

CaLD Response
to the
Community Living Plan
of the
Disability Services Commission

November 2008

At the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre (EDAC) we are appreciative of the effort DSC has taken towards consulting with people from cultural and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds regarding the Community Living Funding Strategy and the opportunity to attend the presentation in Subiaco and also participate in the Framework for Community Living writing workshop. EDAC has reviewed the Community Living Concept Plan Stage 1 Report and the draft of the Looking Forward to Community Living. In general EDAC is enthusiastic about the attention, priority and constructive efforts to address the development of real and supported practical choice of independent living options for people with disability and are pleased to actively participate.

In doing so we are keen to offer our constructive input and help to address its application appropriately and effectively to CaLD people with disabilities and their families/carers and communities. This seems to be an area of important potential development of the strategy, that is, of the ways it may acknowledge and engage people with disabilities within the diverse multicultural population. In particular

- recognizing the cultural values and care roles and responsibilities of CaLD family support within community living models; and
- acknowledging that many CaLD people with disabilities may require transitional arrangements and support before (and after) living an independent life in the community.

Family within community living models

Currently the community living strategy is based on an individualistic model, where people with disabilities are promoted as valued members of Australian society living independently from family and extended family members. Like most services, based on the values and practices of dominant liberal Western culture, this concept doesn't in any explicit way take into account the needs of people with a disability from ethnic communities, where family supports and living with family or extended family are key values within a CaLD family and their communities.

Quite frequently a CaLD person (with or without a disability) arranges to live with a balance of both independence and support, similar to 'good neighbour' or 'live-in' options as outlined in DSC model of community living, where the support is provided from within the family/extended family.

To make the strategy more inclusive for CaLD people with disability, requires recognition and inclusion of this culture-based 'family model.' Funding and supported implementation also need to be explored with CaLD families to assist them with participation and integration within the realization of the various community living options.

Family inclusion in planned transitions in living

Most people with a disability (regardless of their cultural origin) will find moving from the security of family home or institution to independent style living quite stressful. The present way the strategy is promoted portrays clients being considered for funding if they move out of the family home. This needs to be addressed as it is seen by EDAC to be one of the major barriers preventing CaLD people and their families considering that option.

EDAC has highlighted in a number of funding and consultative submissions to DSC the difficulty that CaLD people have with the concept of a family member living independent of the family, or doing so without recognition and consideration and inclusion of the family and their care roles and responsibilities in the process. EDAC has made recommendation to the review of the Carer's Recognition Act that CaLD carers of people with disabilities be accorded both explicit recognition and improved support.

An example of this 'transitional' concept is enabling a person with a disability to first (or continue to) live within the grounds of the family home in a demountable transportable home (or 'granny flat'). This has proven a viable option for many of CaLD families as both they and the client adjust to the concept of moving out into more independent living in the community. This can also be a useful trial period to help prepare and determine what resources or considerations are needed to ensure the right supports are provided for the person with a disability towards progressing to living an independent life.

Support for planned transition in living also applies at the later stages of life in terms of people adjusting to leaving the option of independent living and needing to move into more supported care options - such as when a person with a disability may need to move into an aged care home.

Recommendation

EDAC is currently planning to consult with a number of CaLD consumers regarding this strategy and would like to invite a policy officer from DSC's Community Living Plan in 2009 to discuss these options further, towards the development of CaLD support to the strategy that is inclusive of the needs of people with a disability who are from CaLD backgrounds.

A possibility would be the development, in a series of sessions with a working group of CaLD people with disabilities and their family/carers and communities who have experience and issues of concern in these matters, of guidelines to assist CaLD consumers, families/cares, ethnic communities and disability service providers (accommodation) in implementing the community living strategy with CaLD people in ways that produce equitable utilisation of the program and effective and sustainable outcomes.