



cerebral palsy league

Submission 007

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Health and Community Services Committee

Input to

Queensland Parliament's Health and Community Services Committee's Review of:

Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012

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The Cerebral Palsy League (CPL) thanks the Health and Community Services Committee for the opportunity to comment on the proposed *Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012*.

CPL is the largest non-government service provider for Queenslanders who have a physical disability and provide a broad range of services throughout the state. A brief guide to CPL is attached to this submission for the Committee's information.

CPL's vision is ***An inclusive world for all people***

This brief submission has been informed by input from CPL's constituency.

CPL has been long term supporter of fundamental change in the way disability services in Queensland and indeed Australia are funded and delivered. Our views on how this could occur were outlined in our submission to the Productivity Commission's 2011 *Inquiry into Disability Care and Support*.

Key principles from CPL's submission were:

- The provision of disability services must empower people with disability and their families to maximise their independence and contribution to society, not simply provide care and support, which promotes a (real or perceived) dependency on government or community hand-outs.
- The sector as a whole must fundamentally change the way it approaches disability in this country, not just change the funding regime for disability support.
- This is a once in a life-time chance to bring people with a disability into our society as full participants - to move to supporting people with a disability to actively take opportunities, rather than just passively seeing the opportunities that might exist.

CPL anticipates the Queensland State Government's *Your Life Your Choice* initiative will embody these same principles. Self-directed funding is a key foundation in empowering people with a disability and their families to live the life they want to live. This, in turn, means that these same individuals and families will have greater opportunity make more significant contributions to their communities than would have otherwise been possible.

The proposed *Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012* will go some way to removing legislative barriers that have previously held back the roll-out of self directed funding within the disability sector. Accordingly, CPL strongly supports the passage of the new legislation through the Queensland Parliament.

However, CPL is acutely aware that there are potentially many more obstacles that will need to be overcome before the roll-out can commence.

Under the proposed Amendment Bill, in order to receive funding directly a person with a disability or their family will need to enter into an Individual Funding Agreement. No detail has been made available on the form that such an Agreement will take. CPL's client group has made clear that their priorities for such an Agreement will be that:

- The Agreement is transparent - written in plain English in a way that can be understood or training packages developed to ensure it can be understood;
- The Agreement needs to include (or separate explanatory documents need to include) a clear set of guidelines for inclusions and exclusions (what can be purchased with self directed funding and what cannot). A list of exclusions would be the more useful of these two, that is, non-negotiable items that lie outside the scope for funding.

- Red tape needs to be kept to a minimum. CPL's constituency understands the need for financial probity and are happy to provide reasonable evidence that goods and services purchased have been used for the intended purpose. However, they have also identified that they do not wish to be in a situation where the time spent on financial accountability outweighs the relative worth of the funding and works contrary to the very premise of *Your Life Your Choice*.
- Surety and continuity of funding support is a key concern for CPL's client group. Individual Funding Agreements should enable long term solutions, not simply a patchwork of limited term responses, due to lack of certainty.

CPL and its constituency would value being included in deliberations on the future development of the Individual Funding Agreement.

From previous experience, CPL is aware that there are potential obstacles in other Queensland State legislative instruments and State Government department financial probity policies and regulations that may reduce the effectiveness of *Your Life Your Choice*. An example of this will be:

- How will the proposed Amendment Bill and associated funding program processes intend to overcome barriers to providing financial assistance directly to individuals inherent in the State *Financial Accountability Act 2009*?

Specifically, will the State Government require individuals receiving funding under *Your Life Your Choice* to be deemed Statutory Bodies under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*?

To require this of individuals and families will encumber them with structural and accountability requirements that are completely at odds with the stated purpose of the proposed *Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012*.

As stated previously, CPL supports the intent of the *Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012* and its passage through the Queensland Parliament.

CPL values the work undertaken thus far on this critical area of social policy and encourages that the State Government and relevant departments undertake wide consultation dialogue on the form of specific instruments to implement the *Your Life Your Choice* initiative, such as program guidelines and the Individual Funding Agreement. CPL would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the relevant department's consideration of these matters.



