



Australian Government

Government Response

**to the Senate Community Affairs
Reference Committee report:**

**Disability and Ageing: lifelong
planning for a better future**

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Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Foreword | 1 |
| Responses..... | 4 |
| RECOMMENDATION 1 | 4 |
| RECOMMENDATION 2 | 5 |
| RECOMMENDATION 3..... | ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. |
| RECOMMENDATION 4..... | 9 |
| RECOMMENDATION 5..... | 11 |
| RECOMMENDATION 6..... | 13 |
| RECOMMENDATION 7 | 14 |
| RECOMMENDATION 8..... | 15 |
| RECOMMENDATION 9..... | 17 |
| RECOMMENDATION 10..... | 19 |
| RECOMMENDATION 11..... | 21 |
| RECOMMENDATION 12..... | 22 |
| RECOMMENDATION 13..... | 24 |
| RECOMMENDATION 14..... | ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. |
| RECOMMENDATION 15..... | 26 |

Foreword

This is the Commonwealth Government's response to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee report: *Disability and Ageing: lifelong planning for a better future*, tabled on 6 July 2011. The Government welcomes this Inquiry and acknowledges the Committee's findings in examining access to options and services to assist people with disability, their families and carers to plan for the future.

The Commonwealth Government's response to this Inquiry (the Response) acknowledges systems of support for people with disability, their families and carers are provided by a range of governments and departments across Australia. The Commonwealth Government is engaging in collaborative relationships with all stakeholders across sectors to ensure improved access to disability and carer supports and continuity of care across key life stages for people with disability, their families and carers.

The National Disability Strategy, agreed to by all levels of government at the Council of Australian Governments in February 2011, outlines a 10 year national policy framework to guide government activity across six key outcome areas and to drive future reforms in mainstream and specialist disability service systems to improve outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. Two specific areas that are of particular relevance to planning options for people with disability, their families and carers are economic security and personal and community supports.

The National Disability Strategy is supported by an \$11 million package of measures which are designed to promote inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of community life.

On 19 August 2011, the Council of Australian Governments agreed that major reform of disability services was needed through a National Disability Insurance Scheme. They agreed to establish a Select Council of Treasurers and Disability Service Ministers on Disability Reform to consider the Productivity Commission's recommendations and lay the foundations for a scheme. The Commonwealth Government also established a National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group and subsequent expert groups to help advise the Government and the Select Council on the key design elements and features of a scheme.

In April 2012 the Council of Australian Governments reaffirmed their commitment to a National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Commonwealth and the States and Territories agreed to high-level principles that will guide governments' consideration of the Productivity Commission's recommendations on a National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Council of Australian Governments asked its Select Council on Disability Reform to undertake further work on funding,

governance and the scope of eligibility and support as a matter of priority, to enable consideration at its next meeting in 2012.

In the 2012-13 Federal Budget, the Commonwealth Government committed \$1 billion over four years to deliver the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme. This first stage will begin in mid-2013 – a full year ahead of the timetable set out by the Productivity Commission.

Following agreement with state and territory governments, the first stage will include launch sites in the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, South Australia, the Barwon region of Victoria and in the Hunter region of New South Wales. More than 20,000 people with disability will benefit from the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Government's funding also includes a new National Disability Insurance Scheme Launch Transition Agency that will be established to run the delivery of care and support to people with disability, their families and carers in the select locations.

The Commonwealth Government is also committed to ensuring the National Disability Insurance Scheme is developed in close coordination with its wider reform agenda particularly for health and aged care.

The National Health Reforms are aimed at simplifying the aged care and disability systems to allow more coordinated service delivery across Australia. Under these reforms the Commonwealth Government will be the level of government with full funding, policy, management and delivery responsibility for a national aged care system.

The Commonwealth Government will be responsible for basic community care services delivered through the Home and Community Care program for older people (except in Victoria and Western Australia), in line with its responsibility for other national aged care programs. This refers to non-Indigenous people aged 65 or over, and Indigenous Australians aged 50 or over.

The Commonwealth Government will also fund specialist disability services delivered under the National Disability Agreement for people aged 65 years and over. The state and territory governments will be responsible for care services for people under the age of 65 years, in line with their principal responsibility for delivery of other disability services under the National Disability Agreement.

There is a significant interface between health, disability and aged care and it is essential that these issues be considered in a comprehensive way to facilitate enhanced linkages and integration across these services, systems and processes.

