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Attachment B – talking points

TALKING POINTS

Subject	Sector Development Fund Queensland project event at Amparo Advocacy
Date	18 January 2017
Intended	Assistant Minister Prentice
Media Officer	s 47F
Brief Number	MB17-000015

ISSUE: Talking points for Sector Development Fund media event at Amparo Advocacy

TALKING POINTS:

- I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Turrbal people, and pay my respects to their elders – past and present.
- I would also like to acknowledge:
 - Ms Maureen Fordyce, Manager of Amparo Advocacy
 - Mr Don Dias-Jayasinha, President of Amparo Advocacy
 - Ms Paige Armstrong, CEO of Queenslanders with Disability Network, and
 - Mr Nigel Webb, President of Queenslanders with Disability Network.
- It is great to be here today at Amparo Advocacy and witness the great work you and the Queenslanders with Disability Network are doing in helping people prepare for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- I am pleased to announce that the Australian Government will provide over \$5.8 million to the Queensland Department of Communities to assist Queensland's disability sector in the transition to the NDIS.
- The Commonwealth's NDIS Sector Development Fund invests in projects that help people with disability, their families, carers, service providers and workforce, adapt to the new arrangements for disability support under the NDIS.
- The benefits of the NDIS are already being felt in Queensland – in the early transition areas of Townsville, Charters Towers and Palm Island, and in Mackay and Toowoomba which are just beginning their NDIS journey. Here in Brisbane, I know the community is very much looking forward to the start of transition in July 2018.
- The NDIS significantly changes the way disability services are provided, and is one of the most significant reforms in disability policy in modern Australian history.

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- The NDIS will support a better life for hundreds of thousands of Australians with a disability, and their families and carers – including around 91,000 people here in Queensland.
- It will increase the choice and control that people with disability have over the supports they require, significantly increasing their independence and participation in the community.
- Projects funded through the Sector Development Fund will help create an efficient, responsive and innovative market that meets the needs of people with disability and their families.
- The funding I'm announcing today will support three projects managed by the Queensland Department of Communities.
- The first of these projects is the provider readiness initiative, which will help disability service providers transition to the NDIS.
 - Support will be given to small businesses across Queensland, including providers delivering to rural and remote communities and providers where disability services are only a small portion of their current business. Through this initiative, these businesses will be able to expand their support services to reach more people with disability.
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialist providers will be supported to expand their services to assist more people with disability.
 - The funding will also support service providers to help people with complex needs and sectors that deliver spectrum services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
 - Amparo Advocacy is already doing great work here in Gaythorne, supporting people with disability and their families from CALD communities to fully engage and participate in the NDIS as it is rolled out across Queensland. I'm pleased to say their good work will be able to continue with this additional funding.
 - Through the provider readiness initiative, the Queenslanders with Disability Network will provide a targeted strategy to reach people with disability and their families who experience additional disadvantage, to understand the NDIS and be ready to engage with the NDIA.
 - These people will include people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or living in supported accommodation facilities. People exiting the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems will also be supported.
- The second project aims to expand the disability sector workforce in Queensland by engaging, attracting and connecting people to jobs over the next two years.
 - The funding will enable the Queensland Government to rollout the Queensland NDIS Workforce Strategy across the state by mid-2018.

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- The Workforce Strategy is already being implemented in North Queensland, and has seen great success already. Other areas of Queensland will roll out the NDIS from July this year, so it is important that the disability sector workforce be expanded to meet demand under the NDIS.
- The third project will enable the Queensland Government to continue its participant readiness initiative through to June 2018.
 - The participant readiness initiative includes a wide range of activities through the non-government sector, including information sessions and workshops, home visits, phone support and the development of online information resources.
 - Disability organisations in south-east Queensland have already delivered more than 1,089 workshops for more than 12,800 attendees, to help people understand the opportunities presented by the NDIS. This is a significant achievement and this funding will help these organisations continue to engage with people about the NDIS.
- Again, it is great to be here today to witness the wonderful work that is already happening in the disability sector. It is fantastic that this work will continue through the Commonwealth's Sector Development Fund.
- Thank you for having me here today. I would like to invite **s 47F** Executive Director, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, to make a few remarks.

