

Disability Respite Services Stakeholder Advisory Group

Terms of Reference (April 2011)

Respite

Respite is defined as a period of rest or relief. Respite care provides a carer temporary relief from responsibilities of caring for individuals with chronic physical or mental disabilities.

Context

The ACT Government committed \$250,000 for a feasibility study of the respite services delivered by Disability ACT.

The purpose of the feasibility study is to determine the optimal physical design, location and service model for the out-of-home respite services currently provided by Disability ACT.

Disability ACT provides centre-based respite services from four sites in Kaleen, Charnwood, Hughes and Narrabundah.

Respite is provided in different locations for children aged 5-12 years, teenagers and for people over 18 years.

A consultant will be engaged to assist Disability ACT with this work and is developing a business case that will be considered by Government.

This work will occur alongside:

- Continuing quality improvement activities occurring within the provision of Disability ACT respite services including that informed by the *Auditor General's Report No 3 of 2009 Management of Respite Services in the ACT*,
- The consideration of recommendations by the Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Service Enquiry into Respite Services in the ACT (report 4),
- The implementation by Disability ACT of agreed recommendations from the Standing Committee Enquiry; and

- The development of a framework to improve the provision of and access to support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability and their families in the ACT.

In December 2010, the Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services reported on government and community respite care services.

The report produced 28 recommendations aimed at improving the lives of carers and the people they care for. This report gave particular reference to:

- The auditor general's report (above),
- The needs of care recipients (including children, teenagers and adults with a disability, elderly people, people with mental health issues and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) and their carers,
- The needs of staff who provide respite care services, including working conditions and training,
- The range, availability and suitability of respite services including unmet need,
- The interaction between government and community providers of respite care; and
- The experience of service users of government and community provided respite services.

While the Standing Committee report refers to respite services for people with mental health needs, the focus of the stakeholder group is on the respite services and needs of people with a disability which is not solely or primarily attributed to a mental health need. ACT Health manages services for people who have mental health needs.

Role of the Group

A stakeholder reference group is to be established to provide advice to the Executive Director and;

- Inform the Feasibility Study into Disability ACT respite houses as it pertains to the physical design and location of the centre-based respite services currently provided by Disability ACT,
- Provide advice to Disability ACT on the model/s of centre-based service to be provided from these properties, to best meet the needs of children, teenagers and adults with disability in conjunction with the respite needs of their families and the people who care for them,
- Provide advice to Disability ACT on the range of support models that will best meet the needs of children, teenagers and adults with disability in conjunction with the respite needs of their families and the people who care for them; and
- Provide advice on the following actions from the Standing Committee Enquiry:
 - Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) and ACT Health develop a common definition of respite that includes the role, purpose and benefits of respite care for the carer and care recipient and promote the information on their websites and in relevant policy documents.

- Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends that Disability ACT conduct a review of the programs and activities at the four ACT Government centre based respite houses with a view to engaging external expertise to provide therapeutic and creative outlets for residents.
- Recommendation 4: The committee recommends that the ACT Government seek to establish after-school care programs at the four ACT Government special schools to ease the pressure on respite care services and working carers.
- Recommendation 12: The committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate flexible respite options to meet the diversity of needs, with a view to establishing new models of respite services in the ACT that are truly responsive to the needs of carers and care recipients.

Reporting

The Chair will report to the Executive Director Disability ACT.

Composition

The stakeholder group will seek representatives from:

- people who currently or previously have used the respite services
- parents of people who currently or previously have used the respite services
- Housing ACT capital works team
- Disability ACT respite service
- the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander community
- Therapy ACT
- specialist schools/Department of Education and Training
- Carers ACT

Community members will be eligible for the community participation fee as outlined in the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services' Policy.

The Chair and Secretariat support will be provided by Disability ACT.

The role and responsibility of the Chair is to:

- a) set the agenda for, and chair the meetings in accordance with, the terms of reference of the group;
- b) conduct meetings in accordance with the agenda and in a manner which enables the positive and active engagement of all stakeholders;
- c) coordinate the allocation of tasks, the provision of cross-government information required by the group and manage the work of the secretariat support;
- d) refer the stakeholder group to issues and/or recommendations which have previously been identified through review, audit or public consultations; and
- e) provide advice about the approach taken by Disability ACT or the ACT Government to respond to, or address those issues or recommendations.

Timeframes

The Stakeholder Group will convene for approximately six months from commencement.

The Respite Feasibility Study is due to the Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services by June 2011.

The ACT Government is required to provide a formal response to the Standing Committee on Health, Community and Social Services, on the recommendations in its report by March 2011. No formal input is required by the Stakeholder Group.

Meeting Format and Frequency

Agreed actions will be recorded and reported on.

Meeting frequency and methodology will be determined by the group. Methodology may include face to face meetings, teleconference; email exchange; sub group and special interest group meetings.