

National Disability Insurance Scheme –Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women’s Council (NPYWC) (Aboriginal Corporation) Statement

NPY Women’s Council welcomes the implementation of the NDIS in mainstream Australia, and supports the principle of personalised support based on individual life choices for people living with a disability. NPYWC’s work with Anangu and Yarnangu (Aboriginal people) living in the tri-state cross border region (WA/SA and the NT) in Central Australia follows these principles wherever circumstances permit.

With regard to personalised funding packages, there are a number of special circumstances in these remote communities, which require the development of a model of support specifically tailored to the situation in the NPY (and possibly other) Lands.

One such circumstance is the prevalent cultural tradition practice of sharing, which dictates that any goods or money held by one family member shall be used for the good of the family in accordance with established priorities which may or may not include the family member. This would make it difficult, and often impossible for the person with a disability to have a say in the use of any money given to them under the proposed scheme. In addition such a situation would mean the recipient was open to abuse from some family members who see their needs as paramount.

The situation is made more complex because Anangu and Yarnangu have no tradition of budgeting, and generally live from day to day. It is not unknown for people to receive a large sum of money, such as a payment of several thousand dollars, and not to have enough money to buy food a week later. Consequently, the need to set aside some of a particular sum of money for the future is not perceived as a priority, and there is a need for safeguards around access to any such funds, as well as a lack of organisations and personnel to administer such safeguards. While some organisations are starting to work with people in the Lands to develop money management skills, this process is in its infancy, and complicated by factors such as cultural priorities and tradition.

Another factor which affects people in the NPY Lands is the lack of service providers. This means that there is in fact no choice for people as to which service providers they will use. In some situations, such as respite provision for people with high care needs or a high degree of vulnerability there is no appropriate service available. Therefore there is almost nonexistent scope for increasing people’s lifestyle choices through individualised funding.

Our members’ dominant lifestyle choice is the ability to stay on the Lands and live with family on their own country. Sometimes this conflicts with the desires of family who may themselves be ageing, tired or ill. Although care and service provision may sometimes be minimal, people with a disability on the Lands express a strong desire to stay on the Lands rather than move to one of the limited number of facilities in a centre such as Alice Springs, Kalgoorlie, or further away, Perth, Port Augusta or Adelaide.

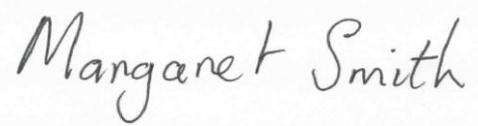
For these reasons, NPY Women’s Council directors elected by members of the Corporation, consider that application of the proposed scheme across the Lands in the same way as in other areas of Australia would be inappropriate and even detrimental to the wellbeing of people living in remote communities in the NPY Lands. Until an alternative model of support can be developed, we instruct that the current block funding system, as currently administered by NPY Women’s Council, remain in place.



Yanyi Bandicha

Chairwoman, NPY Women’s Council

Date: 1.10.12

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature reads "Margaret Smith" in a cursive, flowing script.

Margaret Smith

Director, NPY Women's Council

Date: 1.10.12