**REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DISABILITY ADVOCACY PROGRAM**

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| **MODELS OF FUNDING**  1.1 How do people with disabilities, their families and carers benefit when agencies are funded to provide one or two models of support?  The models of support provided in a particular geographical location in Australia, should depend on the particular needs for advocacy in that location. For example, a remote/rural area may have a particular need for individual and/or family advocacy.. This is not to say that other types of advocacy are not needed in this location, but rather individual and family advocacy are the prominent types of advocacy needed in that particular community. All types of advocacy should be available in all communities, but at varying levels, depending on the needs of the community.  1.2 What are the drawbacks?  Two main drawbacks are financial and Human constraints. The best way to way to provide advocacy across the many demands is to ensure citizen advocacy is available to people with no informal supports and that well funded and well resourced individual advocacy is available in local areas. Advocates must be enabled to work through issues with people for as long as it is needed and not just on a superficial level.  Vcb  1.3 How do we value and support the various models of advocacy while ensuring access to individualised, fit-for-purpose advocacy, regardless of location?  Efforts should always be made to ensure that advocacy efforts always fit into the needs of individual communities. However, this does not mean that communiities should managed their advocacy efforts in separate small silos from each other, as this is not an effective use of resources. Whenever possible, advocacy agencies should have opportunities to network and work collaboratively to ensure that people with disabilities have access to individualised, fit for purpose advocacy, regardless of where they happen to live. |
| **IMPROVING ACCESS TO ADVOCACY SUPPORTS**  How do we improve access for:   * + people with disability from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their families?   + people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and their families?   + people with disability in rural, regional and remote locations?   + people who are very socially isolated including those with communication difficulties and those in institutional care?   There are a number of way we can improve advocacy supports for these marginalised groups. First, be prepared to change the way we disseminate information in a way that it can be easily understood, eg: in different languages, have forums that are specific to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders or people from CALD backgrounds, disseminate more information to people with disability in rural, remote and regional locations , via post, email, social media , skype or by having a certain number of advocacy workshops dedicated to people who reside in these locations each year.  When it comes to people that are very socially isolated including those withh communication difficulties and those in institutional care, people working within the advocacy field could work with family members, carers or friends, the people who know the person with a disability the best to try to assist them in their efforts to advocate for the person, for example, a friend could help a person with a disability, communicate with an advocate, these people could also fill an advocate on a person's background.  **2.2 What are the strategies or models that have worked? What are the strategies that do not work?**  It is vital that the person with a disability is a central part of the process, regardless of the severity their disability. Collecting data from advocacy agencies on a regular basis could involve compelling them to collect and store certain types of data. This information could be stored manually within a secured filing system, or electronically on a database. The type of information collected could include the number of people being supported, the nature of advocacy being delivered and how funding is being spent. This information could be utilsed, when making decisions on how to improve funded by the National Disability Advocacy Program. |
| **IMPROVING THE ADVOCACY EVIDENCE BASE AND CO-ORDINATION OF SYSTEMIC ISSUES**  3.1 What mechanisms could be used to ensure information on system issues gets to the right people and organisations?  Electronic mailing lists can be a tool to gettting information to people, particularly chosen people could be invited and/or strongly encouraged to join the mailing list. Maybe giving people and organisations, opportunities to network on a regular basis-including holding forums, workshops on various systemic issues. Sending news bulletins and other kinds of information via the internet could be another strategy.  This information could include a monthly list of new resources on systemic issues regarding systemic advocacy, and where they could be obtained, linking people with disability to systems advocacy organisations- such as Queensland Advocacy Incorporated that deliver educational opportunities on a range of issues.  3.2 How can we help disability advocacy organisations work with a wide range of other organisations with similar aims, such as:   * disability people's organisations * the Ausralian Human Rights Commission * Ombudsman organisations * aged care advocacy organisations * state disability advocacy organisations * peak bodies?   Encourage all advocacy organisations in each state to regularly network with each other and share information and strategies. This has been done successfully in Queensland, with the formation of the Combined Advocacy Groups of Queensland, which regularly hold teleconferences across the state. Systems advocacy organisations such as Queensland Advocacy Incorporated also network regularly with the state's Community Legal Centres. |
| **THE INTERFACE WITH THE NDIS AND ADDRESSING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**  4.1 What steps or organisational structures should be put in place to ensure conflicts of interests do not arise, or are minimised?  People acting as advocates should be compelled to identify and deal with, not only real, butperceived conflicts of interest that could be caused through having other roles and allegiances. These can and do affect the advocate's decision making and advocacy efforts, if not addressed. Advocates also need to identify factors that might compromise their own efforts by examining their attitudes, values, needs, and relationships to minimise personal conflicts of interest. Above all else, the advocate must act in the best interests of the person/people with disability, and only in their best interests, no one else's.  4.2 How do we avoid gaps between supports provided by the NDIS and advocacy funded by the NDAP?  The NDIS and NDAP should work collaboratively to ensure no gaps exist in the advocacy supports of people with disabilities. When it comes to making decisions about who offers which types of advocacy, the best interests of people with disabilities must be considered. The NDIS should not provide any individual advocacy, as independency of the NDIS is critical. The NDIS should only fund capacity building and the decision support and education component.    4.3 What policies and strategies do we need to protect the rights of people with disability?  We need to make sure that advocates act:   * in the best interests of people with disabilities * in a way that does no harm to people with disabilities * minimising conflicts of interest * continuously questioning whether they can improve their advocacy efforts. * in an ethical manner |
| **UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE**  5.1 What forms of legal review and representation do people with disability need most?  The most deafening need of people with disabilities when it comes to legal advocacy, is support when it comes to dealing with the Criminal Justice System. This is particularly prevalent for people with intellectual disabilities caught up in the court system or find themselves incarcerated in correctional facilities. Another area in which people with disabilities could need legal assistance is family law, in the case of forced sterilisations, custody matters where the parents have disabilities, restrictive practices, guardianship and involuntary treatment.  5.2 What barriers prevent people with disabilities from accessing justice?  The follow barriers prevent people with disabilities from accessing justice:   * police have not identified an offender/victim as having a disability * The court system lacks awareness of people witth disabilities and are unable to cater for their individual needs. * Corrective Services inadequacy caters for people with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. * The general perceptions of people with disabilities within the community.   5.3 What models of legal advocacy are most effective?  The most effective models of legal advocacy for people with disabilities, are those who work in conjunction with the mainstream justice system. At some point, people with disabilities are going to have to deal with the mainstream justice system, it is better for them to be offered some kind of specialist assistance in dealing with this system, rather them having to try to solely navigate such a system. Some Community Legal Centres work very closely with people with disabilities and are the best model of legal advocacy, they also provide training to other CLC'S, as well as some private law firms. |