



STEPS TO REFORM

REFORM AND ACTION STRATEGY FOR DISABILITY SERVICES IN THE ACT 2002-05

Disability ACT

**Department of Disability, Housing and
Community Services
ACT Government**

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Introduction

The Government's response to the recommendations of the Board of Inquiry into Disability Services in the ACT provides a framework for disability reform in the ACT over the next 3 years. The Government is committed to reforming the disability service and support environment, and acknowledges that reform involves changing cultures and practices through gaining knowledge about the 'state of the art' in the disability field. It also involves creating an environment where people with disabilities, their families and carers, government, service providers, support organisations and the mainstream community are learning together and working collaboratively to contribute to a society in which:

All people with disabilities achieve what they want to achieve, live how they choose to live, and are valued as full and equal members of the ACT community.

The reforms will encompass services and supports that are available for people who are eligible under the Commonwealth State and Territories Disability Agreement, the ACT Disability Services Act 1991 (see Appendix A) and relevant Government policies.

Key Challenges

The reform program presents challenges for all those involved in the disability sector. Among those are six key challenges, including:

- Designing a service and support environment in which government, non-government organisations and community have appropriate roles in providing person-centred responses to people with disabilities and their families;
- Creating a service and support environment that is easily accessible to people with disabilities of all ages and stages of life and reduces the stress of significant transition stages i.e. from childhood to school leaving age and moving into older age. Support for people with disabilities must be flexible; that is it must be timely as identified by individuals;
- Establishing coordinated responses and policies for people with disabilities across all areas of the ACT Government;
- Creating an environment that encourages learning through small steps and initiatives and investment in people, and developing pathways that provide access to the benefits of that learning to a large number of stakeholders. People with disabilities and their families should be assisted to build the necessary knowledge and skills to have authority over their support. In addition, service providers should have opportunities to share and gain information and to participate in the re-design of current arrangements;
- In the context of high and increasing levels of demand for services, allocating resources strategically and equitably to reduce levels of unmet need and ensure that people with disabilities receive adequate and appropriate support. Innovative change must occur at a pace that creates improved service quality and satisfaction levels of people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that the disability service and support environment in both government and non-government is person-centred, flexible and innovative, and is accountable to people with disabilities and their families/carers.

This document sets out a number of priority areas for reform in the disability sector. These areas for reform comprise a significant part of the overall work plan for Disability ACT for the next three years, together with other activities, including operating the Disability Program services, managing service contracts, negotiations in relation to the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement and Minimum Data Set collection. Other important tasks include systems for data co-ordination and management.

All of these activities will contribute to a Disability ACT Strategic Plan. The reform priorities will become the centrepiece of the Strategic Plan, which will be developed following full consultation with people with disabilities, their families and carers, service providers, support organisations and the mainstream community.

Informing the agenda

The priority areas for reform flow from the culmination of a range of sources of information available to Government including:

- The recommendations of the Board of Inquiry into Disability Services in the ACT and the responses of the Government, and the Disability Reform Group to those recommendations;
- Feedback from people with disabilities, families/carers, support workers and service providers through community consultation meetings and forums facilitated by RPR Consulting;
- Advice from disability experts; and
- Research undertaken by Disability ACT, the Disability Reform Group and the Disability Advisory Council.

This advice and information has contributed significantly to the ongoing development by Disability ACT of the discussion papers outlined in the key reform activities (see pages 8-13).

Priority areas for reform

Based on the research, knowledge and consultation outcomes outlined above, the Government has developed a reform agenda with six priority areas. The six areas are equally important in that they are all integrally linked to the design of a contemporary service and support environment.

Priority areas for reform include:

1. Promote and actively contribute to making the ACT a community that welcomes people with disabilities and is highly accessible to people with disabilities throughout their life by:

- Establishing working models across the whole of government that provide for people with disabilities and their families to create individualised support arrangements within available resources;
- Co-ordinating the disability-related functions of the government agencies that provide significant services to people with disabilities including the Child Health and Development Service (CHADS), The Home and Community Care Program (HACC), Education, and Housing so that people with disabilities can easily access information

and support at all life stages and particularly at significant transition points in life stages;

- Providing specialist advice to other government departments and assisting with development of Disability Action Plans to ensure that policies, procedures and facilities in the ACT meet the Government's responsibilities as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), are reflective of the overarching objectives of the reforms, and place a high priority on the rights of peoples with a disability;
- Developing a whole-of-government marketing strategy for positioning people with disabilities, their families and carers as valued members of the ACT community.

