Western Australia and the National Disability Insurance Scheme: Update September 2012

On 3 September 2012 the Premier of Western Australia wrote to the Prime Minister on a proposal for a NDIS Launch site in Western Australia.

The letter reaffirms Western Australia’s commitment to a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and seeks Commonwealth Government’s agreement to develop a NDIS launch site in Western Australia.

Western Australia has sought agreement to build on the State Government’s existing My Way initiative (see Fact Sheet 3) by jointly working with the Commonwealth Government to progress and establish the NDIS in two sites effective from 1 July 2014, with a further two from 1 July 2015.

The proposed sites include both metropolitan and regional locations and include providing services and supports for people with a psychiatric disability, eligible under the NDIS.

People in the proposed launch areas would benefit from both the advances in choice and control intended from the My Way initiative and the additional funding and national consistency resulting from the NDIS. Around 7,700 people with disability would be involved in the launch area.

The proposed NDIS My Way sites provide an important opportunity to trial key aspects of the NDIS, whilst building on those elements already in place in Western Australia. Key elements of the Western Australian proposed arrangements for NDIS My Way sites are outlined in the attached paper.

Western Australia’s proposal is that the total funding for the launch site (estimated at $270 million a year) is evenly divided between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government. The State Government has committed to providing its share of $135 million a year and with a similar investment from the Commonwealth Government, both Governments would jointly meet the funding level estimated for the proposed eligibility requirements.

Funds Management

State-based NDIS funding pool would be established, with WA’s NDIS funding account overseen by a WA NDIS Board. Proposed membership would include a representative from the WA Disability Services Commission, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), Insurance Commission of Western Australia and the National Disability Launch and Transition Agency. Overall, the WA NDIS Board would be responsible for monitoring the financial sustainability of NDIS through actuarial modelling and monitoring of approvals processes as well as ensuring the NDIS is administered in a manner that supports individualised funding, choice and control. The WA NDIS Board will be accountable to the WA State Minister, who would also be represented on an NDIS COAG Council.

Administration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Current WA infrastructure ¹</th>
<th>WA proposal for launch – NDIS My Way ²</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>• Experience and knowledge base in the consistent application of eligibility criteria</td>
<td>• WA to adopt nationally consistent eligibility criteria</td>
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<td>• Robust system for determining eligibility for services based on a sound eligibility policy framework developed by the Disability Services Commission</td>
<td>• Eligibility criteria will be applied using the existing eligibility determination processes</td>
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<td>• Eligibility is currently confirmed by Local Area Coordinators, Disability Services Commission or endorsed service providers based on the eligibility policy framework</td>
<td>• NDIS My Way Coordinators based in local communities will apply the nationally consistent eligibility criteria to determine eligibility for the NDIS</td>
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<td>• The Disability Services Commission has an established appeals process for intellectual disability and Autism. Other appeals are managed via disability sector organisations</td>
<td>• NDIS My Way Coordinators participate in education and training from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)</td>
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<td>• Appeals to be made through the WA NDIS Board</td>
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<tr>
<th>Information and entry points</th>
<th>Current WA infrastructure ¹</th>
<th>WA proposal for launch – NDIS My Way ²</th>
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<td>Multiple information and entry points to the disability services system:</td>
<td>Multiple information and entry points to the NDIS:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Local Area Coordinators</td>
<td>• A web based information portal (including the NDIA)</td>
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<td>• 120 Disability Service Organisations</td>
<td>• Community based NDIS My Way coordinators</td>
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<td>• Disability Services Commission</td>
<td>• Mainstream service points in remote locations (e.g. nursing posts, mental health services, HACC service points)</td>
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<td>• Mental Health Commission</td>
<td>• A small number of disability service organisations funded</td>
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¹ This reflects current arrangements in the disability sector, noting that reforms are currently underway to progress similar person centred arrangements in the mental health sector.