Another key reform area is the implementation of the National Disability Agreement which commenced on 1 January 2009. From this date to 30 June 2015, the Commonwealth Government will be providing \$7.6 billion in funding to the state and territory governments for increased and improved specialist disability services such as supported accommodation, early intervention and targeted care and respite.

The Commonwealth Government recognises that access to accommodation and disability support is critical to enabling families to plan for the future.

In July 2010, the Government established the Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund to provide \$60 million over three years to build innovative, community-based supported accommodation places for people with disability.

This builds on the \$100 million the Commonwealth provided to states and territories for supported accommodation through the Capital Words Memorandum of Understanding. More than 300 supported accommodation places for people with disability have been built using funding from this scheme.

The National Carer Strategy is a significant initiative designed to improve outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers.

The National Carer Strategy outlines the Government's long-term commitment to recognising and supporting carers and contains six priority areas that will help to ensure carers have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians to participate in work, community and family life. The information and access priority area is of particular relevance to planning options for people with disability and older carers.

The National Carer Strategy is supported by a \$60 million package of measures, which will improve the financial security of carers and raise public awareness of the role and contribution of carers.

The Commonwealth Government remains committed to reforming disability support services, including planning, to provide individuals with the support they need over the course of their lifetime.

Responses

Recommendation 1

The committee considers that there is a need for a clear transition process to facilitate uninterrupted funding when people with a disability move between states, and recommends the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs work with the states and territories to seek to resolve issues related to portability as a matter of urgency.

AGREE

The Commonwealth Government supports the principle of interstate portability of disability services and will direct the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to continue working with state and territory governments to address portability issues through Commonwealth and state/territory forums.

Work undertaken to achieve improvements in the portability of disability services includes:

- state and territory governments agreeing to a portability protocol;
- the establishment of a network of portability officers in each jurisdiction to assist people with disability to move between states and territories; and
- a moving interstate information fact sheet to assist people with disability to access aids and equipment through government programs.

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have also agreed to consider this recommendation under broader disability and carer reform frameworks including the National Disability Agreement.

This is also one of the key recommendations from the Productivity Commission's report into disability care and support and is reflected in the work currently underway towards a National Disability Insurance Scheme. This is also reflected in the high level principles for a National Disability Insurance Scheme that have been agreed by the Council of Australian Governments. In particular, *Principle 1b* states that:

A National Disability Insurance Scheme should be needs based and provide people with disability access to individualised care and support. To achieve this, a National Disability Insurance Scheme should recognise existing best practice across the states and territories and build on this best practice through foundation reforms to:

b. Be simple to understand, navigate and provide portability across jurisdictions and service providers;

Recommendation 2

The committee considers it critical that effective planning support be available for people with disabilities transitioning from education to employment and from employment into retirement. The committee recommends that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs provide retirement planning support options for people employed in Australian Disability Enterprises.

AGREE

The Commonwealth Government agrees with this recommendation. As the system of supports for people with disability who are ageing in Australia are provided by various governments and departments, a collaborative approach between all stakeholders will be required to promote planning supports for people with disability who are transitioning to retirement.

Currently, the Commonwealth and state and territory governments through the Disability Policy Research Working Group, are examining strategies that might be pursued to improve employment options for people with disability over a medium term timeframe. This includes particular consideration of transition issues for people with disability into work from school, and out of work, into retirement.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is responsible for several programs that assist individuals with disability transition from education to employment.

Under the More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative the Commonwealth Government is providing additional funding to both government and non-government education authorities to support schools and teachers in meeting the needs of students with disability. Education authorities have selected activities to support students with disability in their jurisdiction. This may include the provision of additional support for students with disability to transition from school to post-school education and employment. Activities are being undertaken in the 2012 and 2013 school years.

Under the Disability Employment Services program young job seekers with disability can have streamlined access to Disability Employment Services. These job seekers are referred to as Eligible School Leavers. They can be assisted through Disability Employment Services before they leave school, when they enter directly from a state-based transition to work program, or within 12 months of leaving school. Eligible School Leavers are exempt from the normal requirement of an independent assessment of their work capacity before entering Disability Employment Services. Eligible School Leavers can directly approach a Disability Employment Services provider, who can commence servicing the job seeker straight away. Assistance for young job seekers with disability may

include any required training, work trials or work experience, as well as other assistance to promote job readiness.

