

**NATIONAL DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS WORKSHOP**  
**9 JUNE 2011**  
**PARKROYAL MELBOURNE AIRPORT**  
**9.00AM TO 3.30PM**

**AGENDA**

	<b>Agenda Item</b>
09.00am	1. Welcome and introductions
09.10	2. Background
09.20	3. Aligning funding agreement activities with the National Disability Strategy and the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities
9.30	3.1 Funding agreement Activities
10.15 – 10.30	Morning tea
10.30	3.2 Funding agreement deliverables
11.00	3.3 Performance indicators for 2011-12 funding agreement
12.00	3.4 Next steps
12.15 – 13.15	Lunch
13.15	4. Development of Program Guidelines
13.30	5. 4.1 Discussion on draft Program guidelines
2.45-3.00	Afternoon tea
3.00 to 3.15	4.2 Next steps and timeline
3.30	5. Close

**Agenda item 3: Aligning funding agreement activities with the National Disability Strategy and the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities**

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- 3.1: Funding agreement activities
- 3.2: Performance indicators for 2011-12 funding agreement
- 3.3: Funding agreement deliverables

Background information on each of the above agenda items can be found in the relevant agenda paper. To enable organisations to contextualise what the funding agreements might look like and where each of the above agenda items might fit a draft agreement is attached (Attachment A).

**Background:**

The National Secretariat Program commenced in 1991 as the Community Organisation Support Program. At that time, it funded national disability organisations primarily on a medical model. It also funded the National Caucus of Disability Organisations (NCDCO) which arranged meetings between Executive Officers and Presidents of national disability organisations.

The role of the Caucus involved:-

- Policy development and advice;
- Facilitating appointment of consumer representatives to government, business and community working groups;
- Coordination of campaigns on issues of shared interest.

In 2003, the Caucus was replaced by the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO). Unlike the Caucus, AFDO was funded as an ongoing incorporated independent organisation. AFDO was designed to coordinate the views of the disability sector including other disability peak organisations and subsequently provide advice to government that fully represented the interests of people with disability. Other national disability organisations continued to be funded by FaHCSIA and continued to be able to provide advice directly to government.

The Government acknowledges the significant role that national disability organisations play in representing the views, needs and ambitions of people with disability to government. The Australian Government provides operational funding to 12 national disability organisations to enable them contribute to government policies about disability issues, represent constituent views and carry information between government and the community on social policy issues.

The funding provided is used for a variety of purposes including:

- Staff salaries and on-costs directly attributable to running costs for a national organisation;
- Staff and Board training;
- Operating expenses directly related to the running costs for the national organisation. These costs could include rental for premises, office materials, utilities, insurances, office equipment, telephones, bookkeeping and audit expenses; and
- Travel and associated costs, including meal allowances (excluding alcohol) within Australia directly related to the work of a national organisation.

### **Agenda item 3.1: Funding agreement Activities**

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**Purpose:**

- Discuss and refine the Activities listed in the draft funding agreement.

**Issue:**

Funding Agreements for the national disability organisations list the key activities undertaken by each organisation. It is important that the activities in the funding agreements are consistent with what the sector has identified as key activities of national disability organisations.

It is also important that the Activities in the funding agreement reflect the intent of the National Disability Strategy and Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Following are some Activities that could be included in the funding agreements:

- Provide national leadership in the disability sector by representing the views of your constituents to government, business and the community sector.
- Support and assist state/territory peak organisations in the disability sector to address issues associated with attitudes, practices and structures which prevent people with disability fulfilling their potential as equal citizens.
- Represent people with disability at a local, state, national and international level.
- Develop and maintain collaborative and effective links with government and non-government organisations with an interest in issues impacting on people with disability.
- Contribute to government policy and service delivery through the provision of high quality and timely advice, by providing input to Australian Government reviews, inquiries and consultative process.
- Provide Government with advice about emerging issues and trends affecting people with disability and respond to requests from us for input into submissions, or ad hoc reports, in a timely manner.
- Ensure your members views are reflected in any advice provided.
- Provide Government with information on systemic advocacy issues that you have identified that affect people with disability.

- Facilitate the flow of information between the Government and your sector by factually informing your members, and the sector, about Australian Government policies, programs and services by mechanisms such as mail outs, standard spaces in your newsletters, and up to date publication of information on your website. Information flow may be initiated by us or by your organisation.
- Ensure that data and information about the Department used in documents produced by your organisation is accurate. Where an error is identified, the Departmental Officer must be alerted and the error corrected.
- Provide Government with an evidence based policy paper on a mutually agreed issue/topic. The issue/topic must align with the National Disability Strategy and/or the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or must be about an emerging issue as identified by your members.
- Maintain your membership of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) and work collaboratively with AFDO and other disability peak organisations on key issues impacting on people with disability.

**Context:**

Current funding agreements for the National Disability Organisations cease on 30 June 2011.

