

It is broke, so we need to fix it: a
demand-side perspective on the NDIS

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If you took all the econimists of the world and laid them end to end, they still wouldn't reach a conclusion.



The stretch ...

Multi-perspectival dynamics

From the perspective of the person with disability	From the perspective of 'traditional' service providers
Individualisation of funding	Business-isation of provision
Dematerialisation of service design	Decapitalisation/democratisation of service design
Personalisation of service delivery	Marketisation of service delivery
Customerisation of service experience	Commercialisation of service offerings
From the perspective of the professional	From the perspective of the support worker
Autonomisation/deinstitutionalisation of employment	Casualisation of employment
Specialisation of practice model	Generalisation of practice model

Who are people with disability who are participants in the NDIS? Especially through the NDIA?

- Diverse: impairments, capacity, capabilities, needs, levels of dependency and interdependency, aspirations, expectations
- Dynamic: lifecourse perspective inherent in the insurance model makes us aware of changing needs, capacity, capability, aspirations and expectations across the lifecourse, with particular attention to be paid to transition points to ensure best possible entry into next stage of life (eg at early adult hood)
- Differentiated: through the eligibility, assessment, risk analysis, planning and budgeting processes

When these people approach the market the critical issue becomes 'attainable, sustainable quality' with these questions emerging:

- Does being in control of funds to purchase disability supports offer sufficient leverage in the growing market (specialist disability service providers, generalist support providers and private sector enterprises) to ensure and drive up quality (for self and others)?
- Does moving from client/consumer to purchaser/customer increase the possibility of gaining what is reasonable and necessary to support life goals?
- Does the market provide sufficient safeguards for customers...protecting their rights, interests and well-being?

The key question for this reform

Does moving from client/consumer to purchaser/customer increase the possibility of gaining a quality product which is reasonable and necessary to support life goals?

What does quality look like from this perspective?

Because quality is in the eye of the beholder how can we understand it and protect it so that the funding system can do its job and the supply side can be responsive and maximise its goals for market share?

What quality is and what it is not

- **What it is:** *an amalgam of availability, accessibility, suitability and flexibility as well as demonstrated facilitation of social and economic participation and effective interface with informal supports (families, communities) and other systems providers (health, housing, transport, education) **and all affordable!***
- **What it is not:** *we know that quality is absent when other things are present...high levels of service control, rigidity, threat, harm to customers; poor value for money; absence of quality assurance regimens; poor or absent safeguards for particularly vulnerable customers*

Some questions for the market...

- What do choice and control look like in a market that is under-developed and offering services of variable quality?
- Overall, there was a high-level of agreement among stakeholders about the quality and safeguarding measures that should be adopted for the NDIS. While stakeholders emphasised the need to focus on developmental safeguards, they also generally suggested a need for high-level regulation. Many were sceptical of the assumption that the development of a competitive market for disability care and support would empower people to make choices, particularly in the short-term, and they were concerned about any reduction in current quality and safeguarding measures given that cases of abuse and neglect have occurred even with these protections. *(Report of Consultations into NDIS Quality and Safeguards, 2015)*

Some questions for the overall scheme

- Which approaches might best help to protect attainable and sustainable quality when we are working with a population of people who have lived without choice and control?
- Is self-regulation likely to be potent enough in this context, even in the longer term?
- Does the system need to develop independent, external quality assurance mechanisms that go beyond the current proposals?
- Where do the state-based systems of consumer safeguarding fit within this national approach?



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