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions aims to increase participation of young people in education and training; encourage more young people to make a successful transition from school to further education, training or full time employment; and increase attainment of young people aged 15 to 24, including Indigenous youth. The National Partnership will better engage young people in education and training through programs like Youth Connections which delivers individual support services to more than 45,000 young people, including 12,600 who have been identified as having disability and young people for whom mental health is identified as a barrier.

The Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, through the National Disability Coordination Officer Program, assists people with disability to access and participate in post-school education and training, and subsequent employment, through a network of officers across Australia. The program works to reduce systemic barriers, build links and coordinate services between the education, training and employment sectors so that people with disability have assistance at all levels and are subsequently able to make better informed decisions about further employment, education or training.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, through a Transition to Retirement pilot, has also explored pathways to retirement for older employees with disability working in Australian Disability Enterprises. The pilot's aim was to determine the capacity of Australian Disability Enterprises to assist in retirement planning (utilising a case management approach), and the capacity of communities to include older people with disability in mainstream activities. An independent Evaluation Report of the pilot findings was released on 18 May 2012.

The Commonwealth Government released *Inclusive Employment 2012-2022: a vision for supported employment* on 8 May 2012. The vision identifies that by 2022, employment supports will be 'flexible and responsive over the life course of the individual' and that 'people with disability will be able to organise their own transitions at a time when they are ready'.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the government look to identify people with disabilities as a special group who may age earlier than other members of the population and should therefore have access to a range of aged care services at an earlier age.

AGREE IN PART

The Commonwealth Government is committed to building a National Disability Insurance Scheme and recently committed \$1 billion to deliver the first stage of the scheme. The Government is working with the States and Territories on the final design which will include consideration of interactions with other care systems and mainstream services.

For the majority of younger people with disabilities, it is more appropriate for them to be cared for through specialist disability support services than through aged care services. However, younger people with a disability are eligible for services provided under the *Aged Care Act 1997* if they are approved for those services by an Aged Care Assessment Team and there are no other more appropriate care facilities or services able to meet the person's needs.

The changes to government roles and responsibilities as part of the National Health Reform Agreement mean that state and territory governments have funding, program and operational responsibility from 1 July 2012, for basic community care services for younger people and funding responsibility for residential aged care and packaged community aged care delivered through the Commonwealth aged care program to younger people (under the age of 65 years and under 50 years for Indigenous Australians). Until otherwise agreed, Victoria and Western Australia are not party to these reforms.

Commonwealth and state and territory governments are working towards better interfaces between the disability and aged care systems to ensure that people receive the right services in the most appropriate setting as their needs change.

The National Health Reforms will enable a more simplified and integrated provision of aged care, including people with a disability who may age earlier. These arrangements will allow continued access to aged care services for young people with a disability where they are approved for these services by an Aged Care Assessment Team and no other more appropriate services are available. They also allow older people access to specialist disability services where this is most appropriate.

A key principle underpinning this reform is that all governments share responsibility for providing continuity of care across health services, aged care and disability services to ensure smooth client transitions.

The disability and aged care sectors are working together through Commonwealth and state/territory forums to resolve implementation issues that have arisen from this policy change and to meet the needs of people with disability who may age earlier.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing review the assessment tools used by the network of Aged Care Assessment Teams to take into account the needs of people with a disability who are ageing prematurely.

NOTE

Through the National Health Reforms, state and territory governments have responsibility for the funding and provision of community care services for younger people (under 65 years and Indigenous Australians under 50 years) with a disability. This includes responsibility for assessment of this population. The Commonwealth Government has responsibility for community care services, including assessment, for older people. Until otherwise agreed, Victoria and Western Australia are not party to these reforms.

The *Aged Care Act 1997* (the Act) is the current legislative framework within which assessments, eligibility and approvals for aged care are stipulated and the program operates. In accordance with the Act, a person is eligible to receive subsidised care if they have physical, social or psychological needs that require the provision of care and they meet the criteria specified in the Approval of Care Recipients Principles.

The Secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing has the ability to approve people for Commonwealth Government subsidised care covered under the Act, and has delegated authority to make these decisions to selected members of Aged Care Assessment Teams. The 2007 National Review of Aged Care Assessment Teams recommended that expert advice be sought to develop a set of validated, specific assessment tools and develop criteria for their use in the Aged Care Assessment Program context.

The Aged Care Assessment Program Toolkit has been developed to enable nationally consistent assessments to identify the client's need for aged care services and supports, entrance to residential care or referral to other health, mental health or disability services.

