



## **South Australian *Joint Solutions Cross Sector Collaboration Roundtable***

**Balcony Room, Parliament House, Adelaide**

**19 September 2014**

### **The Joint Solutions Roundtables**

The arrival of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the ongoing imperative to progress the National Disability Strategy (NDS), have highlighted the pressing need for mainstream programs to participate in the reforms underway around services and supports for people with disability. While the issue of developing workable interfaces between specialist disability programs, mainstream programs and the NDIS has been discussed in many forums, little practical attention has been given to how this can be achieved and what outcomes are sought for governments, providers and people with disability.

The *Joint Solutions Roundtables* have been convened by the YPINH National Alliance in the jurisdictions to interrogate how these cross-program connections can be developed. The Adelaide Roundtable focussed on the imperatives around the NDS and the NDIS in South Australia.

### **South Australian Roundtable**

Over 25 participants met in Parliament House, Adelaide's *Balcony Room*, to discuss the need for improved cross sector collaboration at the *Joint Solutions Cross Sector Collaboration Roundtable* convened by the Young People In Nursing Homes National Alliance on September 19.

Representatives from Disability SA, Health SA, the SA Attorney General's Department, Education SA, the South Australian Council of Social Services (SACOSS), SA Transport and the SA Office of Sport and Recreation, joined representatives from the NDIS and advisors from the offices of Minister for Disabilities, Tony Piccolo, and Minister for Education and Child Development, Jennifer Rankine, to discuss how better cross sector collaboration could be achieved.

The Alliance's National Director, Dr Bronwyn Morkham, welcomed participants and thanked Minister Piccolo for his support in hosting the Roundtable in Parliament House.

Bronwyn then spoke of the Alliance's 14-year history of championing improved coordination across multiple portfolios as part of the solution to the YPINH issue. She also spoke of the lessons that the Younger People In Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) initiative had delivered that were highly relevant to the development of the NDIS.

Chief amongst these was that, despite YPIRAC aiming to resolve a cross-sector and cross-jurisdictional problem, it ended up being a *disability services only* initiative delivered by State and Territory disability programs. As such, it could not deliver the



much-needed systemic reform across the health, housing, disability and aged care sectors that was (and still is) really required.

In commenting that the overarching issue of system reform to deliver cross sector pathways and collaboration to support people with disability was not new, Bronwyn concluded her remarks by indicating that the advent of the NDIS offered a significant opportunity to undertake a reform process of benefit to all stakeholders.

Roundtable participants then moved to the question of how key programs were addressing interface development in South Australia. Representatives from Disability SA, SA Health and SA Education services gave their views about where they saw the development of systemic interfaces between their departments in the world of the NDIS.

Executive Director of Disability SA, Dr David Caudrey, commented that current work had a clear timetable, with the NDIS moving to full scheme operation in 2018. While other Commonwealth/State instruments, such as the HACC agreement that dictates funding responsibilities for people with disabilities over/under 65, will also have an impact, effort is essentially directed at NDIS transition.

David also raised the question of how, in the future, the various mainstream programs might deal with those young people in aged care with chronic health conditions who may not be eligible for the NDIS.

In 2018, he said, it is likely that Disability SA would cease to exist in its present form. As a result, the future of many of the programs Disability Services had delivered to fill mainstream service gaps for people with disability was uncertain. David reiterated that all service programs needed to plan for this and that with less than four years to full NDIS rollout, no-one could afford to be complacent. David also stressed that the importance of the National Disability Strategy should not be forgotten.

Lyn Dean from SA Health commented that South Australian health services are attuned to the cross program issues. One issue they are dealing with presently is the large number of individuals with approved Aged Care Assessments still in hospital settings awaiting placement in the aged care system. Lyn also indicated that major barriers to cross-program collaboration do exist, barriers that are partially driven by very black and white approaches to how programs operate and to how they manage their borders.

