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Update from the CE

Dr Garth Bennie



Kia ora and welcome to spring!

I am mindful that it has been some time since we provided a comprehensive update on NZDSN activities. We have several projects that have been at critical points and I was keen to wait so that we had substantive news to report, however one can only wait so long!

You will notice that we have moved from a standard newsletter format to one where we highlight specific developments and then provide a link that takes you to more detailed information. This saves repeating ourselves and also makes best use of our refreshed website.

The NZDSN Annual General Meeting

The NZDSN AGM was held on September 21st. Our [Annual Report](#) was tabled - as well as the audited accounts and financial report you can find reports from Wendy Becker (our outgoing Chairperson), the Chief Executive's report, the NZDSN Statement of Strategic Intent and our current Business Plan.

As a result of Board elections we are very pleased to welcome 4 new Board members: Laurie Hilsgen from Carer's New Zealand, Donna Mitchell from HHL Group, Mike Brummitt from Community Care Trust (Dunedin) and Sarah Halliday who was co-opted as the new Chair of our Employment Advisory Committee. Congratulations – we look forward to the huge range of skills and experience you all bring to your role as Board members.

At the AGM Barney Cooper, John Taylor and Chris Harris were confirmed honorary life membership of NZDSN. All three were pivotal in the establishment of NZDSN and have all made huge contributions to its development as the peak body for disability providers.

Equal Pay Negotiations

These have recently got under way again with meetings on the 12th and 21st September. A Working Group of employers (including NZDSN representatives) and funders has been established to look at the latest offer from the unions and this group meets on October 17th. The Working Group will put together a proposed settlement response to the union offer – hopefully by the end of October. Government is now keen to see a settlement by Christmas.

An outline of what shape a settlement may take is being developed and we hope to be in a position to share this with providers and seek feedback in the next few days. The negotiations now centre on consideration of the Mental Health Care Assistants role as a comparator to base the negotiations around. At this stage our view is for a settlement that monetises penal rates (i.e. includes these in the hourly rate), recognises tenure initially, but that further steps need to be related to qualifications; and includes a percentage in contract pricing to meet related on-costs of an increase in wages. It still remains unclear about the extent to which a settlement will address the fact that MSD and mental health funded services are not included. It is hoped that in the not too distant future we will be able to put a detailed proposed settlement to providers to seek a mandate.

Ministry of Health Funding Issues

Many of you will be aware of the ongoing concerns we have been raising with the Ministry of Health and Government about pricing, particularly in the area of High and Complex needs, but also more generally across all services funded by the Ministry of Health. The Labour opposition involved NZDSN in hosting a Roundtable discussion with several providers to highlight and explore further the matters we have been raising. Some media attention also helped get the dialogue going! Needless to say the level of frustration amongst providers about pricing and funding issues remains high. We also discussed the issues at length in this year's [NZDSN Sector Briefing](#).

[CLICK HERE](#) for copies of NZDSN letters to Ministers Coleman and Lotu-liga and for a summary of the main points agreed at the labour Party's roundtable meeting.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a copy of the NZ herald article that outlined the issues.

On a more positive note - Ministry of Health officials have agreed to the establishment of a **Strategic Policy Group** where NZDSN representatives will be engaged early on in discussions about new policies and strategic direction. We are working on a terms of reference and will soon run a process to select members for this group.

MSD Contracts Update

NZDSN, Platform and Inclusive NZ have now had their first monitoring group meeting with MSD. We are now able to clarify that the transition arrangements to the new contracts on July 1st 2017 will take the form of a quarterly upfront payment based on the previous year (along with those needing ongoing support), followed by a reconciliation payment for the 2nd quarter based on actual outcomes achieved. We can also confirm that there are several criteria in the contract for access to services where registration with Work and Income is **not** a requirement. We agree with MSD that the development of some robust criteria/indicators to determine the Service Intensity Level would be preferable and we will work together on developing these. The spreadsheet that MSD have developed and distributed is interim only. MSD will work with providers to scope the changes needed to sort out so that it works for providers.

While there is a strong perception among many that the proposed new contracts will disadvantage those with higher support needs and force providers to focus on “quick wins” we need concrete data to back this up – otherwise it just remains a perception. NZDSN is keen to have around 5 providers to commit to comprehensive data collection (retrospectively and for the July – December 2016 period) using the spreadsheet we distributed earlier.

If you want us to get from perception to evidence we need providers to participate in the collection of this data - contact us now!

[CLICK HERE](#) for access to the spreadsheet.

The monitoring group meets again on November 18.

Fire Regulations in Supported Housing

A governance group has now been established and a contract let for the development of a Design Guide and Code of Practice. There will be a consultation process run with the sector on a draft of this document before the end of the year. For further details [CLICK HERE](#)

Employer Guidelines and Recent Legislative Changes

A project is being put together to develop easy to follow guidelines for providers that ensures compliance with a number of recent changes, particularly new standards in the Employment Relations Amendment Act. These will be peer reviewed by key stakeholders prior to being released.

Provider Development Programme

Upcoming highlights include:

- **Expressions of Interest for Leadership Mentoring and Communities of Practice**
- Workshops on **Responding to Tendering Processes**, and

- The first workshop in **The Enabling Good Lives Roadshow**.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details (you will need to scroll down as events are listed by date).

The DisAbility Caucus

This is an evolving initiative that seeks to emphasise with Government the need for bold decisions about the transformation of the disability service system. The Caucus is non-aligned and seeks contributors who are able to offer leadership and influence around some key messages. For some joining up means a bit of sorting through issues around mandates from their employers or the organisations they represent and the Caucus accepts that for some this may take some time to work through.

If you would like to join simply email info@disabilitycaucus.nz

For the DisAbility Caucus key messages [CLICK HERE](#).

The Employment Practice Guidelines Project is Underway

The Governance group overseeing this project is made up of people from NZDSN, Inclusive NZ, Platform, DPA, People First and MSD. Gordon Boxall has been contracted to lead this project with the next step being to establish a working group of subject matter expertise. A copy of the Project Brief can be found [here](#).

Disability Action Plan 4a Working Group – Transforming the Disability Service System

This group has just met for the first time with Garth Bennie representing NZDSN. Membership also includes DPOs, Enabling Good Lives Leadership Group (which also has NZDSN participation through John Taylor), Inclusive NZ and Government officials. This work is being led by the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development and the mandate for the work comes from the Disability Action Plan and the Cabinet request for advice on options. The Working group will look at a systematic analysis of the evidence that includes the EGL demonstrations, Ministry of Health's New Model for supporting disabled people, the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Australia and other trials / pilots in the UK and Canada for example, and the innovative approaches developed by New Zealand families and providers. The systematic analysis of the evidence will provide the platform for officials to develop advice to Government on the options for applying the lessons to the disability support system. NZDSN's views on transforming the disability service system are spelt out in detail in this year's [Sector Briefing](#).

Orientation to our Strategic Environment for Boards

Garth Bennie (NZDSN CE), is available to meet with boards to present an orientation to the broader strategic environment that providers are operating in. It is essential for Boards to understand the current challenges and developments that impact on providers. This includes things like the changing policy and legislative environment, new models of service delivery and the impact of the UN convention. Many of these matters are canvassed in this year's [Sector Briefing](#) and this will serve as a basis for a presentation and discussion.

Contact garth@nzdsn.org.nz to arrange a session.

For News and Information about what's happening – check out our website

[In your Region](#)

[EVENTS Calendar](#)