Commonwealth and state and territory governments have also agreed to pursue common assessment tools for consideration across state, territory and Commonwealth programs and services to support continued momentum in reform of disability services nationally. The Commonwealth Government has commenced its review of the assessments for aged care and is taking into account linkages to the disability system.

As part of the Commonwealth Government's National Health Reform agenda, options for reform to the access and assessment pathways of the aged care system are being considered. The Assessment Framework and Tool for Aged Care project looks to design the structure and components of an assessment framework for aged care by reviewing current assessment tools used for initial needs identification and developing an appropriate, nationally consistent, needs identification assessment tool that accommodates for the full spectrum of aged care clients from those requiring base level services in the community to high level care in a residential setting.

Recommendation 5

The committee notes the National Disability Agreement requirement for states and territories to consider one-stop-shops for disability services. The committee recommends that the Commonwealth, in consultation with the states and territories, establish its own presence and representation at one-stop-shops. The committee considers that one-stop-shops must be capable of directing enquiries towards whichever service is most appropriate, whether that service is provided at a state, territory or Commonwealth level. Further, the committee endorses Recommendation 22 of the *Who Cares...? Report on the inquiry into better support for carers*, calling for the establishment of a dedicated Carer / Disability Unit at Centrelink. This dedicated Unit should be accessible via disability services one stop shops.

NOTE

The Commonwealth Government notes this recommendation and supports greater accessibility to information and streamlined assessment processes for people with disability, their families and carers.

The Commonwealth will consider this recommendation under broader disability and carer reforms including the development of the foundations for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have been working on reforms to improve service planning and simplifying access under the National Disability Agreement. A *National Framework for Service Planning and Access for Disability Care* has been developed. The Framework aims to reduce the complexity of systems used by people with disability, their families and carers by making it easier to navigate across and between systems and focus on a person centred approach to service delivery. The Framework outlines the key principles and objectives to be incorporated in jurisdictional service access and planning frameworks. It also features current good practice in the provision of key objectives. All governments have developed plans to support the implementation of the Framework.

As indicated in the Commonwealth Government's response to the *Who Cares...? Report on the inquiry into better support for carers*, there are a number of supports and mechanisms in place to ensure carers receive appropriate and accurate advice, in particular those with complex needs. The Department of Human Services is implementing Service Delivery Reform, transforming the way its services are delivered to make it easier and quicker for customers, including people with disability and carers, to access government services so that they have more control and better support and assistance when it is needed.

The Service Delivery Reform measures include co-located shopfronts, more mobile and outreach services, case coordination, Local Connections to Work and other support services.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs improve its website to make information about disability services and planning support more up-to-date, comprehensive and navigable. In so doing, the Department should establish a working group, which includes carers, people with disabilities and disability services organisations, to seek feedback on matters of design, utility and accessibility.

AGREE IN PART

The Commonwealth Government will ensure that the website of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (the Department) is accessible and easy to use for everyone in the community. This includes meeting the new website accessibility standards (WCAG2.0), agreed to by all Commonwealth and state and territory governments, at the required compliance level by the end of 2012.

The Department agrees to review the material on its website about support provided by the Commonwealth Government to assist people with disability, their families and carers to plan for the future. While the Department's website is not an appropriate mechanism to provide comprehensive information about supports and services available for particular issues, a link will be created on the website to a national stocktake of future planning initiatives for families of people with disability (to be released in 2012).

The Commonwealth Government values input from people with disability, their families and carers in the development and implementation of policies, programs and services that directly affect them. The Department will continue to engage people with disability, carers and peak bodies, including the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, in the development of initiatives that are designed to improve access to information for people with disability, their families and carers.

Recommendation 7

While the committee would like to see improvement in the quality and accessibility of information on government websites for people with disabilities and their carers, it also mindful of the limited reach of new technologies. In acknowledgement of this, the committee recommends that all levels of government should consider effective non-web-based tools for the communication of critical information on disability and planning services. The working group suggested in Recommendation 6 should also be engaged for this purpose.

AGREE IN PART

The Commonwealth Government is committed to ensuring people with disability, their families and carers have access to appropriate and timely information about services and supports. While information is available on Commonwealth Government websites to be downloaded, paper-based reports and materials are still being produced and can be requested in various formats. The National Disability Strategy, National Carer Strategy and various other documents are available on request as a hard copy report, Easy English, Braille and Audio Version.

