



Western Australia and the National Disability Insurance Scheme: Launch Sites

In May 2012, the Commonwealth Government announced that the NDIS would be launched in July 2013 in a number of sites across the country, and asked State Governments to submit expressions of interest to host a launch site.

Western Australia submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) for a launch site in July 2012. The launch proposal involves building on the State Government's existing My Way initiative (see Fact Sheet 3) in four areas (Goldfields, Lower South West, Cockburn/Kwinana, Perth Hills).

People in the proposed launch areas would benefit from both the advances in choice and control intended from the My Way initiative and the additional funding and national consistency resulting from the NDIS. Around 7,700 people with disability would be involved in the launch area.

The Commonwealth Government has recently announced that it has agreed to fund launch sites in the ACT, South Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and Victoria. The Western Australian Government is still in negotiations with the Commonwealth Government for a WA launch site to start in July 2014. The Premier recently wrote to the Prime Minister to restate the State Government's commitment to host a launch site.

Western Australia's proposal is that the total funding for the launch site (estimated at \$270 million a year) is evenly divided between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government. The State Government has committed to providing its share of \$135 million a year regardless of whether the Commonwealth provides the additional funding to meet its share.

The main issue for discussion with the Commonwealth Government is how the launch site should be run. The Commonwealth Government wants the site to be run by the new national agency, which would make all decisions on who is eligible for the scheme and what support they get, manage all contracts with service providers, and employ Local Area Coordinators.

The Western Australian Government believes that the use of existing relationships and well developed infrastructure (including Local Area Coordinators and contracts with service providers) is in the best interests of people with disability, their families

and carers. Maintaining locally based arrangements allows for local flexibility and accountability that is essential in ensuring that the system is responsive to local and individual needs.

The Western Australian proposal is to build on the existing local system through the My Way project and mental health reforms and by adopting nationally consistent eligibility criteria and rules around what support people get. In this way, Western Australians will benefit from the NDIS without compromising any of the strengths of the existing system which people are familiar with. This will ensure that people with disability currently accessing services continue to be supported through these changes.

Key elements of the proposed NDIS My Way sites include:

- A guarantee that people with disability will not be worse off as a result of the NDIS
- Western Australia adopting a national approach to eligibility, assessment tools, individualised planning frameworks and quality standards, to ensure portability and consistency of the approach over time
- A joint approach to funds management, recognising the significant investment by both Governments and requirements for transparency and sustainability of the NDIS
- Building on existing local networks and administration arrangements, including Local Area Coordinator networks, individualised funding arrangements and links with mainstream services, to ensure continuity of service for people with disability currently accessing services and supports
- Support to people with psychiatric disability, building on the State Government's ongoing mental health reforms and
- Full data sharing with the national agency to support ongoing monitoring and oversight of the NDIS at a national level.

The existing Western Australian disability services system has evolved through 25 years of bi-partisan reform and increased funding. The Western Australian Government believes that this system, further improved through the My Way initiative and with additional Commonwealth Government funding, would provide a unique opportunity to test the NDIS.

Further information on the NDIS is available at www.ndis.gov.au or http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/disability_reform/ndis.html