

Sunnyfield Matters



NDIA CEO, Robert De Luca visits Sunnyfield

Sunnyfield had the pleasure of hosting Robert De Luca, CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Liz Neville, Business Manager, Provider Engagement on Friday 2 March 2018. Mr De Luca was invited to visit Sunnyfield to meet with Directors and Senior Leadership and discuss proposed recommendations to improve the NDIS implementation, meet with clients and families accessing Sunnyfield services and tour Sunnyfield Enterprises.

Sunnyfield and a large number of NSW disability organisations are experiencing a number of significant difficulties in the practical implementation of the NDIS. During the visit Karen Ingram, Sunnyfield Board Chair, Tom Pockett, Sunnyfield Board Deputy Chair, Caroline Cuddihy Sunnyfield CEO and Bruce Tosello, BD&F General Manager raised key issues currently facing service providers and participants under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The following recommendations were raised to improve the implementation of the NDIS:

- 1) making the NDIS easier for people with intellectual disability and their guardians
- 2) promoting employment for people with disability
- 3) addressing community access and transport pricing
- 4) reviewing the Shared Independent Living pricing model
- 5) clearer processes to access Shared Living Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)
- 6) streamlining NDIS policies and processes to make it less complex
- 7) making the NDIS portal easier to use
- 8) improving NDIS payments for services delivered by providers.

“Sunnyfield is committed to advocating and working with participants, families and guardians to improve the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Today was a positive step forward in highlighting the significant issues facing both providers and participants under the NDIS. Sunnyfield will continue to work with the sector and the NDIA to develop a service model that is sustainable and promotes choice and control for people with disability in Australia.” Caroline Cuddihy, Sunnyfield CEO.

From left to right
Tom Pockett, Karen Ingram,
Caroline Cuddihy, Liz Neville
and Robert De Luca.

Registered
NDIS
provider



Sunnyfield
disAbility Services

Message from the CEO and Chair

Dear clients, families, guardians, and friends of Sunnyfield, 2018 seems to be already progressing at a fast pace. Key to Sunnyfield at this time is providing assistance where requested to clients families and guardians at a time of transition under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. For clients in South Sydney, it is their first time transition into the NDIS. For other clients, they are completing their NDIS year one 'My First Plans' and preparing to transition to their 'My Second Plans'.

This can be a difficult time for families and guardians as they prepare and assemble substantiating information for NDIS planning meetings. Sunnyfield is pleased to assist where requested. Whilst many families, guardians and clients have had a good NDIS experience, a number of people have found difficulties in contacting the NDIS, and experienced NDIS processes that are inconsistent, complex and not user friendly. For many whose 'My First Plan' has expired there can be frustrating delays before an NDIS 'My Second Plan' is approved, which in some cases has caused support funding gaps.

Sunnyfield and many other disability sector organisations have had their own challenges with the much needed NDIS. At the end of January 2018 the NDIS outstanding bill owed to Sunnyfield was \$5.5M. A large part being due to several months of funding gap when 'My First Plans' expired and the person with disability as yet does not have a new NDIS 'My Second Plan', whilst Sunnyfield continues to deliver these vitally important support services. NDIS processes are also causing significant unfunded administration costs to providers like Sunnyfield, who will continue to support clients in resolving 'My Plan' expiry gaps, and seeking 'Plan Reviews' and new NDIS client supports.

Sunnyfield has been advocating with Government and the NDIA to improve NDIS systems and processes to reduce their complexity, make them consistent, pay overdue debt, and reduce the 'Red Tape' for all involved.

In addition, the one to one (and one to two) person Community Access support fixed NDIS pricing, is proving to be problematic for providers to place skilled staff and include centre based facilities at these pricing levels in a financially viable way. Sunnyfield made a submission to McKinsey & Co., who were commissioned by the NDIA Board to conduct a consultant NDIS pricing review in 2017. The McKinsey & Co. report findings were released by the NDIA on the 8th March 2018 for public comment.

At this time of NDIS national roll-out, with the NDIS issues being faced, it is challenging the financial performance of providers, with many disability sector organisations facing FY18 financial losses. Sunnyfield Board and management are working closely and diligently to respond to and change the way Sunnyfield operates to minimise the negative impact to Sunnyfield's operating financial results, working capital and hard built Balance Sheet reserves. An example of this is the current process of Sunnyfield transferring its FACS properties leases to the Gateway 2015 Properties Trust (a Community Housing Provider), as instigated by NSW Government.

