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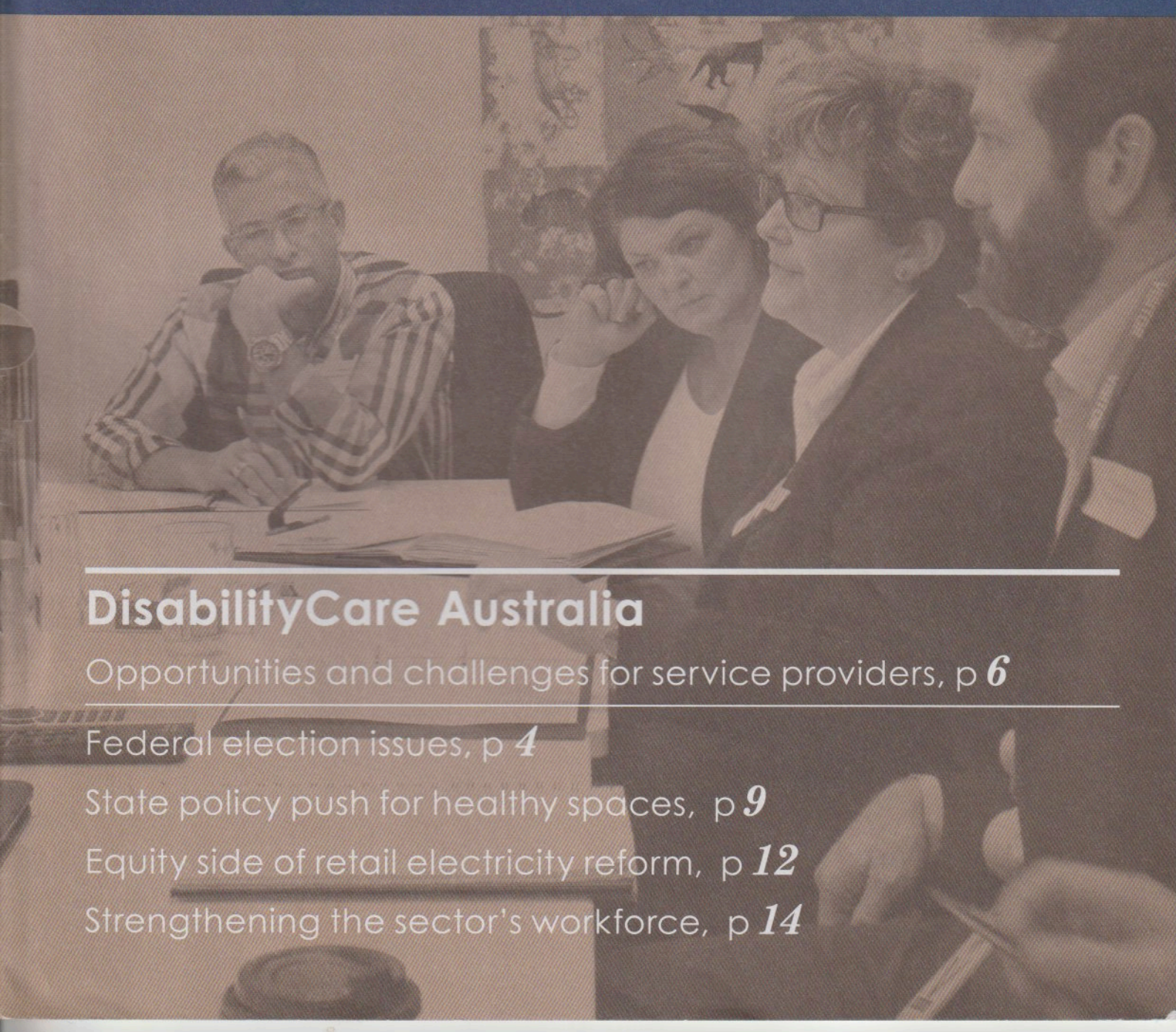
Tasmanian Council of Social Service

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## *Newsletter*

*August 2013*

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A black and white photograph showing four people in a meeting. On the left, a man with glasses and a striped shirt is looking down at a document. Next to him, a woman with short dark hair is also looking at the document. To her right, another woman with glasses is looking towards the right side of the frame. On the far right, a man with a beard is partially visible, looking towards the center. They are all seated around a table with papers and a pen.