TIMING: Embargoed until media event on 25 January 2017 at 10am.

CLEARANCE:

Drafted by	Title	Time/Date
s 47F	A/g Communication Account Manager, Communication Services Branch	16 January 2017

Cleared by	Title	Time/Date
s 47F	A/g Director, Communication Services Branch	18 January 2017
s 47F	Director, NDIS Sector Development Fund	20 January 2017
Ty Emerson	Branch Manager, NDIS Market Oversight	
Margaret McKinnon	Group Manager, NDIS Market Reform	

Subject	Cashless Debit Card Trial – Talking Points
Date	18 January 2017
Intended	Minister Tudge
Media Officer	s 47F

Trial overview:

- Over the last 12 months, the Government and the leaders in two remote regions have been working together to design and deliver a community reform agenda which is hoped will bring stability to those regions.
- The Cashless Debit Card trial has now been under way for ten months in Ceduna, South Australia and nine months in the East Kimberley of Western Australia.

- There are approximately 750 trial participants in Ceduna and 1,200 trial participants across Kununurra and Wyndham in the East Kimberley.
- The trials are known as the 'cashless debit card trials', but the card itself is just one of three elements which come together. The other two elements are a series of highly targeted services and a regional leadership group which has co-designed and co implemented the reforms.
- At the moment, the Government provides welfare payments across the nation in the form of cash.
- In some places, those cash payments are used in ways for which they were never intended, in particular to purchase large volumes of alcohol and drugs, or for gambling.
- The community leaders in each location requested a community-wide solution to a community-wide problem. The trials intend to help with this by reducing the amount of cash available in a community that contributes to the sale and purchase of harmful products.
- The card is an ordinary Visa debit card, indistinguishable from any other Visa debit card that most Australians would have in their wallet. It can be used anywhere to purchase anything – fuel stations, supermarkets, taxis, op shops – but it will not work at bottle shops or at gambling outlets or allow the withdrawal of cash.
- It was deliberately chosen to be silver as this is the most common card colour.
- Everyone on a working age payment in the trial locations has 80 percent of their total welfare payments placed into an account that is only accessible with this card.
- People can also set up recurring bills, make one off payments, and pay for rent and other similar expenses from the restricted amount. A simple app has been developed for those with smart phones so that they can check their balances easily, pay bills and track expenses.
- In this way, it is hoped that the card will assist people in keeping control of their finances across the payment fortnight.

Early results

- The early results of the Cashless Debit Card Trial are encouraging, with data and feedback indicating that the trial may be assisting to reduce welfare-fuelled alcohol, drug and gambling abuse.
- The *Cashless Debit Card Trial Progress Report*, released in October 2016 by the Minister for Human Services, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, and the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, shows that there are some encouraging early signs.
- The report can be found at:

Evaluation:

- Since the Cashless Debit Card Trial commenced, the Government has been receiving and analysing data from the two trial sites to determine the trial's impact on welfare-fuelled alcohol, drug abuse, and gambling.
- An independent evaluation is being conducted by Orima Research and a report on the first 12 months of the trial is expected later in 2017.
- The evaluation will help the Government understand the influence of the trial on participants, their families and the wider community.
- Ultimately, the evaluation will discern what lessons can be learned to improve delivery and to inform future policy and implementation.

