

## Your questions



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# Araluen Participants, Families & Carers Network Online meeting 23 Feb 2023

Araluen CEO, Tamara Cattach, hosted an online meeting with families and carers to talk about Araluen's involvement in the **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation of People with Disability** as well upcoming **changes to NDIS pricing** and accommodation **vacancies in Araluen group residences**. These questions were raised by people participating in the session. A video of the meeting is also available.

## Disability Royal Commission (public hearing 32)

**Q1.** *In reference to the other panelists who gave evidence alongside Tam:*  
**Were the other two organisations that were there, were they large ones or the same size as ours and why did they (the Royal Commission) choose us?**

**A.** (TAMARA): They were probably about four times the size of us. Of the probably ten to twelve organisations that were chosen, they were all of varying size. There was an organisation on the last day that had ten employees and that was from Tasmania. So I think what they were looking at was all shapes and sizes to see whether or not there was a difference in the way organisations were managed, led, and to see if there's any implications. They did talk about the size of organisations having an impact on abuse and neglect occurring.

## New NDIS pricing

**Q2.** **Apart from general CPI rises and things like that, will the actual total amount of money (needed in a plan), say for community participation, be roughly the same or will the gross amount change a lot?**

**A.** (JOSH): Essentially the unit price is actually lowered to allow for these extra charges on top (*of the group support charge*). However, if there are participants that require additional non face-to-face time, then quite a lot of this can add up. So if there are things like the work that managers and staff do around behaviour support plans or allied health visits or extra training that's specific to a participant, that's when I would say participants might need quite a bit of additional funding in their plans.

In the past, the NDIS haven't done very well around providing enough funding for participants in their plans for that individualised training that's needed. And it's actually something that we brought up to Royal Commission as well, that we wanted to see more of - when planners were actually putting through their reviews, that they would make sure to include enough funds in the plan to actually provide the training that's required to support that person individually.

So, yes, there will be an increase for some people. Some people, will likely stay the same. There might be some with slight increases in the price.

(TAMARA) But it's really about deconstructing the price. The centre capital cost is already in the current price. All they've done is just deconstruct it and separate it out so people can see what they're actually being billed for and they (*the NDIA*) wanted to try and make it fair because they felt within groups, often everybody was charged the same amount, but often times there may be one participant that gets more support in that group than the others. And that's unfair that they're all paying the same amount. So it shouldn't really alter your plan too much, but there may be slight alterations.

**Q3. What do the price changes mean for upcoming NDIS plan reviews? So does it mean that in your quote for the next 12 months, Araluen would be able to predict the next 12 months costs?**

**A. (JOSH):** So we will be quoting all participants that 5 minutes per hour of support and we will be essentially charging that out evenly.

However, there will be a period of time, and we've spoken at length to the NDIS about how this might work and how it might work for all providers, because *(these changes are)* quite a difficult thing to bring in. It's very administration heavy, if we started trying to split hairs around the time spent with participants but what we will do is spend some time, first of all, implementing it, then we'll spend some time reviewing it and actually looking back asking "Has the administration time that we've provided been sufficient for participants for what we're billing out?", "Do we need to make adjustments?"

So we're quoting quite standard, but in the future we will need to probably adjust based on individualised need of participants.

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**Q4. So I'm just thinking about the upcoming plan and, of course, how much we ask for it, because I think, well, for a lot of us anyway, in the past year or so, the NDIA have a very keen to just do the phone rollover. Which is fine if you think what you're currently getting will cover all of this, but not so fine if there may be changes that you're unaware of and you go and agree to rolling over and then find out it's not going to work.**

**A. (JOSH):** Yeah, completely understand and it is it is worth speaking to the planner and first of all, asking us for a quote which we can provide you, which will contain all of this new pricing information, and *(you)* informing planners that we have moved to the new price.

All providers have to move to this by July 1st. There's no way around it. Of all providers, 20% of providers have already moved to this. There's still 80% sitting on the transitional or the old pricing as we are. The planners as well, will have to work with us and work with participants around ensuring there is enough funding in people's plans. So I would, I guess, caution against rolling over plans, especially if there are participants that require that additional individualised support we talked about.

So, on top of group support, people might need some individualised support for meal time management or toileting, any of that type of thing as well, so ask us for a quote for that, that includes what participants might need as additional non face-to-face time for staff training or incidents or things of that nature.

It's definitely important to think about and talk to support coordinators about. Talk to us about it. I'm happy to speak to anyone as well. If you want to know more about your own situation for your family member or if any participants want to talk to me directly, I'm happy to give some suggestions around how it might be managed.

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**Q5. How might this affect plans that have already been rolled over for three years?**

**A. (JOSH):** It's very difficult to answer that without looking at individual plans. But we have done some modeling around current plans to see how much they might be impacted by these changes. Some plans have a very small impact or no impact, and other plans have a more significant impact. So it is important prior to rolling over to ensure you're speaking with us and requesting quotes from us for your services.

But at the same time, we're we're willing to work with participants, as we always are. If we find shortfalls, we always try to make sure that participants are aware of that as early as possible. If we do modeling against participant plans and notice, okay, they're going to run out two months before their plan ends, we'll get in touch with you to let you know.

And then there might need to be some adjustments made in discussion with yourself around "Do you want to drop a day? Do you want assistance to go for a plan review to get topped up?" There are few different options available to those that might be low on funds towards the end of say, a three year plan or a fixed amount.

**Q6.** My son's plan has already been rolled over for three years - can any shortfall be topped up from core?

**A.** (JOSH): So in your son's case, all of these funds would be coming out of core, in the first place. And yes, core funds can be used flexibly. So if say, there were some funds for recreational activities outside of our Araluen, that could be used, (*core funding*) can be used interchangeably. From our end we would just need you to agree to a quote so then we can quarantine those funds to Araluen to ensure we've got enough for the year.

*Caution: the advice provided in response to Q6 is accurate to this person's situation and not intended as general advice. You should always enquire about your own circumstances to ensure that any adjustments you seek to your plan are based on accurate information.*

**Q7.** You said before, there may be one support worker, with four participants splitting that cost. At the moment, my son has 1-to-1 or 1-to-2 support. So where does 1-to-4 come from?

**A.** (JOSH): Sorry, that was just an example. Group sizes could be 1-to-2. They could be 1-to-3 or 1-to-4. There won't necessarily be changes to those actual ratios (*i.e. the number of people in the group*). That was just the example we used and we should clarify that. It could be whatever ratios are already in place for participants. In some limited cases, it might be 1 to 5.

The charge for individual support while in a group will generally apply to participants who at the moment have assistance with self-care. So that's where if you see "Assistance with self-care" on a quote or your plan that's when there might be that additional individualised support coming to into play with that as part of that group, that Araluen will bill for.

## Residential vacancies

**Q8.** (comment) Araluen has a number of vacancies for people who may wish to live in supported accommodation. It's essential that you discuss these opportunities direct with our Options for Community Living management, due to the complexity of matching new housemates with existing residents and the importance of achieving compatibility and harmony within our homes. Please contact:



**Penny Kendall**

General Manager, Options for  
Community Living

Ph: (03) 8457 3034

E: [pennyk@araluen.org](mailto:pennyk@araluen.org)

## Want to know more about anything we discussed?



**Who can I ask?**

If you didn't find the answer you're looking for here, you can contact Tamara or join in our monthly meetings. Your questions and feedback are always appreciated. Your service manager will also be happy to assist with any questions relating to day-to-day issues.



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