

Developmental Disability WA– A History of Campaigning

1995 Welcome Home Campaign

In March 1995 the Developmental Disability Council of WA (now DDWA) launched the statewide WELCOME HOME campaign.

The campaign was conducted in response to the crisis being faced by many people with developmental disabilities and their families in Western Australia who were looking for accommodation services but for whom the services were not available.

This campaign had an immediate impact and in 1995-1996 the Western Australian State Government significantly increased funding for disability services as part of its Five Year Plan to address the unmet need of Western Australians with disabilities and their families and carers.

1998 Time to Care Campaign

Three years later, many families remained in crisis and it became apparent that the level of funding allocated under the Five Year Plan was not sufficient to fully meet the need. DDC pledged to continue the WELCOME HOME campaign until the accommodation needs of all people were met.

At the same time, the nationwide TIME TO CARE campaign was being launched by the National Council on Intellectual Disability (NCID). This campaign was to address the critical shortage of support services for people with intellectual disabilities throughout Australia. In WA this campaign was sponsored by DDC.

As well as accommodation, the TIME TO CARE campaign encompassed a broader spectrum of needs that were not being met, including respite, attendant care, early intervention, therapy, employment, day activities, independent living training, community access, day services, recreation and advocacy.



Time to Care rally - WA Parliament House

The goal of the campaign, consistent with International Human Rights Covenants and legislatively prescribed National and State Disability Service Principles, Objectives and Service Standards was:

“to ensure that the elected State and Commonwealth Governments GUARANTEE the provision of adequate and appropriate services to meet the individual needs of people who, because of a disability, are unable to care for and support themselves.”

Politician Adoption Scheme

One very innovative strategy of the Time to Care Campaign was the Politician Adoption Scheme. This was created by DDC in 1998 to bring greater awareness of the needs of people with disability and their families to elected representatives. The Scheme included politicians from all sides, from both houses of Parliament, at State and Federal levels. Premiers, Oppositions leaders, Ministers, Shadow Ministers and State and Federal representatives became an important part of taking the personal stories and experiences from their ‘adopted’ families to their own policy and decision making forums in Parliament.



One of the first ‘adoptions’ was McGhie families (Monica centre) with Mrs McGhie, left, who adopted then South Metropolitan MLC Barbara Scott, pictured with Paul Omodei and DDC Patron Ruth Reid



The Murphy Family ‘adopted’ Senator Glenn Sterle – pictured here with DDC’s Taryn Harvey back left are Di and Shaun Murphy with (front) Ryan, Kieran Glenn and Erin

2001 Time to Care – Identifying the Need

In 2001, it became abundantly clear that people with disabilities and their families in need of accommodation support were joining an ever increasing pool of people living in circumstances of ongoing crisis, with no relief in sight.

Together, and under the banner of the TIME TO CARE campaign, people with disabilities, families, organisations and agencies came together to take a specific stand for the rights of people with disabilities and their families to the accommodation support that they need.

The Identifying the Need report, June 2001 stated:

"Accommodation support enables people who have a profound or severe disability (and are under the age of 60) to receive the ongoing personal care and practical support they need to live independently of their family carers, or to maintain their existing living arrangements and

relationships, in their own home, or in a home-like environment, within the community... People who need accommodation support cannot carry out the basic activities of daily life without help and support from another person."

The TIME TO CARE Campaign was then run under the auspice of the Disability Coalition WA, an informal alliance of peak and representative groups in Western Australia - ACROD(WA), Carers WA, CASA, DDC(WA), People with Disabilities WA and WAAMH (the WA Association for Mental Health) – and was supported by many other service provider agencies.

A key to this campaign was the support and involvement of CASA (Committed About Securing Accommodation), a then newly formed parent lobby group, run by and with membership of families with members with a disability in need of accommodation support.

This campaign worked to bring the reality of the accommodation support crisis to the attention of our community.

Requests of Government

The Commonwealth government was called on to...

... accept its shared responsibility for the provision of funding for accommodation support services, in its negotiations for a third Commonwealth/State and Territories Disability Agreement;

The Western Australian and Commonwealth Governments were called on to...

... provide immediate, emergency support for the Western Australians with disabilities and their families who are currently in "critical" need (as assessed by the Disability Services Commission WA)

... resolve the crisis in unmet need by developing a comprehensive strategy to address the backlog of need over a period of three to five years

... plan to address the ongoing and long term accommodation support needs of Western Australians with disabilities.

