



CSTDA UPDATE

This update has been prepared by Disability ACT to inform the disability sector of the negotiations on a new Commonwealth, State and Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA).

On April 3, State and Territory Disability Ministers met with the Federal Minister, Mal Brough to discuss the CSTDA. All jurisdictions were seeking a greater funding commitment from the Australian Government for the new agreement.

The States and Territories cited their performance over the life of CSTDA 3, compared to Australian Government contributions. For example, the ACT Government spent \$235 million on specialist disability services during CSTDA 3 — \$47.5 million above its commitment at the start of the agreement. By comparison, the Australian Government's total contribution over the five years — to the same disability services — was \$40 million.

In response the Federal Minister was highly critical of the States and Territories for 'not doing enough' during CSTDA 3. He added that the current offer (of continuing the current level of base funding and indexation at a rate of 1.8%) was still dependent on enhanced reporting and accountability.

Despite requests, the Commonwealth would not clarify the detail they wanted regarding improved reporting.

A new third-party accreditation scheme for all disability service providers was also part of the Australian Government's requirements for the base funding and indexation.

Minister Brough said the Australian Government did have additional funding for unmet need, but would not indicate how much. Instead, each State and Territory must put forward plans for additional "new money" funding of accommodation and respite services. The Commonwealth would then consider matching the plans on a dollar for dollar basis.

The Australian Government indicated a distinct preference for separate bilateral agreements with the pursuit of a national CSTDA 4 a fall back position.

The States and Territories stated a strong preference for a national agreement to deal with national disability issues not least of which is unmet need.

Efforts by State and Territory Ministers to meet again with the Commonwealth Minister prior to the Federal Budget being delivered on 8 May, 2007 were unsuccessful.

For its part, the ACT is seeking to overcome a serious disparity in base funding - currently the ACT gets 17 cents from the Australian Government for every \$1 it spends on specialised disability services. Some States receive well in excess of double that amount. The average is 24%, still well ahead of the ACT.

If the ACT is to make serious inroads into unmet need, it requires a minimum of \$11 million dollars of additional funding from the Australian Government for specialised disability services each year for the next five years.

The Australian Budget is presented on 8 May 2007. The ACT Budget will be presented in the 5 – 7 June sittings of the Assembly.

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May 2007

