

Disability Services **Sector Health Check**

Interim report
on the implementation of
Sector Health Check report
recommendations

Summary



making a difference

Sector Health Check Report

The Sector Health Check was established to consider the extent to which Government resources for the disability sector were being used effectively, efficiently and in the best interests of all people with disabilities in Western Australia.

In May 2007, the Minister for Disability Services released the Sector Health Check Report and established committee to oversee the implementation of the 67 Sector Health Check recommendations.

Members of the Sector Health Check Implementation Steering Committee

Ms Joan McKenna-Kerr, Chief Executive Officer, Autism Association of WA (Chairperson)

Dr Lucy Morris, Chief Executive Officer, Community Vision

Ms Jenny Au Yeong, Executive Officer, Ethnic Disability Advisory Council

Mr Gordon Trewern, President, National Disability Services

Ms Jackie Softly, Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability

Dr Shayne Silcox, Chief Executive Officer, City of Melville and Commission board member

Ms Robyn Massey, Acting Director, Disability Services Commission

Ms Helen Corbett, Indigenous community representative

Dr Ron Chalmers, Director General, Disability Services Commission.

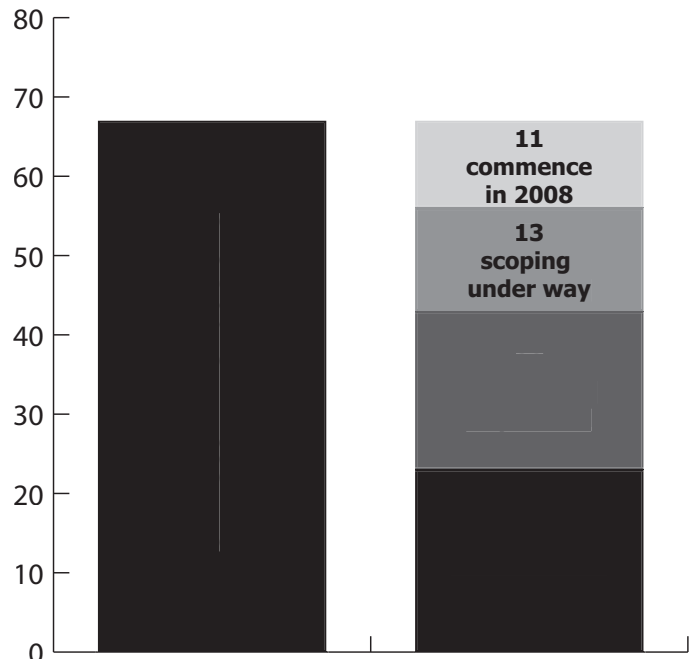
The committee has met on 10 occasions during the period June 2007 to February 2008.

Statement to the Minister

The Sector Health Check Implementation Steering Committee (the Committee) is on track to complete the implementation of the Sector Health Check recommendations by the end of 2008, with the vast majority completed by the end of October 2008.

At the end of January 2008, 23 recommendations had been fully implemented, 20 had been fully scoped and were in the process of being implemented and 13 were being scoped for consideration by the Committee. The remaining 11 recommendations are scheduled to commence in 2008.

Fig 1. Implementation of recommendations at end of January 2008



Completed

7, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 31, 32, 33, 47, 48, 49, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63

Progressing as planned

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 28, 29, 50, 51, 52, 61

Scoping under way

34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46

Commence in 2008*

23, 26, 27, 30, 53, 55, 60, 64, 65, 66, 67

*** Scoping and planning work for these items has commenced and the completed scoping documents will be presented to the Committee during the early part of 2008.**

Major reforms during the first six months

The six months following the establishment of the Committee has been a period of high activity and significant achievement – for the Committee, for the Disability Services Commission and for the wider disability sector.

The Committee took decisive action to work with the Commission's Corporate Executive and Board to scope, plan and implement all policy reforms listed as SHC recommendations.

All recommended Commission policy changes have been implemented. These include:

- changes in the processes used to allocate growth funding which reduces the level of non-recurrent funding generated by the Commission;
- changes in the way the Commission allocates non-recurrent funding;
- detailed annual reporting of accommodation support achievements; and
- transparent processes for allocating funds to Commission planning, policy, procurement and reporting functions.