Support Services

- People who have issues with addiction issues have different needs. This is why additional, highly targeted, services have been put in place to help people address addiction, reduce their dependence on alcohol or drugs, and improve financial management practices. This is the second element of the trial.
 - Additional funding of \$1 million for support services in Ceduna; and
 - Additional funding of \$1.6 million for support services in the East Kimberley.
- Existing services were mapped in the trial locations to identify the gaps and deliver appropriate funding.
- The community leaders were consulted to draw on their local knowledge of what was needed in their community. In each location, extra drug and alcohol services were tailored to help people reduce their dependencies as well as financial counsellors to assist with budgeting.
- In Ceduna, for example, additional support services include a 24/7 mobile outreach service, extra drug and alcohol support and outreach workers, a brokerage fund and additional family violence services.
- In the East Kimberley, additional services include extra drug and alcohol support workers, a brokerage fund, an adolescent rehabilitation project and youth and family support services.
- Other complementary reform initiatives have also been negotiated. In the East Kimberley, for example, there is a strong employment focus to leverage the existing economic base.
- In Ceduna, services were introduced to ensure the surrounding communities of Koonibba, Oak Valley, Scotdesco and Yalata have internet services - in some instances for the first time.

Stakeholder and community partnership

- The state governments of South Australia and Western Australia have worked extensively with the Minister, the Department of Social Services and community leaders to provide data and bridge service gaps.
- The final element of the trial – which works with the other two elements – was the establishment of a regional leadership group in each location, which work with the Government to co-design every element of the trial.
- In Ceduna, the regional leadership group met weekly to determine every element of the trial – from the default percentage to be placed on the card, to the design of the community panel, to the colour of the card, and how it would work.
- During the card implementation phase, issues were and are being identified and worked through to resolution as quickly as possible.
- At the end of the trial there will be a full evaluation that will assess short and medium term impacts of the trial on community functioning, with a focus on social harm caused by alcohol consumption, drug use and gambling.
- If the results continue to be positive over the months ahead, the debit card might prove to be a sustainable model that can bring stability and significant improvements to damaged communities.

Conclusion: where to from here?

- The Government is continuing to work with the community and leadership bodies to monitor the progress of the trial and mitigate any emerging issues.
- The Government will consider the outcomes of the independent evaluation when it becomes available in 2017, when determining future directions for welfare quarantining.

Strong and Resilient Communities grants

Subject	Strong and Resilient Communities grants
Date	10 January 2017
Intended	Minister Porter
Media Officer	s 47F

TALKING POINTS

- The Commonwealth Government is committed to building strong and resilient communities by supporting local community organisations in their efforts to overcome disadvantage and solve complex social problems.
- The Government is improving the way it delivers community development funding through the new \$18 million Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) grants.
- This funding will help foster community cohesion by increasing people's sense of belonging and engagement and improving their chances of getting a job.
- SARC grants replace the Strengthening Communities Activity and will focus on 'whole of community' approaches to emerging community challenges.
- There have been no cuts to funding with \$18 million available for community organisations from May 2017.
- In recognising the valuable contribution of Australia's six million volunteers, the Government will continue to separately fund the \$10 million Volunteer Grants programme.
- The Department of Social Services will begin consulting with stakeholders on the new SARC grants next month.
- The Department is also contacting all organisations currently funded under the Strengthening Communities Activity to advise them of the changes.
- Currently funded organisations will have the opportunity to apply for grants under two new grant programmes: Community Resilience Grants and Inclusive Community Grants.
- The grants will support community projects that develop both individual and community capacity through volunteering, youth sports and cultural activities.
- This funding will also support projects that build and strengthen community leadership.
- Additionally, invited organisations will also be eligible for National Projects and Research grants that address emerging issues of national significance, such as success factors for community cohesion and harmony and increasing philanthropic partnerships.

- For inquiries about the existing Strengthening Communities grant activities and the new SARC programme, contact your grant agreement manager, email SARCreDesign@dss.gov.au or go to www.communitygrants.gov.au

Q&A Defensives:

Q. What's happening to the Strengthening Communities grants programme?

A: The Government will now deliver community development funding through the new \$18 million Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) grants.

Q. Which Strengthening Communities grant programmes form part of the redesign?

A: The following grant programmes will form part of the redesign:

- *COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING*
- *VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT*
- *DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION*
- *MULTICULTURAL ARTS AND FESTIVALS*

The \$10 million annual Volunteer Grants programme will continue to be separately funded, acknowledging the valuable work of more than six million Australian volunteers in supporting communities.