The National Disability Strategy and the National Carer Strategy are two significant initiatives that have priority areas dedicated to improving access to information that is relevant, reliable and responsive to changing needs.

The National Disability Strategy outlines a 10-year national policy framework to guide government activity across six key outcome areas, including inclusive and accessible communities. Under this outcome, the priority area of promoting and sustaining community support networks which provide information and support to families and carers will assist in addressing this recommendation.

The National Carer Strategy outlines the Commonwealth Government's long-term commitment to recognise and support carers across six priority areas including information and access. Under this outcome, the priority area of addressing the information needs of older carers will assist in addressing this recommendation.

The Department will use existing consultation mechanisms such as the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council and national peak bodies, to gain feedback on the development of initiatives that are designed to improve access to non-web based information for people with disability, their families and carers.

Recommendation 8

The committee is seriously concerned by evidence suggesting that as many as 25 per cent of carers are not linked in with Centrelink and therefore are not receiving payment to which they are entitled. The committee therefore recommends that Centrelink review its communication strategy with respect to carers and engage local disability service providers more directly.

NOTE

The Commonwealth Government notes this recommendation and will direct the Department of Human Services to investigate, with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, how it can further raise awareness of carer payments and engage with disability service providers more directly.

Under the National Carer Strategy, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs is providing \$1.6 million over two years to fund a national and targeted campaign to raise public awareness of the role and contribution of carers and encourage people with caring responsibilities to seek assistance and support.

The campaign will promote services and supports available for carers, including carer payments. It will target the community as a whole as well as highlighting the needs of particular groups such as older carers, young carers, Indigenous carers, carers in rural, regional and remote areas and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Department of Human Services' Carer and Disabilities Communication Strategies are reviewed annually to identify and implement strategies to raise awareness of carer payments and services.

The Department of Human Services is currently exploring alternative stakeholder engagement options to target carers who might not be linked in with payments and services which they are entitled to.

Some of these options include increasing external communication and stakeholder engagement activities through third party organisations and professionals, such as medical practitioners, staff in health care settings and carers who are already engaged with the Department of Human Services. The Department of Human Services will also look to provide further education to front of house staff so they are able to provide information to customers who present for assistance in their initial contact with the department.

The Department of Human Services has developed annual stakeholder engagement plans with the aim to inform key bodies and service providers about the department's payments and services available to carers and disability recipients. These key bodies and service providers then provide this information to their members. The Department of Human Services also convenes a Carer Service Delivery Reference Group, which includes members from carer organisations throughout Australia who represent, for example, Indigenous carers, multicultural carers and young carers.

Each year, the Department of Human Services organises a number of local community events to promote and celebrate Carers Week, which is usually the third week in October. Carers Week is an annual event launched by Carers Australia.

All communication products are available upon request in alternative formats. These formats include audio CD or DVD, large print, Braille and e-text. Customers can also select the 'listen to this page' icon on the Department of Human Services Centrelink program website to hear the contents of selected pages. The Department of Human Services' publications '*Caring for someone?*' and '*Are you ill, injured, or do you have a disability?*' contain information specifically for carers and people with disability on the options and services available to them.

Further, the Department of Human Services also produces News for Carers, a newsletter for customers who receive Carer Payment or Carer Allowance that is also circulated to key stakeholders and peak bodies. In 2011 market research on the News for Carers publication was conducted to inform future enhancements to this product.

Recommendation 9

Within the framework of life-long planning, the committee recommends that the government facilitate the provision of specialist financial and legal advice to people with a disability and their carers to assist them with planning decisions, including the decision to utilise a Special Disability Trust. This advice could be made available via:

- **Commonwealth funded financial and legal planning workshops specifically targeted to address the issues that arise in disability planning;**
- **The provision of specialist advice through an established Disability / Carers' Unit at Centrelink; and / or**
- **Commonwealth funded independent legal services specialising in disability services, potentially operating in conjunction with non-government service organisations, and nationally registered on a list accessible to people with a disability and their carers.**

AGREE TO FURTHER CONSIDER

The Commonwealth Government currently provides a number of publications to assist people with disability, their families and carers to make future planning decisions.