Angela Tillmanns
Chief Executive Officer

4 October 2012

About the Cerebral Palsy League

The **Cerebral Palsy League (CPL)** is the largest non-government service provider for Queenslanders who have a physical disability and provides a broad range of services throughout the state.

CPL's vision is:

An inclusive world for all people

The organisation has grown, from humble beginnings in 1948 led by a group of parents of children and concerned citizens to one - sixty four years on - that provides over \$60m of support services to assist more than 5,000 Queenslanders with cerebral palsy and related disabilities and their families/carers to achieve their life goals, each year.

CPL provides a broad range of support services, the majority supported by government funding, some fee-paying services and services sponsored through corporate and community partnerships combined with and donations.

CPL groups its services to individuals and families under five areas:

- **Service Options** – where we discuss people's goals and work with them about options for support
- **Support at Home** – providing a range of support services to adults with a disability and families of children with a disability in their homes
- **Support in the Community** – assisting adults, children and families access and participate in their communities through services such as community access, life skills development, recreation and leisure support, outside schools hours and vacation care for children with a disability and their siblings, assistance with transport, peer support, access to information and community linking
- **Allied Health Services** – providing or organising a broad range of professional services, including access to assistive technology support
- **Employment Support** – providing open and supported employment options to people with a disability – in real jobs on award wages.

The first four of the above services can be accessed through CPL's regional network. CPL has seven regions:

- **North Queensland/Far North Queensland** – stretching from Mackay to Mt Isa across the state and all areas north
- **Wide Bay/Central Queensland** – stretching from just above Gympie in the south to the communities below Mackay in the north and across to Longreach in the west
- **Moreton/Sunshine Coast** – stretching from Strathpine in the northern suburbs of greater Brisbane in the south to Gympie in the north and covering most of the Somerset Regional Council area
- **Metro North** – covering Brisbane suburbs and surrounds from Brisbane CBD in the south to immediately below Strathpine in the north and across to Samford Village in the west
- **Metro South** – covering all Brisbane City region suburbs below Brisbane CBD and Kangaroo Point
- **South Coast** – covering Redlands, Logan and Gold Coast cities and far-northern NSW; and
- **South West Queensland** – stretching from Ipswich and Scenic Rim in the east to the NSW, SA and NT borders in the south-west and up to Boulia and Winton shires in the west.

CPL also provides:

- a state-wide information and referral service to more than 5,000 individuals with a disability and their families, workers in the disability sector, medical and allied health professionals and the general community; and
- an internationally recognised research program.

CPL hosts the **Queensland Cerebral Palsy Register**, funded by the Queensland State Government, which produced its first biennial report on the incidence and prevalence of cerebral palsy in Queensland in 2010. The second report is due in late 2012.

In addition to these services, CPL is also **Registered Training Organisation** providing a range of accredited and non-accredited training for people with a disability as well as workers in the disability community and health sectors.

CPL also operates four Social Enterprise businesses that employ both people with and without a disability on award-based wages in the printing and packaging industries.

CPL employs approximately 1500 staff to provide and support its range of support services.

CPL is a company, with a Board of Directors, who volunteer their services and expertise.

In 2011, CPL achieved re-certification under the following quality management systems:

- National Disability Employment Standards
- Queensland Disability Service Standards and
- AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008.

CPL has an evolving range of vehicles for engagement with our constituency, including:

- formally constituted bodies separate to the organisation, such as the state-wide Client Consultative Committee and the Parents and Guardians Association
- regionally based client committees
- regular surveys seeking feedback and input on client satisfaction, suggestions for improvement and unmet needs
- a feedback system (including complaints management)
- issue-specific forums; and
- a range of less formal gatherings of clients and families with CPL staff.

The views put forward through these engagement mechanisms are fed directly into CPL's strategic and business planning, CPL policies, service development and CPLs advocacy on public policy and community issues impacting on the lives of people with a disability and their families/carers.

Who does the Cerebral Palsy League support?

CPL is a recognised expert in supporting people with cerebral palsy and related disabilities. In a service delivery context, this extends to CPL using that expertise to provide support primarily to people with a physical disability across perhaps the broadest range of service approaches of any provider in Queensland. Of course, many people CPL supports have a range of other disabilities and a small number do not present with a primary physical disability.