

# Revision of the National Standards for Disability Services

## Bulletin: May 2011

### National Standards and National Quality Framework for Disability Services

In February 2011 Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC) endorsed the revision of the National Standards for Disability Services (National Standards), and implementation of a final version of a National Quality Framework for Disability Services.

### Outcomes from consultation on the National Standards

A key process informing the revision of the National Standards was consultation with a range of stakeholders involved in accessing and providing disability services across Australia. Particular support was provided for people with a disability and their family members and carers to give their feedback and share their ideas on the National Standards. Other stakeholders involved in consultation included disability service providers, peak bodies, advocacy organisations, statutory bodies and government departments. Consultation on the National Standards occurred in Queensland between May and June 2010.

The Disability Studies and Research Centre, University of New South Wales (UNSW) designed materials for consultations with stakeholders and analysed the consultation data.

In total, 1,291 stakeholders participated in the consultation process:

- People with a disability represented the majority of consultation participants, with 37.7% of all responses. Disability service providers (31.5%) were the next largest group of respondents, followed by family members, carers and friends (16.9%).
- Consultation methods included focus groups, written submissions and on-line survey.
- Over 890 people (72.9%) participated in facilitated focus groups and workshops in urban, regional and remote locations across Australia. The on-line survey was used by over 270 people (22.7%), while over 50 written submissions (4.4%) were received.
- Across Australia, focus groups were held with Aboriginal service users and service users from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### Key Findings

In December 2010, UNSW reported its findings from consultation on the National Standards with recommendations about the language, focus, content, structure and implementation of revised National Standards.

Key findings include:

- There is a low level of knowledge of the National Standards amongst people with a disability, in particular people with an intellectual disability, and families/carers.
- Structural changes to the National Standards are needed, including revising their language, format, explanations, and supporting information.

- There is a perceived view that the main purpose of the National Standards relates to achieving rights, outcomes and quality of life for people with a disability.
- The conceptual components of the National Standards should be retained, but need to be redeveloped to be clearer, more relevant and contemporary.
- There is support for an assessment process aimed to assess both service user outcomes and service provider actions within a 'quality' and 'continuous improvement' framework, and for assessment to be based on independent monitoring, with a component of self-assessment by service providers.

In February 2011, the UNSW report was tabled at the Community and Disability Services Ministers Advisory Council (CDSMAC). Members endorsed that revised National Standards will be clear in their purpose and objectives, and will be described in a manner that is relevant to both service providers and service users, and define the role of the standards in:

- protecting the rights and responsibilities of people with a disability and their family members and carers as service users
- improving outcomes for people with a disability and their family members
- service provider quality assessment and improvement processes.

Accessible information on the consultation findings are being prepared for release, including an easy read version of the UNSW report and fact sheets in community languages, and will be available in June 2011.

The report has been divided into chapters and is available for download from the Disability Sector Quality System website at [www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/key-projects/disability-sector-quality-system/current-developments/revised-national-standards-for-disability-services](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/key-projects/disability-sector-quality-system/current-developments/revised-national-standards-for-disability-services)

## What happens next?

Work to draft, validate and implement a new set of National Standards will commence in July 2011.

## Further Information

Information regarding the revision of the National Standards will be regularly uploaded onto the project website at [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/national-quality-framework](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/national-quality-framework) as it becomes available and at the Disability Sector Quality System website at [www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/key-projects/disability-sector-quality-system/current-developments/revised-national-standards-for-disability-services](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/key-projects/disability-sector-quality-system/current-developments/revised-national-standards-for-disability-services)

**For further information** on the revision of the National Standards in Queensland please contact the Disability Sector Quality System Team, Principal Project Officer on 07 3836 0531.