Q: Why are the Strengthening Communities grants being redesigned?

A: The Strengthening Communities grants largely funded single organisations dealing with single issues. SARC grants will provide a 'whole of community' approach to emerging challenges. Local communities can identify needs and a single or multiple organisations can come together to provide local solutions.

SARC grants will provide more flexibility to enable communities to determine how funding can best address their needs.

Q. Is 'redesign' just a code-word for cuts?

A: No. There have been no cuts to funding. There is still \$18 million available annually for SARC grants.

Q. When will SARC commence?

A: The Strengthening Communities grant programmes cease on 30 June 2017 and the new SARC grants commence on 1 January 2018.

Q: Are impacted organisations being offered extensions on their current grants?

A: Some currently funded organisations provide ongoing direct service delivery or supports and these organisations will be offered a six month extension to their Strengthening Communities grant agreement until 31 December 2017.

All currently funded eligible organisations will have the opportunity to apply for grant funding under SARC, which is expected to be announced in May 2017 for a 1 January 2018 start.

Q: Why aren't other funded organisations getting funding extensions?

A: These organisations were funded for one-off time-limited projects.

All currently funded eligible organisations will have the opportunity to apply for grant funding under SARC, which is expected to be announced in May 2017 for a 1 January 2018 start.

Q: Will the Volunteer Grants round change?

A: No. The Government's \$10 million Volunteer Grants programme will continue to be funded separately to support around six million volunteers in community organisations that assist vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

Q: Why has there been no opportunity for community organisations to be consulted on these changes?

A: The Department of Social Services has contacted all currently funded organisations to inform them of the changes. In February, the Department is meeting with organisations most affected by these changes.

Q: How can community organisations find out more about the redesign and when the funding rounds open?

A: The Department of Social Services is informing/has informed all affected community organisations about these changes. Further information can be found on the DSS website at dss.gov.au. Funding rounds are expected to open in May 2017.

[Q&As for consultation period in February]

Q: Why is the Government redirecting funding from current Strengthening Communities activities such as volunteer management, which benefit many individuals and organisations in communities, to a focus on programmes that address intolerance?

A: The three new grant programmes provide a more flexible programme structure that enables communities to determine how funding can best address their needs.

Funding will help build the enabling structures which are vital to well-functioning, cohesive and resilient communities. Volunteering is one of a number of community enablers that will continue to be supported.

Q: Under these changes, why is there funding for some volunteer activities but not for others?

A: Priority will continue to be given to programmes and projects that support people and communities experiencing disadvantage. Funding will support activities that address the needs of people from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disability and mental health issues and disengaged youth.

Volunteering activities supporting marginalised people to socially and economically participate in their communities will be supported.

BACKGROUND: FOR MO ONLY –

For further information on SARC refer to Brief Number: *MS16-000900*

SENSITIVITIES

Media

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Recent media interest in this grants activity include:

Youth Insearch Foundation is currently funded under the Community Development and Participation Activity (part of the Strengthening Communities Activity) with funding is due to expire on 30 June 2017. In November and December 2016, the Department received two media queries regarding the organisation's funding and requesting a meeting with the Minister. There was also an extensive article in the Daily Telegraph on 12 November 2016 which quoted Tamworth Magistrate Mal Macpherson.

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/juvenile-crime-fears-mentoring-programme-that-breaks-chain-of-offending-under-risk-from-cuts/news-story/0153e0ed78383d8451d9b05b6d9d57c8>

Other articles which featured Insearch are listed below:

Blacktown Advocate 27 July 2016

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/blacktown-advocate/youth-insearch-helps-kings-park-man-jaired-goodwin-turn-his-life-around/news-story/cd7b580dc8d24eb0bd00f27b91a1a42c>

Armidale Express 28 December 2016

<http://www.armidaleexpress.com.au/story/4373398/video-youth-insearch-saved-my-life/?cs=4054>

s 47E

Pro Bono - Budget 2016: Shock for Volunteer Programmes, 4 May.