2. Design and introduce individualised and flexible support for people with disabilities through:

- Developing sector-wide transparent and flexible eligibility and funding guidelines;
- Creating central and easy access to information and assistance to explore and create individualised and flexible supported living options;
- Investing in people with disabilities, their families and carers to design and facilitate the introduction of a responsive network of supports for people with disabilities;
- Building capacity in service providers (government and non-government), support organisations and the mainstream community to design and deliver a responsive network of supports for people with disabilities;
- Reforming the government and non-government service and support environment, in partnership with service providers and support organisations, people with disabilities, their families, carers and the community, in a manner that reflects the diversity and value of each stakeholder's input;
- Developing arrangements for supports for people with disabilities and their families that are flexible and timely;
- Fostering innovative approaches to developing the service and support environment and support types.

3. Establish a comprehensive quality framework for the disability service sector including:

- A quality framework comprised of:
 - a set of performance standards and quality indicators that support monitoring and evaluation of service performance, and encourage continuous quality improvement;
 - strategies of self assessment, external assessment and auditing to monitor results, evaluate outcomes and provide data for an ongoing cycle of quality planning;
 - incident reporting systems that support safe practice and continuous improvement;
 - strong and responsive internal complaint and client feedback processes;
 - an independent complaints resolution processes, accessible and timely;

- independent assessment of service performance including auditing of performance and compliance with standards and legislation, with a particular focus on health and safety; and
 - effective use of facts, data and knowledge to support the way strategies and plans are developed and how they are deployed.
- Effective access to independent, proactive advocacy services for people with disability and efficient systems level advocacy;
 - A stable, skilled disability workforce where staff members have appropriate roles, opportunities to establish meaningful relationships and maximise their potential to make a significant contribution to people with disabilities.

4. *Amend the Disability Services Act 1991 (ACT) to:*

- Reflect the new structure, profile and partnership approach to disability in the ACT;
- Establish statutory powers to increase mechanisms and authority to enforce safety and quality standards of services for people with disabilities;
- Establish objectives that reflect the Government's contemporary approach to disability services and provide the framework for flexible and individualised support from which to develop disability policy.

5. *Development and Implementation of a workforce strategy concerned with:*

- Ensuring that people with disabilities have access to accurate information, support and a pool of skills to assist in creating flexible and person-centred lifestyle options and supported living;
- Valuing carers, support workers, managers and leaders and ensuring that they have adequate access to training, support and continuous education opportunities that expose them to different working environments, cultures and styles;
- Incorporating professional development and staff satisfaction in broad quality framework;
- Promoting and maintaining opportunities to advance a career in the disability sector.

6. *Establish flexible and appropriate housing and tenancy options for people with disabilities through:*

- Developing housing and tenancy models and approaches and creating options that consider support arrangements and provide for people with disabilities to have ordinary tenancy rights;
- Ensuring that housing policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of people with disabilities;

- Undertaking community education and consultation activities regarding housing and tenancy options.

Approach to Reform

Reforms will be steered by Disability ACT, in consultation with stakeholders and, initially, the Disability Reform Group. A permanent community advisory body, to be appointed in February 2003, will play a key and ongoing role in steering reform.

Disability ACT, in consultation with the Disability Reform Group, will establish a series of targeted reform working groups. Disability ACT will coordinate communication and monitor progress among the working groups to ensure that the reform is well sequenced and consistent with the overall principles of Disability ACT. The working groups, in collaboration with the Government and the Disability Reform Group/community advisory body, will be responsible for establishing work plans and developing detailed reform implementation strategies.

Disability ACT, with advice from the Disability Reform Group/community advisory body and the working groups, will be responsible for designing, introducing and promoting a comprehensive disability service system across the whole of government that recognises the rights of people with disabilities and is highly accessible to people with disabilities throughout their life.

Community Participation

- In five of the key reform areas, working groups will be established comprising government representatives and representatives from key disability interest groups able to contribute particular expertise. The working groups will undertake research, seek expert advice, community education activities, establish policy area-specific principles and publish and widely disseminate discussion papers;
- Where appropriate, consultation will occur through existing community forums and networks;
- All people with an interest and expertise in disability reform will have opportunities to contribute to development of policies through attendance at forums to hear new ideas and exchange views. Arrangements will be made to facilitate and ensure involvement of people with disabilities;
- Policy discussion papers will be subject to comprehensive consultation procedures through information forums, written submissions and the ACT Government electronic consultation process. Consultation mechanisms will be widely advertised and adequate time allowed for people to respond to discussion papers;
- A regular reform newsletter will be issued jointly by the community advisory body and Disability ACT through the DRG mailing list and will be published on the Disability ACT website.

