**Submission to the National Disability Insurance Scheme Code of Conduct Discussion Paper**

**The Australian College of Community and Disability Practitioners (ACCDP)** operates under the auspices of the by the Australian Services Union (ASU). The college was established to empower community and disability practitioners in establishing standards of practice for work in the social, community and disability services sector. The ACCDP is governed by a Board comprising employer representatives; academics; practitioner representatives and is Chaired by a senior practitioner who is also President of the ASU NSW & ACT (Services) Branch.

The ACCDP supports the introduction of a Code of Conduct that promotes safe and ethical NDIS service delivery principles underpinned by the rights of people with disability and anti-discriminatory practices.

The focus of our submission is on ensuring that NDIS practitioners, that is the workers as defined in the Code of Conduct, have: i) an understanding of the responsibilities and obligations conferred by the Code of Conduct on NDIS service providers and workers, and ii) the skills to provide safe and quality services to NDIS participants.

The NDIS workforce needs to double by 2019-20 to meet the expected demand for NDIS services. In addition the NDIS workforce will need to develop new skills and capabilities to meet the rapidly growing and complex needs of NDIS participants. Throughout this growth period the NDIS will be competing with other service industries to attract skilled and qualified workers to the NDIS workforce.

To compete with other service industries and recruit skilled and qualified workers to the NDIS workforce employers will need to attract and retain employees by providing opportunities for workers to develop their skills and create career pathways.

The Code of Conduct is rightfully underpinned by a human rights person centred approach within an environment of informed and supported decision making for people with disability who receive NDIS services. Conversely the Code of Conduct creates a punitive environment for workers. Workers and people with disability will be better served by a Code of Conduct that also is underpinned by a skill and capability development approach within an environment of training, education and support.

It is essential, if the objectives of the Code of Conduct of ensuring the safety of people with disability participating in the NDIS and participants receiving quality support services are to be met, that workers are appropriately trained and qualified for the work they are engaged to perform.

To achieve this, the ACCDP makes the following recommendations:

**Recommendations:**

1. The Code of Conduct should also be underpinned by a skill and capability development approach that guides and support workers to provide safe and quality services to NDIS participants.

2. Education and training is to be provided to all workers engaged to provide NDIS services to ensure all workers are informed of and understand their obligations and responsibilities under the Code of Conduct.

3. The Code of Conduct should include the following obligations:

i) Providers must provide truthful information as to their employees’ qualifications, training or professional affiliations;

ii) Providers must not mislead or deceive people with disability or the public regarding his or her employees’ qualifications, training or competence in a field of practice or ability to provide supports.

4. Providers need to develop and implement a strategy for the professional development of their NDIS workforce through education and training, skill acquisition and practice improvement.

Helen Westwood AM

Project Officer

ACCDP