Lyn indicated that while this needs to change, the effort to do so must be a shared task. Lyn was aware of numerous individual cases where the health system had the skills and capacity to better coordinate services across programs. However, taking the initiative and undertaking the coordination role to benefit the patient, carried the risk for health services of other responsible programs leaving the health service



with the total funding responsibility. Lyn concluded by saying that with over 140 people with aged care assessments needing to move out of acute settings, there is a pressing need to work on a pathway of care with other programs.

Improved protocols that encouraged collaboration would, she believed, be very useful to enable change and good practice in this area. If we are to move beyond the 'who pays for what' commentary that seems to drive much of the discourse between programs at present, there needed to be genuine partnership between programs with recognition of the mutual benefit such collaborations could deliver – and it needs to start with breaking down the black and white approaches to meeting joint responsibilities for individuals with complex needs.

In offering an educational perspective, Education SA's Ksharmra Brandon said the Education Department were highly conscious of the objectives of the National Disability Strategy as well as working with the NDIS to implement the terms of the bi-lateral agreement. This meant identifying in-kind services to be contributed to the NDIS as well as working on the bureaucratic transitioning of school transport and personal care in schools to the NDIS.

Roundtable participants were then invited to introduce themselves and indicate what they hoped to gain from the morning's discussion.

Topics for discussion raised by participants included

- The evolving role of mainstream agencies with the advent of the NDIS.
- The need for collaboration across government to nationalise service costs.
- The challenges involved in generalist and specialist programs working together.
- The need for clear strategies to enable collaboration with other sectors and programs.
- How can departments coordinate effort to deliver the SA disability justice plan?
- The need for clear and agreed 'connections' with lead agencies to manage stigma and the complexities of their support requirements for forensic clients requiring distinct and well supported pathways on exit from prison; and the development of a clear pathway of specialist and community support for these clients.
- The need for involvement of consumers and family members in the process alongside government departments and service organisations.
- How can the NDIS' commitment to working with mainstream agencies and with people with disability and family members be brought to life to generate a range of collaborative responses?



- The role of transport in transition to the NDIS.
- The need for health services to identify transition strategies as the NDIS comes online.
- The role of the National Disability Insurance Agency in identifying what connections are needed between programs, across portfolios.
- People with disability ineligible for the NDIS would soon be turning to mainstream agencies for assistance previously provided by disability services.
- Who would be responsible for driving the reforms that were clearly needed between and across programs?
- Service coordination is the core business of departments and should not be an afterthought or an add-on.
- Systemic coordination should not adversely impact consumers. In many ways it is the role of the wider service system to organise itself and not leave major gaps.
- Cross program links and collaboration needs to be about more than just referral from one program to another, but involve joining up the various supports and services that people need over the long term.
- Programs and departments needed to be aware of the barriers to effective cross sector collaboration that include:
  - Sharing of information
  - Concerns about confidentiality
  - Interagency protocols
  - Development and availability of well-resourced databases.

It was agreed that these observations provided a comprehensive list of elements that are pertinent to the work required in South Australia with regard to developing effective cross program connections.

### **Research project briefing**

Ros Madden, from the University of Sydney's Centre for Disability Research and Policy (CDRP), then gave a detailed briefing on the benefits of cross sector coordination revealed through a joint research project of the CDRP and the YPINH National Alliance for the National Disability Insurance Agency.

In describing the approach of the research to cross sector collaboration, Ros articulated the importance of an integrated approach at three levels. The *macro* (government), *meso* (community services) and *micro* (consumers and family members) must be linked horizontally (across programs) and vertically (at all 3 levels) if coordination is to be fully effective. In explaining this framework, Ros



provided a useful lens through which to approach cross sector reforms and the collaborations that would underpin it.

In commenting on Ros' presentation, Dr Peter Tyllis, South Australia's Chief Psychiatrist and Director of Mental Health Policy, indicated his keen desire for better partnership and collaboration between mainstream programs that would improve the outcomes for individuals with psychosocial disabilities. Peter called for access to discretionary funds for service initiatives and whole of government agreements to underwrite cross sector initiatives that carried mandates from Ministers and Cabinet.

In line with the discussion about whole of government initiatives, the Alliance's Director of Policy and Innovation, Alan Blackwood, raised the issue of the *Better Pathways* program. This school transition program is an initiative of the Social Inclusion Unit within the South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet with funding from the South Australian Department of Education.