Accountability

The Reform working groups, informed by broad community consultations and expert advice/research, will work with the Disability Reform Group/community advisory body to advise government on the detailed direction of the reforms.

A theme that emerged through the community consultations facilitated by RPR Consulting was that Government should demonstrate accountability to the community in relation to meeting milestones during the reform process. To this end, Disability ACT has undertaken to establish a work plan in each of the priority reform areas with milestones clearly indicated, and to publish accomplishments in relation to those milestones in regular newsletters and on Disability ACT's website.

Examples of Key Reform Activities (Draft)

Some of the key activities that will be undertaken in the reform process are summarised below under the headings of the priority areas, including broadly indicative dates for delivery of key outputs. Working groups in each of these areas will undertake a significant level of participatory planning that will be the basis for positive and progressive disability sector re-design.

<i>Individualised and flexible support options for people with disabilities and families/carers</i>			
Targets	Activities	Outputs	
Eligibility policy developed and implemented	Working group to develop eligibility discussion paper. Expert advice to be obtained as recommended by working group.	▪ Discussion paper	Nov 2002
	Working group to conduct consultations, including a public information forum.	▪ Consultation feedback	Mar 2003
	Working group to develop eligibility policy	▪ Eligibility policy	Apr 2003
	Working group to develop eligibility policy implementation plan.	▪ Implementation plan	May 2003
		▪ Evaluation report	Dec 2003
Access policy developed and implemented	Working group to develop access discussion paper. Expert advice to be obtained as recommended by working group.	▪ Discussion paper	Nov 2002
	Working group to develop draft consumer access model	▪ Draft consumer access model	Dec 2002
	Working group to conduct consultations, including a public information forum.	▪ Consultation feedback	Mar 2003
	Working group to develop access policy.	▪ Access policy	Apr 2003
	Working group to develop access policy implementation plan	▪ Implementation plan	May 2003
		▪ Evaluation report	Dec 2003

<p>New consumer access arrangements developed and implemented</p>	<p>Working group to further develop and refine consumer access model</p> <p>Working group to conduct consultations</p> <p>Working group to develop 3-stage implementation plan for new access arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refined consumer access model ▪ Consultation feedback ▪ 3-staged implementation plan ▪ Stage 1 implemented ▪ Stage 2 implemented ▪ Stage 3 implemented ▪ Evaluation reports 	<p>Mar 2003</p> <p>Apr 2003</p> <p>Jun 2003</p> <p>Jul 03-May 04</p> <p>Jun 04-Mar 05</p> <p>Apr 05-Dec 05</p> <p>May 04, Mar 05, Dec 05</p>
<p>Funding policy developed and implemented</p>	<p>Working group to develop funding discussion paper. Expert advice to be obtained as recommended by working group.</p> <p>Consultation on implementation to be held with service providers.</p> <p>Working group to develop funding policy.</p> <p>Working group to develop implementation plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion paper ▪ Consultation feedback ▪ Funding policy ▪ Implementation plan ▪ Evaluation report 	<p>Dec 02</p> <p>Mar 03</p> <p>Apr 03</p> <p>May 03</p> <p>Dec 03, Dec 04</p>
<p>Innovation Projects implemented in up to 3 stages</p>	<p>Innovation Fund Steering Committee to be established</p> <p>Innovation Fund to be advertised and promoted to the community</p> <p>Steering Committee Innovation projects to be selected for funding</p> <p>Innovation Fund projects to be evaluated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Steering Committee ▪ Advertisement ▪ Applicants selected ▪ Evaluation reports 	<p>Oct 03, Apr 03, Oct 03</p> <p>Oct 02, Apr 03, Oct 03</p> <p>Jan 03, July 03, Jan 04</p> <p>To be negotiated</p>