Volunteering Australia also issued a media release on this issue.

Drafted by	Title	Time/Date
s 47F	CSB Account Manager/(Acting) Director, Comms	10/01/2017

Cleared by	Title	Time/Date
Yvette Sims	Multicultural and Communities , Branch Manager	10/01/2017
Evan Lewis	Multicultural, Settlement Services and Communities Group Manager	

Sector Development Fund overarching talking points

Subject	Sector Development Fund announcements in January 2017
Date	11 January 2017
Intended	Assistant Minister Prentice
Media Officer	s 47F
Brief Number	N/A

ISSUE: The Australian Government is providing more than \$15.3 million through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Sector Development Fund to assist the disability sector in its transition to the NDIS.

TALKING POINTS:

Sector Development Fund – overview

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Sector Development Fund was established to assist the disability sector, including people with disability, their families, carers, service providers and workforce, in transitioning to the new arrangements for disability support under the NDIS.
- It does this through a number of activities including building community capacity and engagement, increasing the ability of the disability community to care for people with disability, increasing disability service provider readiness to manage the transition, expansion and diversification of the disability workforce, and building the evidence base.
- The Australian Government is providing of projects of more than \$15.3 million to help people prepare for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and will assist providers to transition to the scheme and will help to increase the workforce to meet the needs of participants. This is in addition to the \$86 million already committed.

Queensland Department of Communities

- The Australian Government has provided over \$5.8 million to the Queensland Department of Communities to assist Queensland's disability sector's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- The first of these three projects will aim to expand the disability sector workforce in Queensland by engaging, attracting and connecting people to jobs.
- The funding will allow the Queensland Government to implement the Queensland NDIS Workforce Strategy across the state by mid-2018.
- Other areas of Queensland are set to roll out the NDIS from July this year, so it is important that the disability sector workforce be expanded to meet demand under the NDIS.
- The second project will allow the Queensland Government to continue its Participant Readiness initiative through the 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years.
- The Participant Readiness initiative includes a wide range of activities through the non-government sector, including information sessions, meetings, workshops, home visits, phone support and the development of online resources.
- Organisations funded through the Participant Readiness Initiative have delivered more than 1,089 workshops for more than 12,800 attendees, to help them understand the opportunities presented by the NDIS.
- The third project will assist disability service providers in transitioning to the NDIS. It will help small organisations delivering to rural and remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialist providers, and service providers delivering supports to people with complex needs, or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Northern Territory Government

- The Australian Government is providing over \$6 million through the Sector Development Fund to for capacity building projects to be managed by the Northern Territory Government.
- The Northern Territory is working to resolve issues around remote area service delivery, and these projects will help the Northern Territory disability community take further steps to get ready for the NDIS.
- The funding will help the NT Government progress a number of NDIS-related projects – working with communities to develop community plans, training Aboriginal support workers and helping people get ready for the NDIS.
- The Northern Territory covers the third largest area of all Australian States and Territories, but only represents a small percentage of the population. The lack of access to large, metropolitan areas impacts the ability of people with disability in the Northern Territory to access disability services.
- It is important to develop targeted approaches to disability services to ensure that people with disability in the Northern Territory have access to adequate support with the roll out of the NDIS, in order to take advantage of the consumer choice and control the NDIS brings.
- The community plans developed by the Northern Territory with local communities will be used to support their transition to the NDIS.

- The plans will inform new solutions to the existing challenges associated with disability service delivery in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Government will work with local communities to identify new approaches to disability services.
- The plans will also identify ways to engage and train Aboriginal support workers in remote communities, encouraging the growth of a culturally competent workforce.
- The community plans will also be used to help people with disabilities, their families and carers to prepare for the rollout of the NDIS.

