

Review of the National Disability Advocacy Program Discussion Paper Ethnic Community Services Co-operative Feedback

<p>About Ethnic Community Services Cooperative</p>	<p>Ethnic Community Services Co-operative (ECSC) has 37 years of experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and mainstream service providers across the disability, aged care and child care sectors in NSW. Our vision is that every Australian from a CALD background has the opportunity to participate fully in Australian society and receive services that are relevant and appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>ECSC welcomes the opportunity to make give feedback on the Review of the National Disability Advocacy Program Discussion Paper (April 2016).</p>
<p>1.1. How do people with disability, their families and carers benefit when agencies are funded to provide only one or two models of support?</p>	<p>In addition to receiving independent advocacy that is free from conflict of interest, people with disability must receive independent advocacy that is of exceptional quality. Working on specific models of support allows organisations to develop the expertise and community connections necessary for effective delivery of advocacy services. For example, by focusing on the needs of people with disability from CALD backgrounds (e.g. through recruitment of bilingual staff, development of multilingual resources and relationships with community organisations) advocacy services can be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of our community and the complex ways in which cultural perceptions of disability and the migration experience can affect people with a disability from CALD backgrounds.</p> <p>Many disability service providers lack the capacity to develop expertise or resources to respond to the totality of complex issues facing the diverse group of people with disability living in their communities. Funding of specific models of support allows advocacy services to develop expertise in working with specific stakeholders. Such expertise can then be shared amongst the sector, for example by providing cultural competency training to service providers who may lack capacity in this area.</p>
<p>1.2. What are the drawbacks?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many services lack capacity and funding to share their expertise in providing specialised advocacy services with others to build capacity across the sector • Competitive tendering processes and short-term funding for advocacy services may impact negatively on the readiness of organisations to share best practice and expertise



<p>1.3. How do we value and support the various models of advocacy while ensuring equitable access to individualised, fit-for-purpose advocacy, regardless of location?</p>	<p>Equitable access to specialised advocacy support can be achieved if organisations are funded to work cooperatively, for example through building regional and inter-regional referral networks. In order to achieve this aim it is vital that the expertise of each organisation is valued and funded adequately so that organisations are not competing with each other for limited funding or tenders that require organisations to provide a full range of advocacy services outside their area of expertise and organisational capacity. This challenge can be met by providing opportunities for prospective co-tenderers and sub-tenderers to connect (both in person and via online databases).</p>
<p>2.1. How do we improve access for:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The national approach to funding must be flexible and responsive to diversity of people with disability in Australia, for whom access to advocacy services may be important. This is particularly so for people who experience additional barriers to accessing information and participating in the community, including many people from CALD backgrounds. - Resources must be developed and disseminated in community languages, included workshops for CALD communities on disability rights and services available to uphold these rights - Partnerships with local CALD community organisations need to be developed and maintained to enable outreach and service access - Targeted community outreach and education is critical for addressing cultural perceptions of disability and engaging people with a disability from CALD backgrounds in services and supports which promote their rights - Free access to translating and interpreting services for both clients and service providers needs to be provided. • People with disability in rural, regional and remote locations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding allowances need to be made for additional costs or time spent for provision of specialised advocacy services in remote locations by services that may not be available locally - Maintaining a state-wide advocacy service directory of all funded services (NDAP, state and Commonwealth will facilitate referrals and

	<p>cooperation between organisations to allow of equitable access to the full range of advocacy services for people living in rural and remote locations, including services currently supporting people from Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are very socially isolated including those with communication difficulties and those in institutional care? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By providing funding for outreach activities and community liaison
<p>3.1. What mechanisms could be used to ensure information on systemic issues gets to the right people and organisations?</p>	<p>Regular consultation</p>
<p>4.1. What steps or organisational structures should be put in place to ensure conflicts of interest do not arise, or are minimised?</p>	<p>Advocacy funding should target organisations providing specialist advocacy services that are independent from service provision.</p>
<p>5.2. What barriers prevent people with disability from accessing justice?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is critical for disability advocacy to promote community education and awareness about disability issues and rights, including legal rights. Some people with disability especially from CALD background tend to have limited knowledge about their human and legal rights, as identified through the consultation process for the National Disability Strategy. Lack of understanding can lead to barriers when accessing and receiving services. Community education empowers people with a disability enabling them to build their confidence to self-advocate for their needs, rights and goals being met. Furthermore it will enhance their problem solving skills which will contribute to their sense of independence. • Community education should be delivered through partnering with local community organisations with strong connections to local CALD communities, to enable outreach of people with disability who may be isolated from the service system and to address stigma within communities. • To provide effective access to justice for people with disability from CALD backgrounds, freely accessible interpreters are crucial in overcoming linguistic barriers when dealing with legal institutions