In considering how best we can focus the Activities in any new funding agreement it is important that we agree on what is the role of a peak and what does a peak do?

**Background:**

At a workshop held on 10 March 2010 National Disability Organisations participants summarised their vision for organisations representing people with disabilities in terms of their purpose, underpinning principles and structure / capacity.

Participants at the workshop identified that the main activities of disability organisations are to:

- Deliver frank, well-informed advice—including specialist advice on particular population and social groups
- Keep membership well-informed
- Empower people with disability to protect their rights and challenge systemic barriers
- Help build the capacity of the sector—through education and training; and development activities

- Undertake outreach and advocacy for people with disability without a representative voice

The activities listed above are consistent with the Industry Commission's definition of peak bodies "A representative organisation that provides information dissemination services, membership support, coordination, national systemic advocacy and representation, and research and policy development services for its members and other interested parties. The peak council role does not involve direct service delivery' (Industry Commission 1995, p.181)."

### **Agenda item 3.2: Funding agreement Performance Indicators**

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#### **Purpose:**

- Discuss and refine the Performance Indicators listed in the draft funding agreement.
- Note that the Performance Indicators must align with the agreed Activities to be included the 2011-12 funding agreements.

#### **Background:**

The Australian Government is required to be accountable for the funding that it provides. It must ensure that it receives value for money and is required to measure the performance of the organisations that it funds.

For the first time, the 2009-11 funding agreements for the national disability organisations included performance indicators as follows:

1. Number of pieces of expert advice provided to Government to contribute to the policy discussion in relation to the issues and trends affecting people with a disability. Target 10 papers/events/meetings (over the life of the agreement).
2. Extent to which key stakeholders are satisfied with the support and advice provided by your organisation. You will need to provide evidence to support stakeholder satisfaction claims. Criteria should include the sector's views on:
  - the amount and quality of consultation you support;
  - the usefulness of the information you provide to members; and
  - satisfaction of your representation to government of members views.
3. Number of activities held with government, non government agency, and community representation that supports the sharing of information. Target 10 per year.

#### **Discussion**

Over the term of the 2009-11 funding agreements the second performance indicator above has caused confusion amongst peaks. The performance indicator has either not been addressed, or is done as a last minute activity.

The workload involved in gathering the information to address Performance Indicator 2 varies between the peaks. The reason for this is that some peak organisations are established as individual member organisations and as such have a large amount of members whereas, other organisations are established as alliances and only have 6 or 7 members. This creates an inequity across the peaks about the expectations that the Department places on them when reporting against performance indicator two.

Several organisations have also sought clarification about performance indicators one and three and the information that can be included.

The development of the new funding agreements provides an opportunity for the national disability peak organisations to refine the current performance indicators. Both output and outcome indicators need to be developed.

Possible indicators could include:

1. Number of pieces of expert advice provided to Government to contribute to the policy discussion in relation to the issues and trends affecting people with disability, their families and carers. Target 5 papers/submissions over the life of the agreement.
2. Number of activities that support the sharing of information and community representation. Target 10 workshops/meetings over the life of the agreement. The workshop/meetings must be either instigated by your organisation or make an active contribution to issues of national importance to people with disability.
3. The extent to which key stakeholders are satisfied with the support and advice provided by a national disability organisation. FaHCISA will undertake a survey of members using the following criteria:
  - o the amount and quality of consultation you support;
  - o the usefulness of the information you provide to members; and
  - o satisfaction of your representation to government of members' views.
4. Rating by FaHCSIA of the extent to which it is satisfied that the organisation is acting as a national disability peak organisation.

To assist organisations the Department could prepare a document that outlines how it will measure performance the performance indicators, its expectations from organisations and general information about how it assesses quality, and the rating scale used.



**Agenda item 3.3: Funding agreement Deliverables****Purpose:**

- Discuss and refine the Deliverables listed in the draft funding agreement.

**Discussion:**

Funding Agreements for the national disability organisations list the deliverables that must be provided to the Department for each organisation. Some of the deliverables such as the Annual Report align with the corporate governance requirements of organisations.

In the past, organisations have been required to prepare a progress report against the Activity details that was due in August of each year. The progress report was often seen as a duplication of the annual report and was seen as a waste of time and effort by the peaks.

In addition organisations were required to provide a performance report against the performance indicators listed in the Funding Agreement. The performance report was for a calendar year and was due in January of each year of the funding agreement.

Following are some suggested deliverables for the 2011-12 funding agreement:

• Agreed policy paper topic	31 August
• Workplan identifying how your organisation will meet its strategic and business plans.	20 October
• List of members and relevant stakeholders, including contact details.	20 October
• Policy paper – final	20 January 2012
• A report against the Activities specified in the Funding agreement. The report would include information about how the organisation contributed to the Activity and the outcomes that the contribution achieved.	20 April 2012
• Copy of annual report • Audited financial statements for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012	30 November 2012

#### **Agenda Item 4: Development of Program Guidelines**

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##### **Purpose:**

- To initiate a discussion about the development of program guidelines for the National Disability Peak organisations.