Establish a comprehensive quality framework for the disability service sector

Targets	Activities	Outputs	
ACT Disability Services Standards developed, including indicators	<p>Consultant to conduct project to enhance Disability Services Standards and develop indicators, in consultation with the sector</p> <p>Self-assessment instrument to be developed to assist agencies with internal assessment against the new ACT Disability Standards.</p> <p>Agency self-assessments to be carried out</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ACT Disability Services Standards and Indicators ▪ Self assessment instrument ▪ Self-assessment reports 	<p>Jul 03</p> <p>Oct 03</p> <p>Apr 04</p>
A quality framework implemented across the sector	<p>Review of existing quality systems to be conducted</p> <p>Working group to consult on the review</p> <p>Working group to develop a quality framework and implementation plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report on existing systems ▪ Consultation feedback ▪ Quality Framework ▪ Quality Framework implementation plan ▪ Evaluation and progress reports 	<p>Jun 03</p> <p>Jul 03</p> <p>Oct 03</p> <p>Jan 04</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Complaints and advocacy mechanism established	Pending receipt of the outcomes of the Review into of existing community advocacy and watchdog agencies, Disability ACT will undertake the relevant activities necessary to implement the recommendations	Schedule to be determined	
Disability Services Improvement Scheme established	Working group to design and implement Disability Services Improvement Scheme	Schedule to be determined	
Quality framework reflected in the Workforce Reform Plan	Working group to consult with Workforce Strategy Working Group.		

Amend the Disability Services Act 1991

Targets	Activities	Outputs	
Amendments to the Disability Services Act enacted	<p>Working group to develop a proposal for amending the Act</p> <p>Consultations to be conducted</p> <p>Cabinet submissions and drafting instructions to be prepared</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposal for amendments ▪ Consultation feedback ▪ Cabinet Submissions 	<p>Mar 03</p> <p>Apr 03</p> <p>Jun 03/Mar 04</p>
An effective community consultation mechanism, established, including appointment of a community advisory body	<p>Communication strategy to be developed</p> <p>Working group to design and oversee a review of the current advisory structure arrangements for disability, including partnership considerations</p> <p>Working group to develop proposal for new advisory structure and arrangements</p> <p>Consultation to be conducted</p> <p>Advisory body to be selected and appointed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication strategy ▪ Report on current advisory structure and arrangements ▪ Proposal for new arrangements ▪ Consultation feedback ▪ Community advisory body 	<p>Jan 03</p> <p>Dec 02</p> <p>Dec 02</p> <p>Dec 02</p> <p>Feb 03</p>

A workforce strategy for the disability sector

Targets	Activities	Outputs	
Workforce Reform Plan implemented	<p>Consultant to review the current workforce structure and training needs</p> <p>Working group to develop a Workforce Reform Plan</p> <p>Working group to conduct consultation (including consultation with the Quality working group)</p> <p>Negotiations with staff and unions to be undertaken</p> <p>Working group to develop Reform implementation plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultant’s report and recommendations ▪ Workforce Reform plan ▪ Consultation feedback ▪ Results of negotiations ▪ Reform Implementation plan ▪ Evaluation report 	<p>May 04</p> <p>Aug 04</p> <p>Sep 04</p> <p>Feb 05</p> <p>May 05</p> <p>Dec 05</p>
Education and awareness raising program developed, implemented and evaluated	Education program to be developed on 6-monthly cycle of consultation, planning and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education and awareness program design ▪ Implementation plan ▪ Delivery of program ▪ Evaluation report 	<p>6 monthly</p> <p>6 monthly</p> <p>6 monthly</p> <p>Annual</p>

<i>Flexible and appropriate housing and tenancy options for people with disabilities</i>			
Target	Activities	Outputs	
Successful transitions to more flexible and appropriate housing/tenancy arrangements	Working group to consult on effectiveness of current housing policies and procedures for people with disabilities, and on housing and tenancy options	▪ Consultation feedback	June 03
	Working group to review current models and research world best practice, including the use of expert advice, and develop options paper	▪ Options paper	Sept 03
	Working group to contribute to the review of the Residential Tenancy Act	▪ Revised Act	
	Government to consult with people with disabilities, their families/carers and service providers regarding transition	▪ Transition plans and evaluation reports	Ongoing

Reform Timeframe

The program outlined above represents an initial phase of disability reform. Good and lasting systems that are responsive to learning and continually improving must be based on comprehensive planning and extensive consultation and collaboration. If as a sector in partnership, we are able to achieve the outcomes set out above, we will have established an environment of development that is progressive and flexible.

With this framework established, in 2005 the Government will be able to embark on further advancement and innovation.

With the support and involvement of those with an interest in disability matters, the ACT Government is committed to fostering progressive disability approaches in this dynamic environment.

Appendix A: Definition of Disability

Commonwealth State and Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA)

Under the CSTDA, people with disabilities refers to the targeted age range of 0 - 65, where disability is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury (or come combination of these) which is likely to be permanent, is unrelated to ageing, requires ongoing or episodic support, and results in substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the following areas: self care/management, mobility, communication.

ACT Disability Services Act (1991)

The Act defines disability as that which is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments; which is permanent or likely to be permanent; and which results in a substantially reduced capacity for communication, learning or mobility, the need for continuing support services; and which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature.