

Submission for the Stage 2 Consultations on the new National Disability Strategy Position Paper

October 2020

Opening

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Position Paper for the Stage 2 consultations on the review of the National Disability Strategy.

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is the peak body for local government in NSW, representing NSW general purpose councils and related entities. LGNSW facilitates the development of an effective community-based system of local government in the State.

Background

The current National Disability Strategy (2010-2020) is Australia's overarching framework for disability reform and sets out a ten year national plan for improving the lives of Australians with disability, their families and carers.

In 2019, LGNSW contributed to the Stage 1 consultations on the review of the National Disability Strategy. These consultations formed the basis of the current Position Paper, which has been developed by the federal government in partnership with state, territory and local governments. This submission provides the response from LGNSW to this second stage of consultations on the new Strategy.

LGNSW has consulted with councils and in preparing this submission. LGNSW notes that the new Strategy will be published following agreement from all levels of government. It is important that local government is included as part of this process.

Recommendation 1:

That Local Government NSW, on behalf of local government in NSW, is included in the review of the new Strategy prior to it being finalised and published.

Response

1. Vision and Outcome Areas

LGNSW supports the stated vision and the six outcome areas listed in the current strategy. These outcome areas align with the current four focus areas of public authority Disability Inclusion Action Plans, including those being delivered by local councils in NSW.

The vision and outcome areas also align with the overall intent of the new Strategy to coordinate more effectively the aims and objectives of all key stakeholders in providing a community that is inclusive of all community members.

LGNSW strongly supports the proposed Outcomes Framework and its intent of providing a clear and consistent approach across all levels of government to measure how effective mainstream and disability-specific services are at improving outcomes for people with disability.

It is important that the new Strategy aligns more closely with the aims and objectives of the NDIS, noting that only 10% to 15% of people with disability have approved NDIS plans with attached funding for these plans.

Recommendation 2:

Of the outcome areas in the Strategy, LGNSW recommends that priority be given to economic security, inclusive and accessible communities and personal and community support.

This will help to ensure that people with disability who are not supported by the NDIS can meet their needs through community services and facilities.

2. Guiding Principles

LGNSW supports the Guiding Principles¹ identified to focus the development of policy and design of programs by all levels of government and non-government organisations.

The adoption and implementation of these principles from all stakeholders will help ensure that a coordinated effort from the whole community is achieved to help to remove barriers, support economic participation and promote social inclusion.

3. A stronger focus on community attitudes

LGNSW welcomes the Position Paper noting that all levels of government and all sectors of the community share the responsibility to work together to remove barriers and shape attitudes so that people with disability can fully participate as equal members of the community.

¹ The Guiding Principles proposed in the Position Paper are: involve and engage, design universally, engage the broader community, address barriers faced by priority populations, support carers and supporters.

LGNSW also agrees with the need to address community attitudes to achieve true community inclusion. In line with adopting an integrated approach to the delivery of the Strategy, there is a need to clearly identify how this will be achieved and where it fits within the architecture of the new Strategy.

Recommendation 3:

The Department should clearly identify within the Strategy the proposed objective, outcomes and measures for addressing and changing community attitudes. This to include where this aspect fits within the Guiding Principles of the Strategy (e.g. through engaging with the broader community).

4. Clearly describing roles and responsibilities

As has been identified in the Position Paper, it is important to clearly outline what each level of government is responsible for to make it easier for people with disability to access supports and services.

Recommendation 4:

That a co-design process be undertaken with all levels of government to identify and agree on relevant responsibilities.

Recommendation 5:

That the Strategy identify required resources, including funding and funding sources, to ensure the delivery of relevant responsibilities is achieved.

Community organisations and all levels of government are, amongst others, acknowledged as key stakeholders in the delivery of the Strategy. An effective means of achieving identified outcomes is through the development of partnerships and collaborations between these sectors and all levels of government, particularly local government with its close connections to community.