The Committee Chairperson worked with the Commission Board to ensure that all policy changes were formally considered and adopted according to the spirit and intent of the SHC report.

Key reforms which will bring significant improvements to the disability sector and wider community were also initiated and completed during the first six months. These include:

- a new service for people with rapidly degenerating conditions;
- workforce planning and development initiatives including allocating of significant funds to help non-government organisations to increase the wages of direct care workers;
- full application of the human services indexation policy for non-government organisations;

- a Training Liaison Officer for the disability sector;
- a Quality Management Framework for disability services; and
- establishment of the Chief Executive Officer – Director General Round Table.

Significant progress has also been made on the major reform initiatives. These include (1) the Long-term State Disability Plan, (2) Community Living Plan, (3) better responses to the needs of people who exhibit challenging behaviours, (4) better service and systems responses to Aboriginal people with disabilities, (5) better service and systems responses to people with disabilities from culturally diverse backgrounds, and (6) community consultations on health issues for people with disabilities.

The Long-term State Disability Plan

The groundwork has been completed and foundations laid for the preparation of the long-term plan to ensure that the Western Australian community is inclusive and welcoming of people with disabilities over the next 15 years.

A Reference Committee comprising highly skilled and credentialed experts in a wide range of relevant fields has been established and will oversee the development of the plan during 2008. Emeritus Professor Patricia Harris has been appointed as Research Director to guide and coordinate the research component of the planning process.

The conceptual and research stages of the planning process have commenced and the product of this work (a series of monographs on key topics such as demographic trends, patterns of disability, family and household composition, changing expectations of carers, unmet need and the impact of technological and medical advances and survival rates) will be used as the basis for an extensive community consultation to help map future scenarios, and identify an agreed preferred future.

Community Living Plan

The Sector Health Check process gave a clear message to the disability sector: we need to expand the range of options to assist people

with disabilities to live good lives in the Western Australian community. The Community Living Plan will provide a framework for achieving this goal.

Stage one of the Community Living Plan is generating a strong interest in the disability sector and the wider community. Following a period of significant national and international research, coupled with extensive local consultation, a Community Living Framework has been drafted to provide the vision, principles, strategies and evaluation measures for the new community living pathways.

The framework has a focus on increasing understanding and skills in a “person centred approach”, trialling and evaluating new innovative approaches, establishing a focal point for technical support/planning and infrastructure, more local approaches to partnership development and funding, a strategic approach to shared responsibility across families, local communities, business and all levels of government, establishing a foundation with some independent funding as well as a strategy for family leadership/networking and support.

Work is also proceeding on a “best practice” data base of examples of innovative community living support arrangements. This data base will offer a comprehensive overview of national and international best practice examples to guide local options development.

Community consultation on health issues for people with disabilities

One of the tasks for the Commission from the Sector Health Check process was to gather information on current health issues for people with disabilities and their experiences in accessing mainstream health services. This will be done via consultation with people with disabilities, their families, carers and agencies (including service providers, Health Consumers Council and Office of Health Review). The information will be used to assess the effectiveness of the current strategies undertaken by the Commission’s Health Resource and Consultancy Team, to develop future strategies and to inform the future role of the Commission in achieving positive health outcomes for people with disabilities.

This project is proceeding according to plan and agreed timelines. A Project Officer has been appointed, a literature review has commenced and the consultation process is proceeding. The consultation process has included six statewide focus groups comprising people with disabilities, carers, families and agencies (including representatives from CALD and Aboriginal communities). CarersWA, the Health Consumers Council and the Office of Health Review have been consulted.

Better responses to the needs of people who exhibit challenging behaviours

One of the most challenging tasks within the list of Sector Health Check Report recommendations was to develop a comprehensive sector-wide strategy to respond to the needs of people with disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviours. The conceptual planning and consultation phases of this important project is well under way.

The project has been scoped to deliver the following outcomes:

1. An agreed and documented evidence base to support the development of services and supports for people with challenging behaviours – developed in a number of formats for stakeholders.
2. An environmental map and strategic analysis based on the philosophical and evidence-based framework. This will be inclusive of the tertiary, universal and disability sectors.
3. A long-term strategy for the disability sector to inform future sector development in the areas of funding, training, service growth and key partnerships and collaborations.