- The *Planning for the future: People with disability* booklet includes:
 - guidance on the things to consider when planning for the future;
 - options available to families when planning for the future;
 - information about how to set up a trust;
 - information about how to obtain financial and legal advice; and
 - useful contacts in each state/territory.
- The *Special Disability Trusts: Getting things sorted* booklet includes information on:
 - planning for the future, taking account of disability issues generally;
 - how families can use trusts to provide for family members with disability; and
 - the availability of concessions from social security and veterans' entitlement means tests for eligible family members establishing a Special Disability Trust.

Commonwealth and state and territory governments under the National Disability Strategy have agreed to the priority area of developing innovative approaches to future planning, including private provision for people with disability, their families and carers. This recommendation will be considered as part of further work undertaken to progress this priority area.

The Department of Human Services will examine with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs ways to improve servicing of people with disability, their families and carers.

The Department of Human Services' Financial Information Service currently provides general information about financial matters including Special Disability Trusts but under its current mandate they cannot provide advice on these matters. Although departmental staff can provide information on the income support impacts of financial decisions including Special Disability Trusts, qualified or licensed people would need to be engaged to provide specific advice about financial, legal or taxation issues.

Recommendation 10

As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability face particular barriers accessing planning services, the committee recommends that the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health undertake research to identify how planning support can best be provided to them.

NOTE

The Commonwealth Government notes that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, rather than the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, has portfolio responsibility for undertaking research to identify how planning support could best be provided to Indigenous people.

The Commonwealth Government recognises that Indigenous people with disability and their carers face particular barriers in accessing planning support. A national stocktake of future planning programs and initiatives for people with disability, their families and carers, developed by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, identified this particular challenge. The findings of the national stocktake will be considered by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments when developing policies and programs focused on future planning options for people with disability and their carers. The stocktake will be released publicly in 2012.

Increased access for Indigenous Australians to specialist disability services was identified as a priority area under the National Disability Agreement. A *National Indigenous Access Framework* has been developed to ensure that the needs of Indigenous Australians with disability are addressed through appropriate service delivery arrangements. This framework will be released publicly in 2012.

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have also agreed to contribute \$10 million over five years to research and development under the National Disability Agreement. Research efforts will be focused on building the evidence base for policy and practice change relevant to the outcomes of the National Disability Agreement. Research into issues affecting Indigenous people with disability may be considered under this agenda.

The Council of Australian Governments has agreed high level principles to guide the development and implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Principles provide that a National Disability Insurance Scheme should be needs based and provide people with disability access to individualised care and support. To achieve this, the National Disability Insurance Scheme will build on best practice through foundation reforms to ensure equity of access by

addressing the needs of people in regional and remote Australia and people from Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

As part of the development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has also contracted the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) to provide advice on service delivery models and data capture for Indigenous Australians to better understand the nature of Indigenous disability and best practice service delivery options for Indigenous people in a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Recommendation 11

As people with disabilities living in regional and remote areas face particular barriers accessing planning support, the committee recommends that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs provide additional funding and resources to develop planning services in these areas. The committee also recommends that the Department establish a working group of people with disabilities, their carers and regional disability service organisations, to provide advice on how additional funding should be utilised.

AGREE IN PART

The Commonwealth Government recognises that people with disability and their carers living in regional, rural and remote areas face particular barriers in accessing planning support.

A national stocktake of future planning programs and initiatives for people with disability, their families and carers, developed by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, identified this particular challenge. The findings of the national stocktake will be considered by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments when developing policies and programs focused on future planning options for people with disability and their carers. The stocktake will be released publicly in 2012.

The challenges faced by carers living in regional and remote areas in gaining access to information, services and supports are also identified in the National Carer Strategy. In response, addressing the information needs of carers living in regional, rural and remote areas is included as an area of action in the Strategy.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs remains committed to engaging people with disability, carers, service providers and peak bodies in the development of programs and services that impact them, including future planning services.

The Council of Australian Governments has agreed high level principles to guide the development and implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Principles provide that a National Disability Insurance Scheme should be needs based and provide people with disability access to individualised care and support. To achieve this, the National Disability Insurance Scheme will build on best practice through foundation reforms to ensure equity of access by addressing the needs of people in regional and remote Australia and people from Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

As part of the development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has also contracted the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) to provide advice on service delivery models and data capture for Indigenous Australians to better understand the nature of Indigenous disability and best practice service delivery options for Indigenous people in a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Recommendation 12

The committee recommends that the government, through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, work with the states and territories to establish a succession planning framework. The framework should:

- **Make clear the importance of long-term planning;**
- **Provide guidance on the critical aspects of long-term planning;**
- **Take into account the individual differences of families;**
- **Support a range of approaches to planning.**

AGREE TO FURTHER CONSIDER

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have agreed to consider this recommendation under broader disability and carer reforms, including the National Disability Agreement, National Disability Strategy, National Carer Strategy and a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have developed a national stocktake of future planning initiatives for families of people with disability. The stocktake defines future planning as any activity or support that is undertaken to ensure arrangements are in place for the future care of a person with disability. Future planning is also referred to as succession or transition planning.