² The WA proposal, including progressing the My Way initiative, reflects reforms in both the disability and mental health systems.
| **Planning (general)** | • Established network of community based Local Area Coordinators work with individuals and families to engage in planning processes or to broker planning services as required  
• Planning often leads to individuals and families accessing community supports, mainstream services and strengthening informal support networks | • Locally based NDIS My Way Coordinators will be available to directly assist individuals/families to engage in planning processes or to broker planning services as required, through disability service organisations  
• Planning often leads to individuals and families accessing community supports, mainstream services and strengthening informal support networks |
| **Assessments and approvals** | • Individualised funding allocation processes through an independent local panel with intensive experience in disability and local understanding  
• Individualised funding allocations are determined on the basis of an individual plan  
• Trained and experienced Disability Services Commission staff conduct assessments on individual needs, taking into consideration short-term and long-term goals, resources and individual strengths | • WA adopts nationally agreed assessment tools  
• Approvals are delegated to State assessors trained by the NDIA  
• Common approach to approvals adopted by WA NDIS Board, including thresholds for delegated approvals  
• WA assessors based in NDIS My Way sites use nationally approved assessment tools and agreed planning processes to determine funding allocations to individuals  
• WA assessors use nationally agreed definitions of ‘reasonable and necessary’ as the basis for approving individualised plans and allocating funding  
• WA NDIS Board is approver of last resort for very high cost and high risk cases  
• NDIA provides training support to WA assessors  
• Funding allocations will be subject to regular national comparability assessments  
• Full transparency and data collection of approved packages |
| Planning (services and supports) | • Trained and experienced Disability Services Commission staff work with individuals and families to develop short term and long term plans that are individualised, taking into consideration the local context and resources  
• Individuals are assisted at the level they require  
• Planning involves focusing on many aspects of the individual’s life including individuals’ needs, strengths and local environment.  
• Individual plans are used as the basis for determining funding allocations to individuals | • WA adopts nationally agreed planning framework for individualised planning  
• Locally based NDIS My Way Coordinators will be available to directly assist individuals/families to engage in planning processes or to broker planning services as required |
| Individualised funding | • Extensive experience with administrating and allocating flexible individualised funding packages  
• Individualised funding packages have a strong planning component which identifies and assists to meet individuals’, carers’ and families’ needs. Local panels have a strong knowledge of local contexts/environments, the local community, resources, services and an understanding of the disability requirements within these  
• Individualised funding can be used in a variety of ways to purchase supports and services | • WA adopts nationally agreed process to determine funding to individuals  
• Funding to individuals will be based on an agreed national assessment  
• Individualised funding can be used in a variety of ways to purchase supports and services based on an approved plan  
• Funding plans will be reviewed on a regular basis (initially after 12 months) |
| Person-centred supports | • Experienced and trained Local Area Coordinators employed by the Disability Services Commission undertake person-centred planning  
• Local knowledge of environments, resources, supports and services  
• People with disability are able to develop and implement personal plans  
• People with disability, families and carers choose the degree of self-direction and self-management an individual has over their supports and services  
• Local Area Coordinators and a range of Disability Support Organisations provide assistance with self-direction and shared-management of services | • WA adopts national definition of eligibility and ‘reasonable and necessary’ supports  
• NDIS My Way Coordinators will maintain an on-going relationship with individuals/families in the NDIS My Way sites as the basis for building natural support networks and linking people to community-based supports and mainstream services  
• WA Disability Services Commission will administer the individualised funding system including portability transfers, using existing systems and reporting processes  
• Reporting arrangements and data collection to be managed by the WA Disability Services Commission, including liaison with the WA Mental Health Commission  
• WA Disability Services Commission/Mental Health Commission will ensure that systems and processes are in place to enable individuals to self-manage or share-manage their own supports and services |