Recommendation 6:

That the Strategy acknowledge partnerships and collaboration are an important element of the Strategy and that potential actions be identified and agreed by all stakeholders to nurture the development of these collaborations between each of these key sectors.

5. Reporting

LGNSW supports an annual reporting process which would include an analysis of progress against the outcomes framework and identify the contribution of government policies/programs towards achieving these outcomes.

This approach should support the integration of the Strategy reporting process through alignment with the required reporting process for public authority Disability Inclusion Action Plans in NSW.

Recommendation 7:

That an annual reporting process be identified and adopted and that this process be integrated with the reporting process for public authority Disability Inclusion Action Plans in relevant jurisdictions.

LGNSW agrees that relevant and accurate data will be essential for measuring outcomes and tracking progress and supports the establishment of a National Disability Data Asset (NDDA), which will help inform service choices by people with disability and their carers.

Recommendation 8:

That the proposed NDDA include service system data covering all local government authorities to assist councils provide or facilitate appropriate services for their local community.

6. Targeted Action Plans to drive implementation

Targeted action plans are a critical component of the Strategy to ensure identified objectives and outcomes of the Plan are achieved. The many case studies of best practice actions delivered by councils through their Disability Inclusion Action Plans is a good indicator of what can be achieved with the inclusion of targeted action plans.

7. Engagement with people with disability

The proposed engagement plan is another critical component of the Strategy development and implementation process and reflects the application of the principles of inclusive design.

To avoid duplication and to capitalise on existing structures and networks, it is important that the engagement plan utilises existing networks and forums which have already developed close connections with the local community including people with disability, their carers and family.

Recommendation 9:

That the development of the proposed engagement plan includes the identification of, and consultation with, existing reference groups such as local government access committees.

Conclusion

LGNSW welcomes the release of the Position Paper as the next stage of consultation for the new National Disability Strategy and the opportunity to provide input to this process.

LGNSW supports the overall intent, vision and proposed outcomes of the new Strategy. In particular, LGNSW supports the intent of enhancing the architecture of the new National Disability Strategy to ensure that governments, the private sector and the whole community work more collaboratively to improve outcomes for all people with disability.

To achieve this, it is important that a truly inclusive, co-design process be undertaken throughout every stage of this review and that all stakeholders are consulted before, during and after each stage of the Strategy review.

Prior to its official publication, we look forward to consultation on a final revised National Disability Strategy and associated targeted action plans and engagement plans which include resourcing, roles and responsibilities.

For further information, please contact Chris Maclean, Senior Policy Officer, Ageing and Disability at chris.maclean@lgnsw.org.au or 9242 4043

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That Local Government NSW, on behalf of local government in NSW, is included in the review of the new Strategy prior to it being finalised and published.

Recommendation 2: Of the outcome areas in the Strategy, LGNSW recommends that priority be given to economic security, inclusive and accessible communities and personal and community support.

Recommendation 3: The Department should clearly identify within the Strategy the proposed objectives, outcomes and measures for addressing and changing community attitudes. This to include where this aspect fits within the Guiding Principles of the Strategy (e.g. through engaging with the broader community).

Recommendation 4: That a co-design process be undertaken with all levels of government to identify and agree on relevant responsibilities.

Recommendation 5: That the Strategy identify required resources, including funding and funding sources, to ensure the delivery of relevant responsibilities is achieved.

Recommendation 6: That the Strategy acknowledge partnerships and collaborations are an important element of the Strategy and that potential actions be identified and agreed by all stakeholders to nurture the development of these collaborations between each of these key sectors.

Recommendation 7: That an annual reporting process be identified and adopted and that this process be integrated with the reporting process for public authority Disability Inclusion Action Plans in relevant jurisdictions.

Recommendation 8: That the proposed National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) include service system data covering all local government authorities to assist councils provide or facilitate appropriate services for their local community.

Recommendation 9: That the development of the proposed engagement plan include the identification of, and consultation with, existing reference groups such as local government access committees.