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### **DisabilityCare Australia**

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# DisabilityCare a game changer

The launch of DisabilityCare Australia has ushered in a new era for the community services sector, with both opportunities and challenges

DisabilityCare Australia – originally called the National Disability Insurance Scheme or NDIS, started operating in Tasmania on 1 July this year.

sporting activity, moving from a group or family home into community housing, or the practical support needed to undertake a course.

In its first month of operation, the scheme had developed personal plans for more than 20 young Tasmanians with disability. And there were 100 more appointments scheduled between participants and the state's 10 DisabilityCare planners, who are based in Launceston, Devonport and Hobart. The target is for around 800 personal plans to be developed by July next year.

The quantum leap with DisabilityCare is that people with disability will lead the choice on what they need and where they get it from.

With funding now attached to individuals, what they get won't be restricted by how much money a particular service provider has left in its budget. While there's not unlimited money in the scheme, eligible individuals can receive whatever they need that is reasonable and necessary. And there is a surety of funding over a person's lifetime.

This is the dawn of a new era – and not just for the participants.

It will change the nature of the relationship between clients and service providers, lead to a major increase in demand, and also shift the funding of service provision from bulk purchase to market-driven.

The community sector is crucial to the success of DisabilityCare, and that's not just the part of the sector providing specialist disability services.

Given the wide range of services participants might want to access, all NFPs need to adapt to the new demand-driven environment.

"DisabilityCare Australia needs the support from the broader not-for-profit sector to provide genuine choice and control and to build the capacity of people with disability to participate," DisabilityCare Australia launch manager Tasmania Sue Ham said.

Tasmania is one of six launch sites for DisabilityCare nationally. In this state the launch means participation will be limited to 15- to 24-year-olds for the first three years. Anyone entering the scheme during these three years will stay in it, even after they turn 25.

The Tasmanian and the Commonwealth governments have agreed to roll out the full scheme to all eligible people with disability between 2016 and 2019, with more than 10,000 Tasmanians ultimately set to participate.

"We expect that over the three years of the launch around 1000 eligible young people will enter the scheme," Ms Ham told a Not-for-Profits round table on 29 July.

The round table was convened by DisabilityCare Australia and

Front Cover:

from left, Multicultural

Council of Tasmania

CEO Ashley Lieutier,

DisabilityCare

Australia's director

of engagement and

funding Tasmania,

Kelly Ford, launch

manager Tasmania

Sue Ham and NDS

executive officer

David Clements at

the roundtable.



At the DisabilityCare NFP round table, from left, National Disability Services executive officer

David Clements, Youth Network of Tasmania CEO Joanna Siejka, TasTAFE teacher Ben

Crothers, Relationships Australia's Jules Carroll and Sharon Scarlett of Carers Tas.



TasCOSS as part of a series of national conversations with the not-for-profit sector.

The discussion at the round table threw up a mix of challenges but the defining statement of the meeting was all about inspiration. Ben Crothers, who teaches a Transition to Work program for students with disabilities at TasTAFE, said: "It's great to have the opportunity to be part of this launch."

National Disability Services Tasmania executive officer David Clements outlined some key issues for service providers related to the launch, including the financial and cultural implications.

"Organisations will need to look very differently at the way they conduct their operations in terms of planning their financial management and risk, how they manage cash flow," he said.

"We [NDS] are drawing on a group of chartered accounts who are looking at components of operations that organisations need to understand and shift, in line with the financial arrangement changes occurring, from block funding to individualised funding."

NDS has been running workshops on this issue, funded through the State Government and DisabilityCare Australia's Sector Development Fund.

David Clements said service providers needed to grasp the changing dynamic that will occur between individual consumers and service providers. "Workers at all levels of service delivery need to understand that shift in philosophy and what that means on a day-to-day basis," he said.

NDS also sees a need for education of service providers in marketing their services.

### Capacity

NDS has been funded by Skills Tasmania to employ a workforce development project officer, as the Tasmanian specialist disability services sector

### DisabilityCare Australia provider information

The DisabilityCare Australia website has list of supports, services and price list for services available for providers.