| Mature, sustainable and diverse disability sector | • Robust and sustainable disability sector (over 100 organisations)  
• Disability Services Commission holds service agreements and undertakes contract management  
• Funding and contracting arrangements with Disability Service Organisations (DSOs) support choice and control and service viability  
• DSOs have experience with individualised funding and planning  
• Strength in governance – DSOs have initial pre-qualification process which ensures an effective business and service delivery model, financial and governance capacity.  
• DSOs are paid quarterly in advance, with first quarter loading to assist with cash flow | • WA will adopt a nationally developed frameworks for workforce development  
• WA Disability Services Commission, Mental Health Commission and NDIA will work jointly to build and sustain sector capacity in the NDIS My Way sites  
• WA Disability Services Commission and Mental Health Commission will maintain contracts with disability service organisations, including ongoing contract management (where relevant) |
| Local Area Coordination | • State-wide network of Local Area Coordinators  
• 42 Local Area Coordination offices across WA  
• 167 Local Area Coordinators in WA  
• Effective supervision and management arrangements to support Local Area Coordinators  
• Local Area Coordinators have developed strong and beneficial relationships with many individuals, families and carers  
• Strong local network and community development role  
• Extensive relationships with disability service providers and community service providers  
• Extensive skills and experience in long-term and short-term planning  
• Local Area Coordinators have long established remote area strategies to ensure effective support to people in remote areas of the state  
• Individual advocacy support for people with disability and families  
• Allocation of discretionary funding to individuals/families to meet immediate/short-term needs | • WA to progress transition from LACs to NDIS My Way Coordinators  
• WA Disability Services Commission will retain responsibility for recruitment, training, supervision and management of NDIS My Way Coordinators in My Way sites – at agreed national ratio and in consultation with NDIA  
• NDIS My Way Coordinators will be responsible for:  
  1. Determination of eligibility  
  2. Provision of information  
  3. Needs analysis and planning  
  4. Connecting individuals with local community based supports and mainstream services  
  5. Connecting individuals with Disability Services Organisations and professional services  
• Agreed funding arrangement between State and Commonwealth to fund NDIS My Way Coordinators |
| Data collection | • Data collected at various points, for varying requirements | • WA to adopt national data requirements  
• WA data systems to inter-operate with National Agency’s system and will facilitate mutual sharing of data  
• Data on all individualised funding will be provided to WA NDIS Board  
• Data on all individualised funding will be provided on a regular basis to the WA NDIS Board and NDIA |
| Portability | • Sector experience in providing choice, control and flexibility  
• Individuals can and do change service providers within WA, and take funding allocations with them  
• Well-developed system between the Disability Services Commission and Disability Services Organisations to work together during transition times | • WA to adopt nationally consistent approach to eligibility, approvals and assessment to facilitate portability  
• Agreement with National agency and other jurisdictions on appropriate funds management/transfer arrangements |
| Quality & safeguards | • Independent Quality Assessors use a Quality Management Framework to measure the outcomes achieved for an individual, guided by the following criteria:  
1. Maintenance and/or improvement of the social, mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual and cultural aspects of the individual’s life  
2. Participation in a lifestyle of the individuals choice  
3. Relationships are diverse and contribute to the individual's life and social connections  
4. Home, the place where a person lives, is safe, secure, comfortable and a place where they can be themselves | • WA to utilise existing quality framework initially and transition to a nationally consistent approach to quality and safeguards over time  
• Independent Quality Assessors use National Quality Management Framework to measure the outcomes achieved for an individual, guided by the following criteria:  
1. Maintenance and/or improvement of the social, mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual and cultural aspects of the individual’s life  
2. Participation in a lifestyle of the individuals choice  
3. Relationships are diverse and contribute to the individual’s life and social connections  
4. Home, the place where a person lives, is safe, secure, comfortable and a place where they can be themselves |
| Grandfathering | • Individuals currently in receipt of an funding package retain their current level of funding unless there is a significant change in their circumstances | People with existing packages, services and supports will retain their current arrangements unless there is a significant change in their circumstances |