##### **Context:**

The development of program guidelines will provide the Department and the national disability organisations with clarity about the:

- aims and objectives of the program; and
- roles and responsibilities (of both government and the organisations).

The guidelines would clearly define what government wants and expects from the peaks, including guidance about reporting expectations, performance reporting and the purpose of the funding provided.

The guidelines would allow the Department to be accountable for the funding that it provides to the peaks and the justification for including additional organisations where appropriate.

##### **Discussion:**

To develop program guidelines we need to revisit some of the discussions that took place at the workshop held in March last year. The report from the workshop is at Attachment A.

We will also need to consider whether all people with a disability have a voice? Are there cohorts of people with disability that do not have a representative organisation and if not how can this be facilitated within the current funding resources?

Lastly, consideration must be given to aligning the work of the national disability organisations with the National Disability Strategy and / or the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

To start the discussion the Department has prepared the following information:

##### **What is a peak?**

The Industry Commission's definition of peak bodies is "A representative organisation that provides information dissemination services, membership support, coordination, national systemic advocacy and representation, and research and policy development services for its members and other interested parties. The peak council role does not involve direct service delivery' (Industry Commission 1995, p.181)."

### **What are the overall objectives of the national disability organisations?**

National Disability Organisations inform Government about issues affecting people with disability; resulting in the development of policies that allow people with disability to fully participate in community life.

National disability peak organisations have a vital role in ensuring that people with disability have their rights promoted, upheld and protected. As a result there is improved economic and social participation of people with disability by giving them a voice with which they can influence Government policy on disability issues and potentially improve the disability services and support of the disability sector.

Funding for national disability organisations ensures that the disability sector, through their national representative organisations, has an avenue to inform Government of policy issues affecting them.

Funding also aims to ensure Government receives evidence based information which can be used to shape disability policy.

### **Eligible and ineligible activities**

Funding is to be used for:

- Staff salaries and on-costs directly attributable to running costs for a national disability peak organisation;
- Staff and Board training;
- Operating expenses directly related to the running costs for the national disability peak organisation. These costs could include rental for premises, office materials, utilities, insurances, office equipment, telephones, bookkeeping and audit expenses; and
- Travel and associated costs, including meal allowances (excluding alcohol) within Australia directly related to the work of a national disability peak organisation.

Funding is not to be used for:

- Costs that are not directly and specifically related to the running of a national disability peak organisation;
- Activities that are funded under another FaHCSIA or another Government Department funding agreement;
- The purchase of alcohol during events related to the work of the national disability peak organisation;
- Overseas travel;
- Capital works or improvements to premises. This does not include office fit-out.
- Organisations should contact FaHCSIA for advice regarding activities outside of those stated.

**Criteria for peaks**

The Department is frequently approached to provide funding to disability organisations. Access to national disability organisation funding is at the discretion of the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. This Minister may authorise entry to the funding for organisations that meet the criteria or align with the National Disability Strategy. This would be considered in the context of the overall availability of funding.

Eligibility criteria for peaks should be developed to assist with this process.

Some ideas follow:

- be national in scope and not-for-profit community based.
- concerned with issues of relevance to the needs of the Australian community with respect to family, housing and/or community services.
- Has a broad membership base (of at least 50 people) or alliance (of at least 10 organisations) in at least 6 States or Territories;
- Does not represent the interests of service providers unless it can demonstrate that no other organisation can be identified which fulfils the role of representing the consumers in their field of interest and the organisation can demonstrate it represents these consumers.
- Works on behalf of disadvantaged groups or others of interest or relevance to the Department, or on issues impacting on these groups.
- Acts as a conduit for information flow between the Government and their membership, drawing together views on issues of relevance to their membership and providing a consultative mechanism for the Department.
- Has a primary focus on policy development and advice.
- Has processes in place to effectively represent its members' views, as reflected in its reporting and communication channels, financial resources, external credibility, and internal accountability requirements.
- Does not duplicate the representational work on behalf of its constituency, compared with other peaks funded by the Department.
- Has limited capacity to be self-financing and to generate other income to run a national secretariat.
- has the ability to analyse information and effectively contribute to Government policy regarding people with disability;
- has effective governance practices supported by established governance frameworks;
- have a demonstrated ability to collaborate across all levels of Government.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

It is important to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the national disability organisations and the Department.

The Department and the national disability organisations should work in partnership to get the best outcomes for people with disability. The Department recognises the enormous work of the national disability organisations. How can the Department better serve the needs of the organisations and can they be seen as a resource for the organisations without comprising the independence?

The roles of the national disability organisations will be refined based on discussions about the Activities in the funding agreement.