As last flagged at the 2017 AGM, 2018 is also the time for the Board to undertake the planned Sunnyfield Constitution renewal process, so our organisation's Constitution is compatible with the NDIS, declining membership numbers, attracting future directors with federal government expertise and knowledge and to be ready for the future market challenges and opportunities (with sector partnership and amalgamations occurring) head. We look forward to working closely with the Sunnyfield community as we face these challenges, changes and opportunities together.

Best regards,

Karen Ingram Sunnyfield Board Chair
Caroline Cuddihy Sunnyfield CEO



Above
Karen Ingram,
Sunnyfield Board Chair
(right) and Caroline
Cuddihy, Sunnyfield
CEO (left)



State of the disability sector report

In December 2017 the 'State of the Disability Sector Report 2017' was issued by the National Disability Services (NDS). The report provides an overview of the sector and issues facing NDIS participants and service providers across Australia.

Below is a summary of the key issues presented as part of the findings

Plan development and implementation: The quality and consistency of NDIS plans is not good enough, causing unnecessary red tape for participants, disability service providers and Government.

Pricing: Many NDIS prices have remained too low. Prices must be based on evidence to allow for high-quality services and supports.

Shortages in rural and remote areas: The NDIS gives people with disability increased choice over their supports, but choice relies on having options. There is a real risk of inadequate supports in rural and remote communities. It is critical these areas have sufficient flexibility for local decision-making, without compromising the core principles of the NDIS.

Communication concerns: There is a lack of communication and consistency in regions where a Local Area Coordinator has been appointed. This leads to confusion for NDIS participants and service providers. Prompt, consistent and transparent communication is needed. Communication from the Government to both NDIS participants and disability service providers has been either too limited or too complex.

Quoting and plan review: Delays in quote approvals and lack of information about new plans is leading to lagged payments affecting cash flow and efficiency. Resolving this requires working with the sector to fix system and process issues.

Communication and responsiveness: Poor response rates on the NDIA's 1800 information line continue to adversely impact disability service provider efficiency. In turn, this places stress on relationships with already overstretched local NDIA staff. Information needs to be more readily and consistently available.

Provider portal and service booking arrangements: The functionality of the provider portal is limited and improvements have been slow. A public and accountable timetable for improved portal functionality designed in partnership with the sector is needed.

Transport shortages: NDIS transport funding tiers are inconsistently applied. A targeted approach to address these challenges is required.

To view the NDS 'State of the Disability Sector Report 2017' visit www.nds.org.au



NDS IS DETERMINED TO SEE THE NDIS SUCCEED. TOO MUCH IS AT STAKE TO LET IT FAIL. THE STATE OF THE DISABILITY SECTOR REPORT SHOULD HELP INFORM AND INFLUENCE THE DIRECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPORTANT DISABILITY REFORMS

Dr Ken Baker, AM, Chief Executive NDS

A GIFT TO BUILD A DREAM ON

Creating shared living home opportunities for people with disability

There are many people with disability who would like to live in a shared living home. However there is a shortage of appropriate housing solutions, and a lack of affordable options is a significant limitation in Sydney. A number of families are working in partnership with Sunnyfield to create accommodation solutions for people with disability that provide benefits for clients, families, guardians and Sunnyfield.



Help create the reality of a lasting home for your family member

There are a range of options available to help secure the future living arrangements for your family member, including:

- Leasing a house to Sunnyfield
- Setting up a house in trust
- Donating a house to Sunnyfield
- Leaving a gift in your Will to Sunnyfield
- Bridging any rental gap on a leased house
- Jointly funding to build a house with other families

The NDIS's Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) funding may be available, depending on the house, location and client support needs.

Sunnyfield will assist families and clients to understand how any of these options may be suitable for their situation. Please note that we cannot provide specific financial or legal advice and recommend that you consult an independent advisor.

To get things started contact Amanda Trotman for a confidential discussion.

T 02 8977 2723

E a.trotman@sunnyfield.org.au

Feedback

We're not only in the business of improving lives, we also are in the business of improving the way we do it. So, if you have any feedback about the things we have done well, or the things we could do better, then please get in contact and send an email to our confidential email account at feedback@sunnyfield.org.au

Contact us

T 1300 588 688
E enquiries@sunnyfield.org.au
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