



Budget Saga

There have been a number of media commentaries on the recent Federal budget, but I'd like to present another perspective on the key issues.

On 9 May 2017, the Commonwealth government allocated \$10.2 Billion to the NDIS across the whole of Australia during the 2017/18 financial year. There was an allocation of \$1.4 Billion over the following three years made to WA as part of the current Bilateral Agreement signed in January this year. The government also allocated \$209 million to establish a national, independent regulatory body, named the 'NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission'. This new agency will commence in January 2018 and will

impact in WA from July 2020.

There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the current levy of 0.5 percent that has collected \$3.9 Billion in revenue since July 2014. This levy may increase to 1.0 percent recurrent from July 2019 with an estimated total impact of \$8.2 Billion. This issue is still to be debated and resolved in the Federal Parliament. Nulsen Disability Services would like to see a firm pledge to fully fund the NDIS into the long-term future.

The Western Australian Government will deliver the state budget in September, delayed due to the recent election. During this year an estimated budget of \$966 million will be allocated, with about three quarters distributed through non-government disability sector organisations.

As part of the current Bilateral Agreement the allocation over the next three years will approximate \$2.0 Billion. It is to be seen if the WA Labor Government will fulfil and not withdraw from this commitment made by the previous coalition government.

Impact on the Disability Sector in Western Australia

The demand for services and the rate of implementation is growing rapidly across Australia, including Western Australia. In WA at the end of March, the NDIA approved 3,440 plans at an average cost of \$39,677 and WA-NDIS has seen 2,887 plans approved at a lower average cost of \$36,021. The majority of all approved plans are fully service provider managed in both schemes.

Therefore the disability services sector is in a rapid growth phase. It is estimated that employment opportunities will double and will grow by over 6,000 direct employment positions over the next three years. During this transition period Nulsen is determined to maintain the wages and conditions of our direct care support workers.

Conclusion

The current Labor state government has not yet made a decision on the previous Bilateral Agreement which has placed Nulsen into a planning hiatus. We cannot progress with any major plans until we know the overall policy, operational and funding framework under which we will operate. Nulsen Disability Services will encourage the state government to make a decision so that we can proceed with planning and with providing clear and comprehensive information to all our stakeholders.