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### Update from the CE Dr Garth Bennie

Kia ora

We have a number of projects on the go at the moment so its timely that we provide some details on how these are unfolding.

In addition, we have our AGM coming up on **Friday 28 September** and NZDSN Board elections leading up to this. The implementation of pay equity and the consequences for providers is a major focus as we move towards the release of an independent report that is intended to provide data and evidence that shines a light on historical underfunding. We have also secured the contract for phase one of the provider capability work in Mid Central.

## Funding, Pricing and Pay Equity

As indicated in earlier updates we have now moved to commission an independent report on historical funding patterns in our sector and the impact of the pay equity settlement implementation. This work is being undertaken by Deloitte and we are looking to release a report by early October 2018. Ministers and officials have been briefed on the background and rationale for this work. There will be a communications strategy in place leading up to and around the release of the report. This will include an invitation to our members to engage with their local Members of Parliament. More on this closer to the time.

This is an important piece of work for NZDSN as having independent data and evidence to support long standing funding issues for the sector is critical. In the context of system transformation, it is essential that the financial nightmares currently experienced by

providers do not become the personal financial nightmares of individual disabled people and families as they potentially grapple with personal budgets that may have limited purchasing power.

### **Pay Equity transfer to Contracts for Residential Providers**

Residential providers will also be aware that landing a residential pricing model has been delayed until early 2019. The Ministry now wants to move quickly to an interim approach to include pay equity into contracts by mid-October. The Ministry has identified a technical working group of nine residential providers (plus NZDSN) to assist them with this. It will be essential that whatever approach is adopted there are provisions in contracts that enable providers to re-negotiate if there are unforeseen costs.

The Ministry will be engaging with residential providers through a “Pay Equity Road Show” focused on the process for transferring pay equity into contracts. These meetings will be offered at 6 locations between September 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Further details will be available through the Ministry shortly. Note that the content of sessions may vary as the Technical Working Groups progress unfolds during this period. Further information will also be available at planned DSS forums in early November. NZDSN will be working with the Ministry to bring you regular updates from this point forward.

Organisations represented on the working group are: Laura Ferguson (Wellington) Argo Trust (Wellington) Brackenridge, Waikato Community Living Trust, HHL, IDEA services, Spectrum Care, MASH Trust and Te Roopu Taurima.

We will look to identify a couple of members of the working group that can be specifically available to smaller providers as a source of information and guidance.

### **System Transformation**

NZDSN has been involved in two current working groups:

- A Workforce Working Group that has been looking at the support that employers and support workers need in the new environment; and
- A “Market Shaping” Working Group that has been looking at the regulatory environment needed to support changes and an approach to market stewardship that enables a diverse and functioning market to operate.

NZDSN is very pleased to report that we have been contracted to undertake phase one of the provider capability development work for the prototype in Mid-Central. This is an opportunity to work with providers and their stakeholders on co-constructing a plan that will support providers to get ready for the new environment and operate with confidence.

## **MSD Employment Contracts and Tendering**

Employment providers have provided comprehensive feedback about changes needed in the new employment support contracts – including concerns with what appears to be a sharp increase in compliance requirements. While MSD have indicated they will respond positively to most of the changes requested, the NZDSN Employment Advisory Committee (EAC) have synthesised and prioritised the critical changes needed and have put this in writing to MSD requesting a written response. We will circulate a copy of our letter and the response from MSD in due course.

A briefing about the upcoming tendering process was held on GETS and a recording of the presentation and Webex session has been posted on GETS so it is available to everyone

## **Provider Development Programme**

We have recently delivered events on business systems and personal budgets for senior management teams and an introductory workshop on EGL and system transformation for support workers in Mid-Central. Both events were very well attended with great feedback. Thanks to some funding through MSD we are offering three series of workshops between October and April at heavily subsidised rates. These include:

- Employer Engagement
- Inclusive Approaches to Community Participation
- Customised Employment

Each series will be offered in three different locations to reduce travel and accommodation costs for attendees. Keep an eye on our website for information on these opportunities coming your way.

We have other events in the pipeline including further leadership forums, further workshops, EGL workshops (followed by the establishment of Communities of Practice) as well as leadership exchanges aimed at spreading innovative practice.

We now have seven EGL Communities of practice up and running across the country.

Phil Smith, our Training and Development Coordinator has left NZDSN and is embarking on a life of sun and fun with his family in Nelson. I would like to personally acknowledge Phil's contribution and his efforts with the provider development programme since 2015 and wish him well with his retirement plans.

## **NZDSN Special Interest Groups**

As part of our Provider Development Programme NZDSN is hoping to facilitate the establishment of a range of "Special Interest Groups." The aim is to bring member organisations together around a topic or issue of mutual interest so that people can

learn from each other, share knowledge and information, and engage in joint problem solving.

Each group would be hosted by a “lead provider” who would organise and facilitate meetings – and, of course, have a strong interest in the topic at hand. It is preferable that a host provider have access to video conferencing. In the future NZDSN is looking to have this technology available as well and thus be in a position to provide this facility. We will also be looking at hosting webinars which special interest groups may want to incorporate into the way they operate.

The following are topics that have been suggested as ones that organisations may have a strong interest in:

- Bargaining and Collective agreements
- Pricing and costing in the context of personal budgets
- IT and CMS systems
- Employment relations and HR issues
- Leading and managing organisational change
- Governance/Board development
- Effective systems for small providers

These topics are just examples of what could be covered, and we encourage you to think of others.

**At this stage we are very keen to hear from potential lead providers and the topics they would like to focus on. Please contact the [NZDSN Office](#) to discuss further.**

## **Workforce Development**

Our work with both Careerforce and the Open Polytechnic continues. Our goal is nationally consistent, high quality fit for purpose and future focused qualifications. Still a work in progress, but with remuneration now linked to qualifications it is essential that employers see value for money so there is some urgency to getting the outcomes we are seeking.

## **NZDSN Annual General Meeting**

An AGM notice has been issued for Friday 28 September and nominations for the three Board vacancies closed off on 27 August 2018. Strong governance is at the heart of any organization. **PLEASE** – take the opportunity to exercise your membership voice and vote! Voting closes on 19<sup>th</sup> September.

The AGM will be held in conjunction with the Auckland Provider Network Meeting on Friday 28 September 2018 at the Sudima Airport Hotel.

The September Provider Network Meeting (being held prior to the AGM from 10am-12 noon) will feature our keynote speaker, Warren Forster who will talk on the Long Term Sustainable Funding Solutions for the Disability Sector. The AGM will follow at 12.15-1pm), following which we will host a light lunch.

For further details and to register [click here](#)

### **NZDSN Statement of Strategic Intent**

This document, which includes our Strategic and Business Plans, will be published in our Annual Report which will be distributed the week before the AGM. In the mean time you can view this document [here](#)

### **We're going up in the world!**

Due to a substantial rent increase we have negotiated a new lease on a slightly smaller space but at the same rate within our current building (sadly with no harbour views). We are now located on Level 8 – same street address (86 Lambton Quay, Wellington).



Mireille Vreeburg  
Auckland Executive Facilitator

## **Auckland Regional Update**

Please click [here](#) to read all the latest news from the Auckland Region