

To the Inquiry into Disability Support Services in Tasmania Committee,

We very much appreciate the opportunity to share our challenges in attempting to continue to operate New Horizons Tasmania, now that core funding (previously received from the Tasmanian Government) must come from the NDIS (through aligning with NDIS individual plan charging, or through applying for funding through the highly competitive ILC grant scheme).

We have a significant portion of members with disability who are not on NDIS plans — as well as funding issues which potentially affect outcomes for many Tasmanians with disability (and therefore, relate to the inquiry).

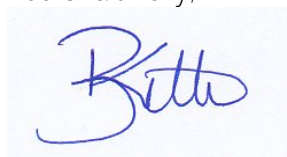
In this submission we will be addressing the following Terms of Reference:

2. The range of support services available to Tasmanians who are not on, or eligible for, the NDIS;
3. Funding for organisations that service those not eligible for the NDIS;
5. Any other matters incidental thereto.

We are aware that the NDIS is constantly evolving and that possibly in the future we may have a better fit.

Our situation is far more complex than we are able to express here, but we hope that this offers a summary of our issues. Please do contact me for more detailed information if it would be helpful.

Yours faithfully,



Belinda Kitto
CEO, New Horizons Tasmania

A short introduction to New Horizons Tasmania

New Horizons Tasmania (NHT) has been providing life-changing inclusive sport, recreational and social opportunities for Tasmanians with disability since 1986.

NHT works in partnership with national and state sporting organisations, local and state government, community groups, local sport clubs and schools to run most of our programs, as well as providing representative pathways for elite athletes with disability.

Proven outcomes for participants in NHT activities include "Health benefits; Growth and Development; Increased friendship/connection; Improved Self-image and Inclusion"

*(*Themes arising from interviews conducted with six participants from New Horizons Club, Dr Damhnat McCann, University of Tasmania, December 2018).*

Currently NHT facilitate 22 programs a week across the state, These take place in Launceston, Hobart, and once-weekly sessions in Scottsdale and Wynyard.

There is a higher rate of disability in populations outside of the two largest cities, and therefore, great unmet need exists for vital opportunities for people with disability to get physically and socially active in other areas of the state. NHT are endeavouring to address this inequity through planned regional expansion of inclusive sport and rec programs.

To learn more about NHT, our members and our programs, please visit www.newhorizonstas.org.au and www.facebook.com/NewHorizonsTas.

Response to TOR 2:

- New Horizons Tasmania works currently with 240 people with disability and many of their families.
- Of these 240 participants, approximately 65% are on an NDIS plan (NHT has not made it compulsory for members to declare their NDIS status, however, will be ascertaining firm numbers in the coming month).
- Some people with disability (and/or their family) decide not to pursue NDIS funding. Others are deemed not eligible to have a Plan, however, are able to receive limited support from a Local Area Co-ordinator (LAC).
- NHT welcomes people with any disability (and any level of disability) and believe access to sport and recreation for all Tasmanians must be equitable (whether they have an NDIS plan or not)
- Important additional information: in 2019, a UTAS study determined the breakdown of NHT membership diagnosis as follows (please note, membership has since grown since 2018):

"Diagnosis was reported for 168 (83%) participants. The most commonly reported diagnosis was Intellectual disability (n=67, 33%) – the percentage of participants with an intellectual disability increases to 39% (n=79) when including those participants with a syndrome associated with intellectual disability such as Fragile X. Other diagnoses included autism (n=38, 19%) and Down Syndrome (n=25, 12%). The 'Other' diagnostic category (see Table 1) included functional disorders; syndromes such as Fragile X, Prader-Willi and Rubenstein Taybi; acquired brain injury; and mental illness including obsessive compulsive disorder and schizophrenia.

The majority of participants (n=133, 66%) had a single diagnosis, 35 participants had at least two diagnoses. Nineteen participants had an ID combined with at least one other diagnosis, including six participants who had autism and ID. Six participants had cerebral palsy and at least one other diagnosis."

*(*Dr Damhnat McCann, University of Tasmania, December 2018)*

Response to TOR 3 & 5:

- New Horizons Tasmania (NHT) lost the organisation's traditional core Tasmanian Government funding with the rollout of the NDIS in Tasmania in 2018/19.
- NHT was awarded a one-off Federal Government 'Muster' grant for 2019/20 "in recognition of the organisation's work in helping to build inclusive, cohesive communities". This assisted in supporting NHT programs for a further 12 months.
- NHT has been without any core funding since July 2020, and is now existing on savings and fundraising. The future of our organisation and state-wide programs are at risk, with enough funds available to continue operating for only a further 16 months.
- For 5 years, the NHT Board and Management have been investigating ways to strengthen and solidify financial sustainability through increased and diversified funding streams (since the announcement that the end of state core funding was imminent). Unfortunately, this has been very difficult to achieve.
- A large portion of this time has been attempting (unsuccessfully) to align NHT's programs to be able to operate profitably under the NDIS model.
- The 'Volunteer-led' structure of NHT, where the majority of NHT programs are led by passionate volunteer coaches, instructors and supporters, has proven impossible to align with NDIS plan charging. NDIS 'groups' are based upon paid support persons.
(Please note that the volunteer-led model which NHT has run on very successfully for over 30 years is a large contributor to NHT not only enriching individual lives, but also the organisation's important contribution to building more inclusive communities in Tasmania).
- Team and non-therapeutic sport and physical activity (which are the majority of NHT's programs) are very difficult to align with NDIS charging.
- There are significant one-off and on-going costs relating to organisational NDIS registration and set-up, invoicing etc for small Not-For-Profits.
- Specialised consultants DSC – Disability Services Consulting — national experts in NDIS transition (<https://teamdsc.com.au/>) have confirmed that converting to an organisational

model with NHT operating as an NDIS Provider under the current NDIS structure, with our current proven programs, would be unsustainable.

- This would even be the case if every participant of every program NHT ran had an NDIS plan. (which, as explained earlier, they do not).
- New Horizons Tasmania has been planning the roll-out of trial NDIS-charged programs (new therapeutic and heavily adapted programs), however there have been barriers to establishing these. For example: there is a real lack of expertise available to support the setting up of these trial programs. NHT advertised for 2 months for a part-time NDIS transformation consultant and didn't receive a single application. Also, there are a lack of Allied-qualified coaches available at a cost NHT could afford.
- NHT is eligible for consideration for NDIS ILC funding
- *"ILC is a key component of the NDIS insurance model and will contribute to the sustainability of the NDIS by building the capacity of the community, people with disability, their families and carers which in turn will reduce the need for funding of supports for people with disability through IFPs."* (* www.ndis.gov.au)
- NHT has applied for NDIS ILC funding in every suitable grant round since the ILC program's inception 2018, but have so far been unsuccessful.
- The NDIS National ILC leadership group visited NHT in 2019, and offered feedback that NHT's ILC applications had been of a high standard and were considered worthy of funding — however there were "too many quality projects and only limited budgets".
- Each ILC round is open to national submissions, so the competition is fierce. Also, there is often a requested 'national focus' for projects, which is impossible to achieve for state-based organisations
- If NHT were successful, and received an NDIS ILC grant, this would only cover funding for a 12-month period, which makes planning and state-wide expansion very difficult.
- Please note, we are currently awaiting news of the last ILC grant round, which closed in December 2020. Funded projects are due to be announced in April 2021.

Thank you.