



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

MEDIA RELEASE

From: Ms M.M. Quirk, MLA
Chair

To: ALL MEDIA

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Disability funding shortfall leaves trail of despair

THERE seems to be little relief in sight for people with disability who have to compete with one another for limited accommodation and family support funding.

Committee chair Margaret Quirk said that with the full roll-out of the NDIS not expected until 2020, people with disabilities who are not part of the NDIS/My Way trials could be looking at another six years of tough competition for funds.

For people in crisis who are desperate for support, the NDIS is a long time away. They want to see immediate improvements to the system of disability funding.

*– Community Development and Justice Standing
Committee chair Margaret Quirk*

Ms Quirk was commenting on findings contained in the Committee's latest report, ***Client driven? Or driven to despair?***, tabled in Parliament today.

The Committee has just completed its Inquiry into Accommodation and Intensive Family Support Funding, which examined the Combined Application Process (CAP) – the Disability Services Commission's (DSC) system for allocating funds to house and support those most in need.

Of 679 applications for Accommodation Support and Intensive Family Support funding made in the most recent CAP round (one of two rounds this financial year), **only 68 were successful**.

Ms Quirk said that unless the State Government increased the level of funding to the Disability Services Commission, hundreds of people in desperate need would continue to miss out.

With the limited funds being allocated on the basis of urgent and critical need, the Committee heard that CAP applicants felt compelled to emphasise the most negative aspects of their lives, and in some cases to exaggerate their circumstances.

The Committee also found that the process for applying for funding was onerous, demeaning and stressful. The DSC was criticised for failing to provide enough information about the assessment criteria and the outcome of each funding round.

Ms Quirk said there appeared to be an unwarranted level of complacency about the current levels of service provision.

The report title reflected that the principal focus of disability services should be the individual needs of the disabled and their families. As detailed in the many case studies in the report, this often did not occur and caused families to become despairing and lose hope.

“The Committee did not hear any evidence to confirm the assertion that Western Australia is relatively better off than other States,” Ms Quirk said. “Even if this is the case, it is clear we can do better.”

The report made 22 findings and 18 recommendations relating to the CAP process, the level of unmet need and the extent of planning required to meet increasing demand.

Copies of the report are available for downloading from the Committee’s website under ‘Reports’ at www.parliament.wa.gov.au/cdjsc

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