



**National Disability Workforce Strategy**

**Prepared for the National Disability Service**

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**Prepared by the Physical Disability Council of NSW**

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## **Who is the Physical Disability Council of NSW?**

1. The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is the peak body representing people with physical disabilities across New South Wales. This includes people with a range of physical disability issues, from young children and their representatives to aged people, who are from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances and live in metropolitan, rural and regional areas of NSW.
2. The objectives of PDCN are:
  - To educate, inform and assist people with physical disabilities in NSW about the range of services, structure and programs available that enable their full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship
  - To develop the capacity of people with physical disability in NSW to identify their own goals, and the confidence to develop a pathway to achieving their goals (ie self advocate).
  - To educate and inform stakeholders (ie about the needs of people with a physical disability) so they are able to achieve and maintain full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship.

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) appreciates the opportunity to consider, and make comment on the National Disability Workforce Strategy for the National Disability Service.

Following a review of strategies identified in the National Disability Workforce Strategy Discussion Paper, PDCN believes that strategies aimed at ensuring that funding truly reflects the costs of service provision, and the identification, training and implementation of an accreditation tool will have the greatest impact on current service delivery and in the long term. These strategies importantly address the financial viability and service integrity of the provider of supports. Furthermore PDCN believes that a number of strategies listed below could be implemented simultaneously with the strategies mentioned above:

- A. Facilitate a process to adapt the industrial relations framework to the new context.
- B. Ensure that National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) pricing covers workforce costs.
- C. Undertake community campaigns to raise the profile of disability work.
- D. Improve the quality and consistency of accredited training.

- E. Continue to share experiences and good practice.
- F. Collaborate on functions and create service alliances.
- G. Explore minimum entry requirements for workers.

### **Ensure NDIS pricing covers workforce costs**

For people with disability to be offered choice in the provision of services, a number of similar services need to be in competition with each other and be financially viable. Different service providers compete by offering service packages that vary in the availability of different types of services and the way services are costed. With the implementation of the NDIS people with disability are now more dependent on the financial viability of community organisations and commercial services. With insecure funding the risk of service availability and/ or a reduction in the quality of services could be severely jeopardised. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring PDCN would recommend that industrial relations advice be sought regarding wage structures and costs of delivering person centred services that reflect the following codes of practice:

- Individual Program Plans (IPP) are prepared and delivered that facilitate a person-centred approach
- Plans contain flexibility in the way services are delivered
- Minimum skill levels of support staff are negotiated between relevant stakeholders
- Work environs are established that enhance fulfilling work experiences
- Relationships are developed between the service recipient and service provider that facilitate the negotiation of fees and charges
- Information is provided outlining management structures, availability of different modes of communication, availability of emergency backup 24/7, human resources policies, accreditation status and complaints/ feedback mechanism
- Advice may be sought from an advocate, family member or whoever the service recipient identifies as appropriate.

PDCN would like to reinforce the significance of [the following administrative costs and the importance for these to be considered as part of routine funding;

- Intake process, negotiating with the agency over the plan and time spent setting up activities for the service recipient;
- Travel time;
- Costs for a worker attending an activity to support a service recipient;
- Training and professional development, especially for allied health staff;
- Staff meetings and debriefing;
- Sick leave and staff replacement costs;
- Recruitment costs; and
- Supervision and quality management. <sup>1</sup>

Insufficient funding for travel is a significant issue for people with disability living in rural and regional locations. With insufficient funding and staffing, people with disability living in rural

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<sup>1</sup> National Disability Services (2014) National Disability Workforce Strategy P.8

and remote locations in the past have needed to forfeit service hours or needed to use family members on a regular basis or for when community supports have been unavailable. PDCN believes that relying on formal carers for support on a regular basis is contrary to the intent of receiving community support, and believes that people needing support should not need to compromise service delivery time, or need to depend on formal carers for support.

### **Improve the quality and consistency of accredited training**

With substantial social and legal reform to the disability sector, PDCN believes that it is crucial that an appropriate accreditation tool be sought and training is guaranteed to ensure that the quality of services are maintained. PDCN believes that the Attendant Care Industry Management System Standards (ACIMSS) could be amended to comply with the NSW Disability Service Standards,<sup>2</sup> and following the review of these Standards and adoption of amendments that these Standards be used as a self- assessment tool. This tool assesses governance and service delivery by reviewing the following disciplines relevant to service delivery;

1. Rights
2. Participation and inclusion
3. Individual outcomes
4. Feedback and complaints
5. Service access
6. Service management

Within these six board disciplines the ACIMSS contains a further eighty practice elements necessary to achieve full compliance.

With the implementation of the NDIS the following issue not considered in the Discussion Paper may needed to be considered as part of a Workforce Strategy;

- An increasing number of support staff that do not have a driver's license and/ or car. Staff availability is impacted with support staff preferring services that are at least three hours in length and for service recipients that are located near to public transport. This concern could be resolved with the availability of a pool car.

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<sup>2</sup> NSW Government- Family and Community Services (Ageing, Disability and Home Care) (2013) Attendant Care Industry Management System Standards