The stocktake identifies the key barriers that make it difficult for people with disability who are ageing, their families and carers, to plan for the future. The paper draws attention to policy and service delivery gaps present in the provision of future planning programs and initiatives across Australia. It also identifies a number of best practice features of future planning programs to be considered by governments when undertaking future work in this area.

Commonwealth and state and territory governments, under the National Disability Agreement, have also endorsed a *National Framework on Early Intervention and Prevention, Lifelong Planning, and Increasing Independence and Social Participation Strategies*. The Framework will assist jurisdictions to develop individual implementation plans which target services and resources towards:

- preventing problems from escalating;
- improving collaborative approaches across service systems;
- ensuring the system can respond to people's individual needs;
- lifelong, planned support through life stages;
- strengthening carers resilience to increase opportunities for participation; and
- improving collaborative approaches to early intervention and prevention across service systems.

Recommendation 13

The committee recommends that as part of the succession planning framework the government establish nationally consistent guidelines on lifelong planning. It is recommended that these guidelines consider matters such as: registration, constitution of boards, management of funds, governance arrangements, transparency, reporting requirements, and the role of paid facilitators.

AGREE IN PART

The Commonwealth Government remains committed to sharing information and learnings across government and the service sector and applying the best practice features of future planning programs to support national consistency in lifelong planning programs. However, the Commonwealth Government does not agree with providing prescriptive guidelines that focus on operational aspects of managing an organisation as outlined in the recommendation.

Recommendation 14

The committee recommends that the succession planning framework be the first step in the development of an integrated and coordinated national approach to planning. In making this recommendation, the committee stresses that the framework should balance the need for individualised or tailored planning support with clear standards of governance and accountability.

AGREE TO FURTHER CONSIDER

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments have agreed to consider this recommendation under broader disability and carer reforms, including the National Disability Agreement, National Disability Strategy, National Carer Strategy and a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Commonwealth and state and territory governments, under the National Disability Agreement, endorsed a *National Framework on Early Intervention and Prevention, Lifelong Planning, and Increasing Independence and Social Participation Strategies*. The Framework will provide greater national consistency with a shared vision for the disability service system that is targeted to programs and initiatives that support individuals and carers with a lifelong focus across the ageing continuum and where people with disability and their carers have enhanced choice, independence and participation in the community.

The Framework provides an overarching structure for services provided by governments and is a foundation for coordinated, collaborative action and a platform for establishing common definitions, principles and strategies to guide the disability service system.

Under the National Disability Agreement, Commonwealth and state and territory governments have also committed to people with disability having as much control as possible over their lives. To achieve this, governments have agreed to focus on how to achieve individualised approaches for people with disability while supporting the sustainability of the disability services sector.

The high level principles for a National Disability Insurance Scheme provide that this reform should take a social insurance approach that would share the costs of disability services and supports across the community. The reform should adopt insurance principles that estimate the cost of reasonable and necessary supports and promote an efficient allocation of resources based on managing the long-term costs of supporting people with disabilities and their carers while maximising the economic and social benefits.

This would involve consistent application of eligibility criteria, and the timely and efficient delivery of reasonable and necessary supports, including early intervention. A National Disability Insurance Scheme will fund reasonable and necessary individualised services and supports directly related to an eligible person's ongoing disability support needs.

Recommendation 15

The committee recommends that in its next Budget the government allocate funds to assist with the development of disability planning. It is suggested that this funding be made available to:

- **Organisations currently involved in planning;**
- **Individual families seeking to purchase planning services from providers;**
- **Other disability service organisations that intend to develop lifelong planning services for families.**

The committee recommends that this funding be made available on a recurrent basis.

NOTE

The Commonwealth Government recognises that people with disability, their families and carers have little or no certainty that they will get the support they need over the course of their lives. The design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme will incorporate the need to provide adequate planning and support for people with disability their families and carers to access and benefit from.