helps families and carers to cope with pressures they face in raising their children and helps to maximise the day to day functioning of the family.

- ASD Workshops (Early Days Workshops)
  A national program of education and support workshops that provide flexible, meaningful and practical options and strategies to assist family members or carers of children aged 0-6 years with ASD

- Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres
  The Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres (ASELCCs) provide early learning programs and specific support to children aged up to 6 years with ASD in a long day care setting. ASELCCs provide parents with support in the care of their children, give them the opportunity to participate more fully in the community and have a positive impact on the children's long term life outcomes. The six ASELCCs funded under this program are located in: South Western Sydney; Brisbane; Adelaide; North West Tasmania; Melbourne; and Perth.

5.1.7 Information and Captioning

The Information activity provides an accessible website with a national database containing information about travel, sport and recreational opportunities for people with disability.

The Captioning activity provides for normally uncaptioned educational and community DVDs and downloadable versions to be captioned, for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired.
Funding for the Information and Captioning activity in 2011–12 is $320,100.

5.1.8 Remote Vision and Hearing Services for Children.

Utilising the National Broadband Network (NBN) where possible, the *Remote Vision and Hearing Services for Children* activity provides greater access and more effective use of new technologies in the provision of cost effective remote allied health and education services for children with hearing and/or vision impairment in outer regional and remote areas of Australia.

The activity aims to enable an estimated 225 children with hearing and/or vision impairment living in outer regional and remote Australia and their families, carers and local case workers, to access developmental and therapeutic information, guidance and support from qualified allied health and education services where access to such expertise would otherwise be scarce.

The activity involves a mix of upgrades to existing client videoconferencing infrastructure or the establishment of personal computers for clients to ensure high quality videoconferencing capabilities are available. The equipment upgrade has a priority focus on regions in which the necessary elements of the NBN are being rolled-out to utilise the faster speeds and high quality video that it enables.

5.1.9 Leaders for Tomorrow

Leaders for Tomorrow is a national activity which aims to develop the leadership capacity of people with disability. The $2.9 million program will provide up to 12 months of leadership support to 200 people with disability to 30 June 2014.

TAFE NSW Hunter Institute, leading a consortium with E-Qual (Enhancing Quality), is delivering Leaders for Tomorrow. By linking people with disability with appropriate training, support and mentoring, this activity aims to help them to develop the skills and confidence to become leaders in business, the community and government.

Funding for the Leaders for Tomorrow activity in 2011–12 is $750,000.

5.1.10 Livable Housing Design Initiative

The Livable Housing Design Initiative (formerly Universal Housing Design) is being funded by the Australian government at a cost of $1million in seed funding over three years (2011-12 to 2013-14) to promote voluntary guidelines for housing built to meet the needs of older Australians and people with disability.

The Livable Housing Initiative is the outcome of the National Dialogue on Universal Housing Design, a group established to bring together government, the residential building industry and the community sector to progress the Livable Housing Design Guidelines, which were developed by the National Dialogue in 2010.

5.1.11 National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service

The National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service improves self-reliance and independence for Deaf Auslan users by providing a single point of contact to book and pay for NAATI accredited Auslan interpreters. NABS will cover the cost of interpreters for Medicare rebateable appointments and a range of other specific health care consultations. Funding for the National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service in 2011–12 is $4.5 million.

5.1.12 National Disability Advocacy Program

The National Disability Advocacy Program assists people with disability to overcome barriers (i.e. physical access, discriminatory attitudes, abuse and neglect) that impact on their daily life and their ability to participate in the community as well as promoting and protecting their human rights. Funding for the National Disability Advocacy Program in 2011–12 is $16.382 million.

5.1.13 National Disability Conference Initiative

The National Disability Conference Initiative assists eligible conference organisers to support the inclusion and participation of people with disability (including a family member or carer(s) to provide support) in disability focused conferences. Funding for the National Disability Conference Initiative in 2012–13 is $320,000.

5.1.14 Ramp Up – a national disability website

The Australian Government is partnering with the ABC to improve accessible information for people with disabilities and increase general community awareness through an online, interactive, disability website. *Ramp Up* is the ABC's new website dedicated to everything about disability. It is a place for discussion, news, debate, humour and general information for everyone in Australia's disability communities.

The ABC has built and will host the website and provide management and technical support. The website will contain material produced by the ABC, commissioned content, and user-generated content. The website will also draw on relevant ABC content from across ABC platforms – ABC TV, radio, news, and online.

Total funding for the website is $557,500. This is provided as: 2009–10 - $57,500; 2010–11 $250,000 and in 2011–12 $250,000.

5.1.15 Outside School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability

Outside School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability is an Australian Government initiative providing teenagers with disability, aged 12 to 18 years, with appropriate outside school hours care. Outside schools hours care includes before, after and holiday care. Funding for the Outside School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability activity for 2010–13 is $21.351 million.

5.1.16 Print Disability Services

Print Disability Services funds the production of digital masters of print material in a file format that can readily be converted into a range of alternate formats for people with print disability. Funding for the Print Disability Services activity in 2011–12 is $1.4 million.

5.1.17 Postal Concessions for the Blind

The Postal Concessions for the Blind activity enables blind people and eligible organisations to send Braille, Moon, audio recording and other eligible material through Australia Post at a 'free of charge' rate for domestic mail and international surface mail. FaHCSIA reimburses Australia Post for postal charges incurred under this activity. Funding for the Postal Concessions for the Blind activity for 2011–12 is forecast to be $2.5 million.

5.1.18 Respite Support for Carers of Young People with Severe or Profound Disability

The Respite Support for Carers of Young People with Severe or Profound Disability program:

- Provides immediate and short-term respite to carers of young people with severe or profound disability;
- Facilitates access to information, respite care and other support or assistance appropriate to the individual needs and circumstances of both carers and care recipients;
- Focuses on carers needs and allows carers to exercise choice and control over their respite care arrangements;
- Supports carers whose needs are not being met through existing Australian Government or state/territory government initiatives; and

- Expects to alleviate unmet demand for short-term and unplanned respite care that currently causes significant stress to carers.

Funding for the Respite Support for Carers of Young People with Severe or Profound Disability activity in 2011–12 is $8.877 million.