- The price list for supports has been published on the website.
- Prices have been based on existing market prices in each launch location so as not to disrupt existing markets.
- A number of frequently used supports have a maximum price that is the highest price DisabilityCare Australia will pay for these supports.
- Other supports such as Early Childhood Interventions and assistive technology have benchmark prices based on market research. In these cases the price list is an estimate for planning purposes and a different amount could be paid so long as it is reasonable and consistent with the benchmark price.

See <http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/providers>

will need to have a major boost in both staff and skills levels to meet increased demand for services.

The TasCOSS Sector Development Unit is working with NFPs to ensure they will have the skills and support they need to adapt to consumer-driven service provision.

*"It's great to have the opportunity to be part of this launch."*

– Ben Crothers,  
TasTAFE teacher

Plans include offering training, development and support networks in key skills such as adaptive management, consumer engagement and social outcomes reporting. All these skills will be crucial for organisations needing to respond to the needs of clients with disabilities and to articulate the difference they can make in their lives.

SDU is also convening a community sector workforce development round table, which brings together specialist peaks across the sector to consider on an ongoing basis what organisations need to adapt to this service delivery model.

DisabilityCare Australia's director of engagement and funding Tasmania, Kelly Ford, said one untapped workforce resource was the great number of under-employed casual workers already in the sector. For example, teachers' aides, who are left without income during school holidays, could be employed to support people in other activities.

"DisabilityCare Australia also has a significant role in capacity-building and to address some of the gaps in community services," Ms Ford said.

"It's a big challenge, those gaps, particularly in rural areas of Tasmania," she said.

"We can encourage existing organisations to consider how they could spread further and go to regions where they haven't operated before."

Sue Ham said accommodation was one area in which there were obvious gaps. "We need to build momentum there sooner rather than later," she said.

### Registering as a service provider

To date, 67 service providers have registered with DisabilityCare in Tasmania. Among the

cont: page 8

Gabrielle Rish

TasCOSS Communications Officer





expected specialist disability service providers are a small number of sole traders, including therapists but also a home maintenance operator, who mows lawns.

Sharon Scarlett of Carers Tas, who attended the 29 July NFP round table, asked whether family carers could register to be DisabilityCare service providers.

"If that was the only option, DisabilityCare Australia may consider it. But it would be difficult to decide what was the natural caring component of a parent or partner and what would be the paid part," Ms Ford said.

Organisations registered with DisabilityCare Australia will be able to advertise positions free of charge on the national Care Careers jobs website.

## Role of Planners and Local Area Coordinators

There are two tiers to development and implementation of DisabilityCare Australia individual plans:

- Planners employed directly by DisabilityCare Australia, who work with participants and, if needed, their families, to develop a plan.
- Local Area Coordinators (LACs), located in Tasmania within the existing disability gateway services provided by Mission Australia and Baptcare.

Planners have a reference package outlining funding guidelines on what a person with a particular disability might receive. If a plan exceeds that reference, it would need to be approved at a higher level at the agency.

The funding for an individual plan can be self-managed or can be managed by a Plan Management organisation, or a combination of both.

LACs provide participants with information, referral, assistance and support, advocate on their behalf and play an important role in building service responsiveness and community capacity to support better participant outcomes. LACs maintain relationships with participants and monitor their plan implementation.



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**Tony Reidy**

Chief Executive



**Beng Poh**

Executive Assistant



**Gabrielle Rish**

Communications Officer



**Jill Pope**

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**Lindsey Moffatt**

Manager, Sector Development



**Kath McLean**

Manager, Social Policy and Research



**Dale Rahmanovic**

Development Officer  
Sector Development Unit



**Wynne Russell**

Policy and Research Officer  
Social Policy and Research Unit



**Tim Tabart**

Development Officer  
Sector Development Unit



**Meg Webb**

Policy and Research Officer  
Social Policy and Research Unit



**Klaus Baur**

HACC Project Officer/Consumer Engagement  
Sector Development Unit



**Gus Risberg**

Shared Services Project Manager  
Sector Development Unit



The Tasmanian Council of Social Service, TasCOSS, was established in 1961. TasCOSS is the peak body for the Tasmanian community services sector.

**Our mission**

To advocate for the interests of low-income and otherwise disadvantaged Tasmanians, and to serve as the peak council for the state's community services sector.

**Our vision**

A fair, just and inclusive Tasmania.

TasCOSS is supported by the Department of Health and Human Services.



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