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Update from the CE Dr Garth Bennie

Tena koutou katoa

It has been a real pleasure to receive so much positive feedback about our recent NZDSN conference.

The mix of speakers and concurrent sessions along with the “making change real” conference theme clearly hit the mark! We do appreciate the support of our membership and the wider disability sector, and of course our sponsors, for their support of this significant annual event. Copies of most key note papers and presentations can be found [here](#)

The dates for the 2019 conference are already locked in – May 29 and 30 – and once again the venue will be Te Papa.

Pricing, Funding and Pay Equity

We have been working with the Ministry of Health on the new residential pricing model over the last 6 months. We have welcomed this opportunity to analyse the tool, have substantive discussions with Ministry officials and to better understand the approach the Ministry is taking. While the pricing model will improve equity and transparency and lead to an overall marginal increase in funding we are ultimately disappointed in the outcome – the model is not based on the actual costs of providing services, but is “reverse engineered” to fit a pre-determined budget cap. In addition, it does not include provision for margins and does not adequately address pay equity impacts. For these reasons NZDSN declined a Ministry offer to be part of an internal Ministry business case to get approval for the new model.

We do acknowledge that at best it is a small step in the right direction where providers will be “more equally underfunded!” On top of this, and in a twist of irony, the Ministry plans to claw back some of the pay equity funding related to an assumed 2.2% wage growth component based on a calculation that has been poorly communicated and is still not well understood by everyone, including some government officials. Given the overarching backdrop of historical underfunding we think clawing back these funds is quite mean spirited!

The approach by NZDSN from this point involves several steps:

- We have declined the offer to be part of the Ministry’s internal business case
- We have requested an urgent meeting with the Minister of Health, particularly in relation to pay equity implementation issues
- We have communicated to relevant Ministers that they need to provide officials with a fresh mandate for a far bolder approach to a sustainable funding model, especially in the face of impending system transformation
- We will be meeting regularly with Ministers Sepuloni and Genter
- We will provide a detailed briefing for providers on the residential pricing tool when it is released
- We are now moving to commission our own piece of independent review and analysis including the investigation of sustainable funding options (this work was delayed while we were working with Ministry officials on the residential pricing model)

A more general discussion on funding issues, particularly in the context of System Transformation was the topic of Garth’s opening keynote at the recent NZDSN conference and can be found [here](#)

MSD: Employment and Community Participation Contracts

There are reports that Work and Income are increasingly using the provider template resulting in more informed referrals to contracted providers. MSD have signalled the possibility of separating contracts for those on SLP and those on job seekers benefits and removing the scaled pricing component on new contracts related to hours of work. We will push for a final decision around this at our next MSD meeting – along with a final decision on SLI indicators. We also need to consider a further round of workshops on tendering late this year ahead of the tendering process – if they stick to the constantly revised timeline. Most SORT training is finally underway.

At a recent meeting with Minister Sepuloni we emphasised that enabling providers to work with students before they leave school and removing the pricing points related to hours of work in the proposed new contracts would be simple fixes that could make a huge impact on employment outcome.

Our next MSD meeting will focus on: confirming contracting change regarding people on SLP and removal of hours of work pricing points; SE providers needing to engage prior to students leaving school; a work programme for removing MWEs, update on SORT and use of provider

information template; SLI indicator work update; tender timetable update; and budget bids for community participation services.

Employment Support Practice Guidelines

We had a successful launch of these Guidelines March 17th at Parliament with good media attention – which also managed to re-ignite the MWE issue. Many thanks for the large turnout! The governance group that steered this project will meet soon to discuss implementation strategies. There has been lots of positive feedback on the document and its use of plain language. We will look to organise workshops that socialise the Guidelines with providers and stakeholders.

Qualifications Review and Development

A comprehensive review of the Health and Well Being Qualifications is underway - this began with a sector forum hosted by Careerforce. Careerforce have commissioned NZDSN to undertake a Workforce Report and we have contracted Gordon Boxall to assist with this. A survey has gone out to NZDSN and Inclusive NZ providers' and Gordon will be meeting with key stakeholders plus a selection of providers. This report will make recommendations for changes to the competencies, content and delivery of these qualifications.

Work continues with the Open Polytechnic providing substantial advice and guidance on ensuring the relevance and “fit for purpose” of their qualifications. We have seconded Sara Georgeson to the Polytechnic for two days a week for most of this year to assist them with this work with a primary focus on the degree programme, but we expect a knock on impact for their level 3 and 4 programme. This is a further opportunity for NZDSN to influence sector qualifications.

Disability System Transformation

It has been very difficult to track NZDSN membership involvement in the myriad of working groups, but there has been opportunity for input. We have been particularly involved in working groups focused on provider development, workforce development, and starting soon, on market shaping. We also have regular meetings scheduled with Ministers Sepuloni and Genter. NZDSN members are participating in the Mid Central Leadership group. There is also a wider group of providers that meet regularly in Mid Central to foster understanding and engagement with the changes.

We are keen to be involved in any opportunities designed to support providers to prepare for and manage the change that the Disability System Transformation will inevitably mean and are scoping out how we can make such a contribution, not just in the Mid-Central region, but nationally as well.

Provider Development Programme

Not surprisingly, a lot of the activity and content over the coming year and beyond will be System Transformation-related, either directly or indirectly. We have resumed our EGL workshop roadshow in partnership with the National Enabling Good Lives Leadership Group, and the establishment of local Communities of Practice following these. Workshops are coming up in Auckland, New Plymouth and Wellington.

We will also be providing information about our first leadership exchange programme host shortly. Communities of Practice that are not directly EGL/System Transformation related will be organised that focus on areas like behaviour support and transition from school. Further training opportunities for Boards is also in the pipeline with a particular focus on change and transformation.

Fire Design Guide for Community Housing

You can access this Design Guide on our website [HERE](#). We will be working with others on the development of a Code of Practice to support the Design Guide and engagement with Building Consent Officers, and to promote and socialise the Guide.

Labour Market Engagement Strategy

This is a project that we are starting to scope and will soon begin engagement with key stakeholders. The combination of the pay equity settlement, uncertainty around immigration policies and an aging workforce mean that we have to “go after” the workforce we want and need in a way that promotes support work as a valued and rewarding career. There is a widespread lack of awareness of what the work can involve, the qualifications that are (and will) be available and the remuneration that is coming about because of pay equity.

Boards and the Strategic Environment

The NZDSN Chief Executive is available to meet with Boards to discuss the strategic environment from a governance perspective – including what’s on and over the horizon; governing through turbulence; getting ready for system transformation; NZDSN’s role and contribution.

Nga mihi nui

Garth

Dr Garth Bennie
Chief Executive



Conference 2018 Update
Libby Carson

Conference 2018 Update

Thank you all once again for attending our biggest and best-ever Annual Conference – we were thrilled at the turnout and the feedback we have had to date has been amazing.

To help us continue improving our conference – could you please take a few minutes to complete the survey [NZDSN Annual Conference Survey](#).

If you have any other feedback you'd like to give us, please don't hesitate to drop me a line libbyc@nzdsn.org.nz



NZDSN Auckland Regional News
Mireille Vreeberg

Auckland Regional News Update

Click [here](#) for the latest updates from our Auckland Regional Team!