Tasmanian Government

- The Australian Government is providing \$3.23 million through the Sector Development Fund to help Tasmania's disability sector prepare for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- The NDIS is expected to include 10,600 Tasmanians by June 30, 2019.
- The funding will go towards four projects headed by the Tasmanian Government.
- The first project, funded for \$1.62 million, will establish a panel of experts to help providers operate effectively in the new NDIS market in regional and rural areas.
- Two of the projects will build the confidence and skill level of participants and ensure people with disability in Tasmania are confident and able to participate in the NDIS.
- The other project will promote the disability sector as a career of choice, looking to increase the supply and availability of the allied health workforce in regional, rural and remote areas.

Early intervention information services talking points.

Subject	Support services extended for families of children with disability
Date	11 January 2017
Intended	Assistant Minister Prentice
Media Officer	s 47F
Brief Number	NA

ISSUE: The Australian Government is providing \$17 million over the next two years to continue to fund the education and information components of the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) and Better Start for Children with Disability programs throughout the NDIS transition.

TALKING POINTS:

- I am pleased to announce that families of young children with disability will be able to continue accessing the support and advice components of the Australian Government's early intervention programs until the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reaches full scheme in 2019-20.
- The Australian Government is providing \$17 million over the next two years to continue to fund the education and information components of the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) and Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) programs, throughout the NDIS transition.
- These programs play an important role in supporting families and children with disability, as they first absorb the child's diagnosis and then begin navigating the system of disability supports.
- HCWA and Better Start are two government programs offering early intervention services for children with disability from birth until age 7.
- These programs have already helped over 65,000 children with disability, their families and carers, to access the services they need.
- The direct support provided by these programs – up to \$12,000 per child – is gradually transitioning to the NDIS as each client becomes a participant, but the Government recognised the continued need for the associated support and advice services during this time of change.
- Some of the services this funding will support are Autism Advisors, Early Days Workshops, HCWA Playconnect playgroups and Better Start Community Events.
- Some of the funding will also go towards the Early Intervention Indigenous Liaison Officer program, which aims to increase awareness of childhood disability in Indigenous families and communities.
- These services provide an important complement to the support available to families through the health, education and early childhood sectors.

- Some of these registration, education and support projects are already funded until the end of the 2016-17 financial year. This new funding will provide children and families within the programs with certainty for the following two years while the NDIS is rolled out.

Q&As:

Is there a change in funding to the HCWA and Better Start programs?

This funding is for education and information components of the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) and Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) programs throughout the NDIS transition – this does not impact on the funding for individualised early intervention services.

Why are you funding support services for HCWA and Better Start if these programs are transitioning to the NDIS?

HCWA and Better Start will continue to operate in locations until they progressively transition to the NDIS. It is important that people are informed about these programs and are supported through the transition to the NDIS – Early Days Workshops, HCWA Autism Advisors and Better Start Registration and Information Services provide families with information so they are aware of the support available to them and HCWA Playconnect playgroups provide parents and children with social support. These support services will remain available until 2019-20 as the NDIS rolls out.

What information and support services will be provided by the NDIA once these programs transition?

The Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Approach is how the NDIS is working with Early Childhood Partners to deliver early childhood intervention for children aged 0-6 years. The Early Childhood Partner will be the first contact point for families. The Early Childhood Partner will discuss with the family the most appropriate supports that would benefit the child. This includes providing information and referral to other support services or organisations. Understanding that every child is different, the Early Childhood Partners will tailor the supports to the child and family's individual needs and circumstances.

TIMING: Embargoed until accompanying media release is distributed and providers are notified of the new funding.

BACKGROUND:

- HCWA and Better Start are early intervention programs for children aged 0-7. Each program is comprised of three components: funding for early intervention services which are demand driven; registration services to enable children to access the early intervention funding; and education and support projects.
- s 47E
- HCWA and Better Start will transition to the NDIS progressively until the NDIS reaches full scheme. The operation of HCWA Autism Advisors and Better Start Registration and Information Services is required until the rollout of the NDIS is complete and registration for early intervention programs close.

- The education and support projects are similar to the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) component of the NDIS and the Department holds responsibility for funding these projects until the NDIS begins to deliver ILC in 2019-20. Funding in respect of the education and support projects will then transition to the NDIS.