



ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

FORMAT FOR AGENCIES TO ANSWERS QUESTIONS

Department of Communities

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Hon Jacqui Boydell MLC asked:

1. Disability Services - I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 1, Page 250, under the heading Explanation of Significant Movements and I ask:
 - (a) Can you please advise which regional residential services have been or will be downsized or closed as a result of a reduction in expenditure and staffing?

Answer:

The reduction in expenditure and staffing outlined in Budget Paper 2, Volume 1, Page 250, does not represent closure or downsizing of capacity of any regional residential services. The reduction relates to a more accurate reclassification of expenditure to reflect individualised funding arrangements, and the redirection of forecasted growth funding to other key service areas in response to the changing needs and priorities of people with disability.

- (b) What other areas have been allocated funding that was originally allocated for residential services in regional WA?

Answer:

Forecasted growth funding originally allocated to residential services has been distributed across various disability service areas. These include planning and coordination, community participation, and therapy and specialised care in regional and metropolitan areas.

- (c) What measures have been put in place to ensure the reduction in residential services in regional WA does not have an adverse effect on those that would normally access these services?

Answer: Not applicable.

2. Disability Services - I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 1, Page 236 under the heading significant issues impacting the agency and I ask:
 - (a) How is the transition to the NDIS in the Pilbara and Kimberley being progressed and at what cost, in the absence of the decision on the service delivery model?

Answer:

The NDIS is being progressed by the Department of Communities, Disability Services, across the Kimberley and Pilbara. As at close of business on 29 September 2017, 200 people with disability had an approved NDIS plan in the Kimberley Pilbara catchment. The average cost of all plans is \$23,230 per person and the average cost of funded plans is \$36,434 per person.

To support the roll-out of the NDIS, Disability Services has initiated a number of localised communication and engagement activities in regional and remote Western Australia to raise awareness of the NDIS and provide advice to people with disability, families and carers, service providers and the broader community about how the NDIS will operate.

Disability Services has also funded a range of Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) initiatives to increase NDIS readiness across WA. Since 1 July 2017, ILC activities in regional and remote WA NDIS roll-out areas, including the Kimberley-Pilbara, have included engagement activities, resource development, workshops and group and individual information sessions. Additional activities are planned for the remainder of 2017.

(b) What is the timeline for deciding on the appropriate NDIS model?

Answer:

The State government is currently reviewing the decision by the previous government for a State-administered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Since coming into Government, Minister Dawson has been consulting extensively with people with disability, their families and carers, peak bodies, individual service providers and a range of industry and special interest groups regarding the operation of the Scheme in Western Australia (WA). The State Government is currently evaluating the alternatives, including joining the Commonwealth Scheme, and will make an informed decision that is in the best interests of WA and its people.

(c) What provisions are you making for the unique circumstances of those in regional WA in particular those living remotely?

Answer:

Disability Services has a network of eight offices across the Kimberley and Pilbara. These offices are located in Kununurra, Fitzroy Crossing, Derby, Broome, South Hedland, Tom Price, Newman and Karratha. The NDIS is being implemented through the WA NDIS model which utilises a network of Local Coordinators who travel to meet people as required and offer a face to face planning service. Plans have been developed for people living in the Western Desert and other remote locations across the region.

3. I refer to Budget Paper 2, Volume 1, Page 244 under Homelessness and Other Support Services and I ask:

(a) The amount of full time equivalents (FTE) employees has decreased due to the departments district structure review, what impact will this have on delivery of service?

(b) What measures have been put in place to ensure the reduction of staff does not impact the delivery of service?

(c) What is the reduction of FTE employees in regional WA?

Answers: to be provided by Hon Simone McGurk MLA.