*Better Pathways* was one of the Australian cross sector programs examined in the NDIA research, and was found to be an exemplar model for its comprehensive cross sector approaches at the macro and meso levels; and its flexible design around the needs of students and early intervention capacity.

This important program creates collaborative pathways for young people who would otherwise not have access to successful school transition opportunities, therefore maintaining the risk of ending up in the justice system, the mental/health systems, unemployed, or utilising disability services as a fallback funding and support regime. As well as benefits to students, these other programs derive direct and indirect benefits from the program, as is the case with well-designed cross-sector initiatives that were studied in the research project.

Alan highlighted the *Better Pathways* program as an example of the need to maintain capacities and networks developed by programs prior to the arrival of the NDIS. Of value to the NDIS in the future, these pathways are of value now to a range of other South Australian programs including justice, employment and health services, for their ability to offer early intervention and deliver improved outcomes to students.

Despite this, *Better Pathways* has funding certainty only until the end of the 2015 school year, putting it risk of winding up ahead of the inclusion of the school transition age group in South Australia when the NDIS is at full scheme.

Alan concluded by saying that the problem with curtailing good models and programs is that they don't grow back quickly, easily or sometimes at all. A whole of government lens would be helpful in assessing the value of this and other programs like it, particularly in the context of the NDIS rollout.



Following a brief break for refreshments, participants were asked to consider 3 questions.

These were:

*1. Collaboration and partnership*

With regard to collaboration and partnership, participants were asked to consider how the capacities of services, sectors and consumers alike (goodwill, skills and community connections) could contribute to collaboration between governments and departments and improving the capacities of mainstream programs? They were also asked to consider what would be needed to make this happen?

*2. Getting beyond 'who pays for what?'*

Looking at how to move towards reform rather than simple cost allocation considerations, participants were asked to reflect on how we might get beyond such a simplistic approach to develop cross program interface agreements that would encourage substantial progress on program improvements.

*3. Who should lead the reform around cross-sector collaboration?*

In considering the question of 'Who takes the lead?' in these efforts, roundtable participants were asked to think about who would/could/should take the lead in generating specific service development imperatives that needed to go across sectors, such as those required to deliver comprehensive rehabilitation services or school transition programs. They were also asked to consider what would be needed to underpin these joint developments; and how mainstream agencies could be supported to build their own capacity to include people with disability in their programs.

With regard to how the capacities of sectors, community services and consumers could contribute to improving the capacities of mainstream programs, participants commented that

- Improved processes for sharing information between commonwealth, state and local agencies was needed as a matter of urgency
- Increased consultation was needed in designing systems; and improved information and training in how services utilised these systems, once running, was also a basic necessity
- Ways to involve people with disability and their families in this design process were important to successful effort
- Finding ways that can target particular cross sector pathways (such as justice, education, employment and others); and tailoring processes to involve all relevant parties
- Better information sharing regarding other programs' and agencies' policies and procedures



- Changes in government, senior administration officials and policies meant for a fluid and dynamic environment that made it hard to stay apprised of changes and their impact on service pathways
- Reducing the duplication of assessment and review for individuals and families is an important component of this process.

In responding to the ‘Who takes the lead?’ question, participants voted resoundingly in favour of a truly partnered approach in which programs – including the NDIS – worked together to arrive at agreed goals and outcomes; and invested in a variety of approaches to achieve these agreed outcomes.

The National Disability Strategy (NDS) was again raised as the instrument that should be guiding the mainstream agencies, but that work with the NDIS was essential in working out how various programs could come together around the needs of individuals.

It was generally agreed that the NDS and the NDIS were companion reforms, and the NDIS needs the NDS to be fully implemented to achieve its key objectives.

It was also agreed that the leadership around these imperatives needed to be shared and that the NDIS had a key responsibility for defining the roles mainstream agencies needed to play.

COAG was also mentioned as the key mechanism responsible for delivering the imperative for mainstream portfolios to embrace this reform across governments.