Campaign Events

- A series of sit-ins at the Disability Services Commission and the Office of the Department of Family and Community Services. The 'sit-ins' were a gesture of the desperation that hundreds of Western Australian families felt due to lack of funding for accommodation support services.
- A rally during the May budgets to highlight the accommodation crisis and remind both the Western Australian and Commonwealth Governments that it is essential they address this in their budget priorities.
- In June 2002 a delegation of three family members from Western Australia travelled to Melbourne to a CSTDA Ministerial Council Meeting, to highlight the accommodation crisis. Families had the opportunity to speak informally with the WA Minister for Disability Services and her Adviser as well as the Federal Minister for Family and Community Services and her Adviser, throughout the day.

- An on-going strategy for small delegations to meet with State and Commonwealth politicians to discuss the accommodation crisis in more detail and ask for their support.

Politicians who were met and whose positions at the time were:

- The Hon. Dr Geoff Gallop, Premier of WA
- The Hon. Sheila McHale, WA Minister for Disability Services
- The Hon. Colin Barnett, WA Leader of the Opposition
- The Hon. Simon O'Brien, WA Shadow Spokesperson for Disability Services
- Sen the Hon. Amanda Vanstone, Federal Minister Family & Community Services
- The Hon. Simon Crean, Federal Leader of the Opposition
- Ms Annette Ellis, Opposition Parliamentary Secretary for Family & Community Services
- An on-going strategy to ensure media attention to take the issue to the wider community to raise awareness. Excellent media coverage was provided by the West Australian newspaper, local community newspapers, local radio programmes, Channel 7 Today Tonight, ABC Stateline, Sydney radio programs and the national television programme, the Today Show.

2005 Time to Care Campaign continues

The campaign continued into 2005. Over this time the Western Australian Government provided sustained funding increases for disability. The Commonwealth government did not, claiming that this was a responsibility of the States and Territories. While every funding increase was truly appreciated, these increases were not enough to meet the needs of families desperately waiting for help. The line continued to grow with families applying unsuccessfully many times over and new families joining the queue.

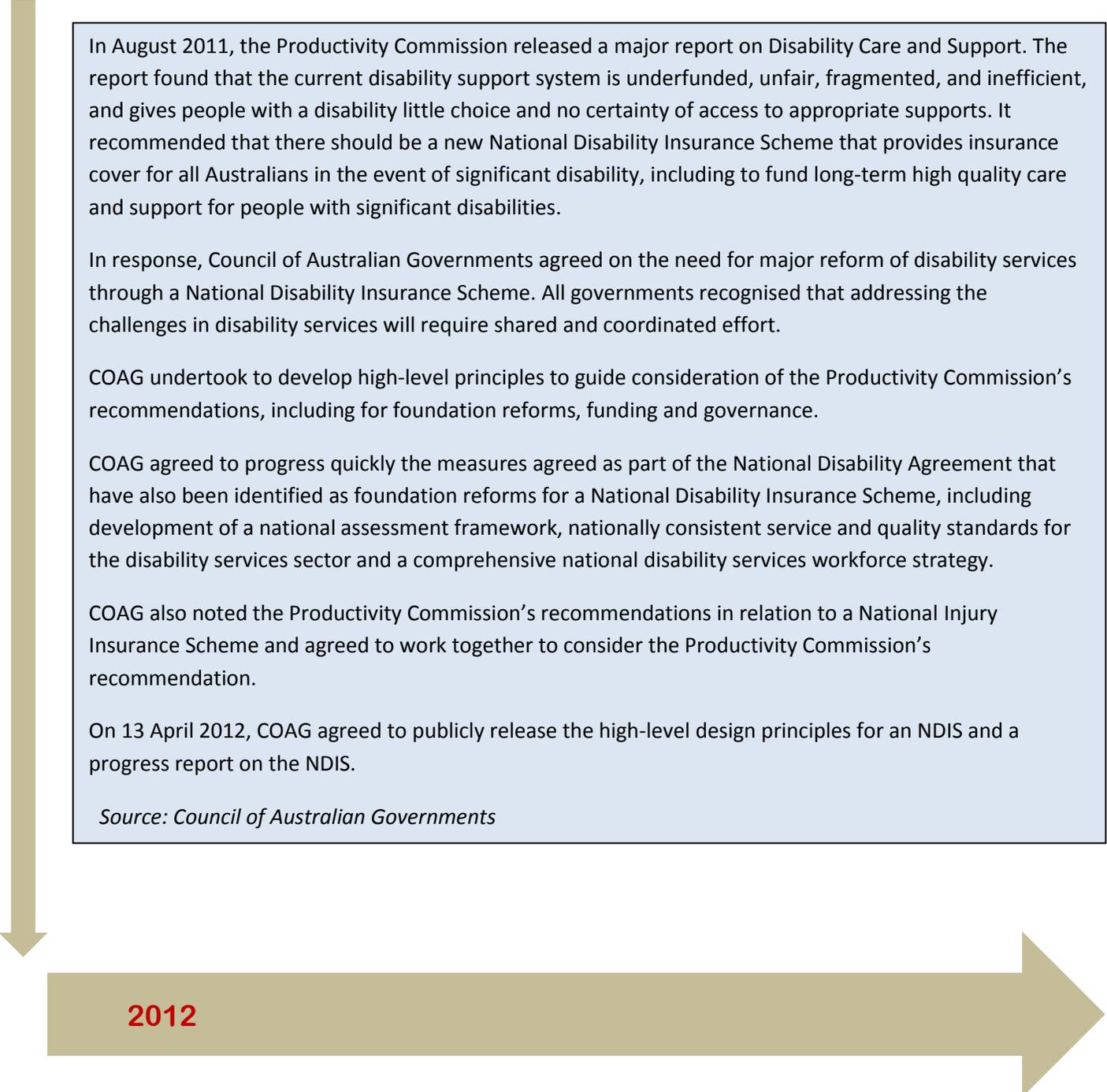
2008 Not a new idea...but finally it's being heard...

