



# “Quality Audit” The Future?

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The SA Disability Minister Tony Piccolo and Disability SA should be congratulated for the consultative process they have instigated to develop a genuine assessment process for evaluating the quality of services being delivered by disability service providers.

The need for a quality performance process has been widely acknowledged within the disability community for a very long time.

With consultations having started with interested disability sector advocates this week the intent of DSA should be commended.

Ultimately the quality of the report and the implementation of the recommendations will prove the integrity and value of this process.

Measuring services in terms of outcomes when it is nearly impossible to find a service recipient who is routinely asked to give feedback on their service experience or if they do give feedback the feedback is often not acted on or just ignored would be a wonderful new experience for many disability service recipients.

While in every aspect of life other organizations, businesses and even charities survey their client base repetitively and develop all sorts of service matrix and benchmark data the disability sector lags decades behind in this best practise.

There remain concerns about the current process however

1. Using academics from an interstate university with a public perception of being one dimensional in its philosophy about disability services is a concern. Some academics have a history of writing reports of what they think people should get in service not what people actually want? Why did DSA not engage locally professionals from Flinders University which has some outstanding staff with healthy knowledge of the local disability sector?
2. What will be the quality systems and outcome measurement standards be that form the basis of the report? Given that NDIA has not yet established performance measurement standards how will this plan fit with NDIS?

3. Will they be measuring as a priority people's satisfaction and happiness or scoring structure and buildings or groupings?
4. Will there be assessment of if people were given genuine choice in where, how and who they live with without limitation?
5. Will the contribution of families and carers be assessed, respected and evaluated?
6. Will the participation in the planning and the ability to develop new styles and models of accommodation outside traditional boundaries and academic philosophy be evaluated?
7. Will the impact on NGO's and other service suppliers be evaluated to ensure the reporting is kept to a minimum and that service providers are not swamped with excessive and time consuming and expensive reporting requirements?
8. Will the report ensure that the findings of the report are annually tabled in parliament?
9. Was the consultative process a genuine process or was it simply a case of academics writing a report based on their own pre conceptions as too often other reports have been presented in the past?

Disability Speaks will continue to contribute to the development of the quality audit process. We trust when the report is finished that Premier Jay Wetherill and Minister Piccolo will commit to the speedy introduction of this essential service.

Given that National Disability Insurance Scheme will make it harder and harder for DSA to maintain its service support programs it is a logical step for the department to scope out the need and the potential format of such quality work and we trust this program ultimately is delivered and proves successful.

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