Comment was also made that the NDIS could assume an “incubator” role in this area, collaborating with mainstream programs to develop specific service responses of benefit to NDIS participants, but that ultimately lay outside the scheme’s responsibility. Participants supported the NDIS-as-incubator role that left the Scheme able to withdraw once the new mainstream service pathways were running effectively, leaving mainstream programs to manage and maintain these new service responses for those with disability.

In response to ‘Getting beyond the ‘who pays for what?’ question, participants were clear that co-funding arrangements between programs were preferred to cost/responsibility shifting; and that *all* services, not just disability services, should be required to contribute to service pathway costs. It was also agreed that work is urgently needed to identify the required joined up pathways and develop these co-funding models. Finally, participants recognised that while many pathways would need to be individualised, there would be enough scale to enable investment in this work.

Roundtable participants also felt strongly that operational agreements were needed if collaborative arrangements were to be effective; and that this was especially



needed where service providers were involved in delivering cross program arrangements. Comment was also made that while many inter-government and intra-government agreements articulate high-level objectives, more would be needed to encourage collaboration and innovation to replace silo-specific approaches.

A cautionary comment was also made indicating that while individuals with disability need access to mainstream services, they also sometimes need funding for specialist disability services and that this funding should be made available for these services as well.

People in the room acknowledged the fine work of the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) and the pivotal role it has and will continue to play in working on the transition to the NDIS in South Australia. Other programs will be looking to work with them in the coming years.

### **Concluding remarks**

There was a strong sense from roundtable participants that the work that had already been done in South Australia, plus a strong awareness of the opportunities for more collaborative development of integrated service pathways, boded well for more detailed discussions locally.

Participants floated a number of ideas for potential cross sector coordination trials similar to those outlined in the Cross Sector Collaboration research discussion paper. Disability, Justice, Health and Mental Health were all identified as areas that would be keen to develop an approach that could be evaluated in the NDIS transition phase. Participants said they would meet privately to explore these possibilities.

In bringing the roundtable to a close, Bronwyn again thanked Minister Tony Piccolo for his support in hosting the event and expressed her gratitude to participants for their enthusiastic contributions.





## South Australian Cross Sector Coordination Roundtable

### List of Participants

Mellanie Fernandez, A/Director, Offender Rehabilitation Services, Department of Correctional Services

Ksharmra Brandon, Manager, National Projects, Special Education from Student, Aboriginal and Family Services, Department for Education and Child Development

Stephen Brock, Senior Policy Officer – Policy and Research, Policy, Projects and Technology Division, Attorney-General's Department

David Caudrey, Executive Director, Disability SA

Dr Peter Tyllis, Chief Psychiatrist and Director of Policy, Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse, SA Health

Lyn Dean, Director of Operational Strategy, SA Health

Trish Spargo, Chief Project Officer, Disability Strategy, Disability SA

Lorna Hallahan, Evaluator with NDIS Evaluation, School of Social Work & Social Planning, Finders University [as observer]

Mary Leaker, Principal Policy Officer in Disability Strategy, Disability SA

Zofia Nowak, Director, NDIS Reform, Disability SA

Nancy Penna, Director, Community Services, Disability SA

Geoff Slack, Director Housing Strategy & Re-imagine, Housing SA

Kylie Taylor, Director, Sport and Recreation Development, Office of Sport & Recreation

Lynn Young, Executive Director, Disability & Domiciliary Care Services, Department for Communities & Social Inclusion

Ros Madden, University of Sydney's Centre for Disability Research and Policy

Emmanuel Cusack, Ministerial Advisor, Minister Tony Piccolo's office

Lea Smart, Ministerial Liaison Officer, Minister Tony Piccolo's office

Phillip Beddall, SACOSS

Meryl Zweck, SA Trial Site Manager, NDIS

Jo Wickes, Community Engagement, SA NDIS

Michele Doyle, Manager, SA Transport Subsidy

Paul Simionato, Manager, Compliance, SA Transport

John Fulbrook, Ministerial Advisor, Minister Rankine's office

Alan Blackwood, YPINH National Alliance

Dr Bronwyn Morkham, YPINH National Alliance