



**Minister for Environment; Disability Services; Electoral Affairs
Deputy Leader of the Legislative Council**

Our ref: 62-18347

Mr John Macdonald
Chief Executive Officer
Kira Community Services

ceo@kira.org.au

Dear Mr Macdonald

Thank you for your email to Mr Mark Folkard MLA, which was forwarded to my office on 27 December 2019, regarding priority issues for Kira Community Services (Kira). Mr Folkard has asked me to respond to the issues you have raised on his behalf.

I acknowledge your concerns regarding the disability care workforce and the impact on Kira's services; I know these challenges are shared across many providers in the sector. The State Government is progressing initiatives to address the shortfall of support workers. The State Training Board's Social Assistance and Allied Health Workforce Strategy was released in April 2019, and there has been considerable progress against all seven of its recommendations.

The State Government has also announced a 50 per cent reduction in TAFE fees from 2020 for a range of high priority qualifications, including disability care. The McGowan Government also provided \$20.3 million in Sector Transition Funding to assist the disability sector to remain sustainable. This included strategies designed to attract younger people to work in the sector. As Minister for Disability Services and a member of the Disability Reform Council (DRC) I am able to influence national workforce initiatives to ensure the sustainable growth of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

I understand that employment is an important outcome for people with disability and I am pleased to hear that Kira is making it a priority. The NDIS has provided new opportunities through individualised planning and funding, and the NDIS Participant Employment Strategy 2019-2022 will give participants greater choice and access to the right supports to achieve their employment goals.

With the right leadership and collaboration between government, the disability sector and employers, I am confident that we can make a significant and positive difference to employment outcomes. To play my part, I have launched the Action Plan for People with Disability 2020-25, which has actions for all State Government agencies.

I have set a target of increasing representation of people with disability in the public sector to five per cent by the end of 2025.

I share your concern that the funding parameters for NDIS participant transport and provider travel may not adequately support NDIS participants to access the community. I have been pushing for better outcomes in these areas at the national level through the DRC. A key focus for the DRC is the implementation of a new NDIS transport policy to ensure that NDIS participants are provided with reasonable and necessary support across the range of transport needs. I hope that this work will go some way toward addressing the concerns you have highlighted.

I am committed to seeing a Western Australia that includes, welcomes, and values people with disability and enables full social and economic participation. The State Disability Strategy, currently being finalised, will seek to achieve a culture and society of inclusion where everyone belongs and has opportunities to participate and contribute. It is a commitment to examine and work alongside the systems and services to ensure people with disability are included and have opportunities to enjoy the benefits of equal citizenship.

The State Disability Strategy is not only about what government can do, but all parts of the community committing to, and acting to, create inclusive communities. In this way people with disability can go about and have choice in their everyday lives.

I have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to Hon Stuart Robert MP, Minister for the NDIS, and I encourage you to contact him to convey any further concerns you have as a provider in the NDIS and to highlight the changes you would like to see. You are also welcome to raise matters relating to individuals who use disability services with my office, so we can follow up with the National Disability Insurance Agency.

Once again, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely



Hon Stephen Dawson MLC
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES

Cc Hon Stuart Robert MP, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Mr Mark Folkard MLA, Member for Burns Beach

31 JAN 2020