After Kevin Rudd's election in 2007, the Government organised the 2020 Summit which was held over 2 days in Canberra in 2008. The Summit brought together Australians with different backgrounds and experiences to put forward and discuss ideas for Australia's future. It was broken up into streams, broadly relating to a number of policy areas.

The Strengthening Communities, Supporting Families and Social Inclusion stream examined the challenges facing Australian families and communities, and over the course of the two days almost 200 individual ideas were raised by participants.

Four 'Big Ideas' and six 'Cost Neutral Ideas' were agreed by the stream as a whole. One of the four 'Big Ideas' was to

- **Establish a National Disability Insurance Scheme**



In August 2011, the Productivity Commission released a major report on Disability Care and Support. The report found that the current disability support system is underfunded, unfair, fragmented, and inefficient, and gives people with a disability little choice and no certainty of access to appropriate supports. It recommended that there should be a new National Disability Insurance Scheme that provides insurance cover for all Australians in the event of significant disability, including to fund long-term high quality care and support for people with significant disabilities.

In response, Council of Australian Governments agreed on the need for major reform of disability services through a National Disability Insurance Scheme. All governments recognised that addressing the challenges in disability services will require shared and coordinated effort.

COAG undertook to develop high-level principles to guide consideration of the Productivity Commission's recommendations, including for foundation reforms, funding and governance.

COAG agreed to progress quickly the measures agreed as part of the National Disability Agreement that have also been identified as foundation reforms for a National Disability Insurance Scheme, including development of a national assessment framework, nationally consistent service and quality standards for the disability services sector and a comprehensive national disability services workforce strategy.

COAG also noted the Productivity Commission's recommendations in relation to a National Injury Insurance Scheme and agreed to work together to consider the Productivity Commission's recommendation.

On 13 April 2012, COAG agreed to publicly release the high-level design principles for an NDIS and a progress report on the NDIS.

Source: Council of Australian Governments

2012

By 2012 The Every Australian Counts Campaign had a strong voice in a dedicated national NDIS campaign.

DDC continued its support of families and support for the groundwork families had laid over many years which led to the NDIS getting closer to becoming a reality. These families' efforts had finally resulted in the Commonwealth and State Governments agreeing on the NDIS as a real policy that had to be implemented and DDC continued, as it does today, to be strong supporters of the NDIS campaign.



In May 2012 DDC joined the NDIS campaign as people with disability, families, support workers and people in the community who wanted to support the NDIS rallied through the Perth central business district, along the Hay Street Mall, down Barrack Street to the Stirling Gardens.

2013

On a hot summers day in January 2013, and again in February, DDC together with People with Disability WA hosted community forums on the design of the NDIS. Members and other interested people from the community provided their ideas about the design of the NDIS and how to ensure the rights of people with disabilities are upheld through the NDIS planning processes.

Following the forums and after receiving members' feedback, DDC and PWD made a joint submission to the Senate Committee on Community Affairs to their Inquiry on the National Disability Scheme.

2016

Campaigning continues.....

DDC becomes Developmental Disability WA in 2013 reflecting our recognition that at the centre of our organisation are our members, throughout the entire State of WA.

Our campaigning continues every single day as we work toward positive change in many areas including education, employment, health, self-direction, justice, and improved opportunity, inclusion and equity in Western Australia.