



**Aged & Community  
Services • Australia**



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CONSUMER DIRECTED CARE

ACSA POSITION PAPER

April 2010

Consumer Directed Care (CDC) is both a philosophy and an orientation to a service delivery option where consumers control and choose the services they get, including what, when, how, where and who provides those services. Individuals will vary in the level of choice and control they want, and the circumstances and capacity of people will also affect the level of control they exercise.

There is not yet an agreed definition of CDC, with interpretations including consumers receiving direct cash payments, individualised service budgets and consumer participation and direction of their service planning. Likewise the scope of CDC is not settled with possibilities ranging from within program services (eg packaged care or respite) to consideration of the wide range of services and supports available to older people to manage their lives (eg Transition Care, continence support, aged and community care, respite etc).

This Position Paper should be considered in conjunction with the ACSA CDC Discussion Paper released in September 2008.

**Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) supports the following as Guiding Principles for CDC in aged and community care:**

1. **Access and choice is a right** of all consumers and CDC is an important **option** for older people and their families.
2. CDC model development must take into account the importance of a **viable and sustainable** aged and community care service system which provides easy access for all frail older people.
3. The emphasis of CDC is on the **choice and control** consumers have over the services and the Government funding for which they are eligible.
4. CDC can be managed and administered in a variety of ways. ACSA recognises the **different approaches** and supports its members (in partnership with consumers) to explore the range of options.
5. Consumers should be supported in their decision making through the provision of **capacity building programs** (including information and education) and the presence of appropriate **safeguards**.
6. A person's funding should be based on an **objective assessment of their support needs**, with capacity for individual self-assessment to be a part of the process.
7. The services of an **advisor/manager/support broker** should be available to the consumer if required.
8. Government, industry and consumer **partnership** is required to lead the ongoing development of CDC.
9. Government involvement is essential to determine **resource allocation models, the parameters of choice** and an **entitlement based system**.
10. CDC must not be seen as a **cost saving measure** for the government.
11. Appropriate **staged and transparent transition arrangements and support** will need to be established to enable aged and community care providers to prepare for the extension of CDC as a service option for older people.

12. Ongoing **research and testing** of CDC in aged and community care in Australia will be important in defining and scoping CDC, and to develop approaches which suit consumer preference, meet government accountability requirements and which enable service providers to deliver viable services.

### **Role of ACSA in the development of CDC as a service delivery option**

- a. ACSA will work in collaboration with key consumer peaks to facilitate the evolution of CDC as a viable service delivery option for aged and community care. ACSA will ensure the interests of its membership to provide quality aged care to older people are represented in this process.
- b. The initial focus for ACSA will be community care, while still keeping the CDC debate broad to encompass all aged and community care.
- c. ACSA will work with members and consumer groups to identify government barriers to CDC.
- d. ACSA will take a leadership role to skill the workforce to facilitate maximum consumer choice and delivery of the most flexible, effective system possible.
- e. ACSA will advocate for necessary changes to government policies, guidelines and legislation to enable CDC to be a genuine option for consumers and to support the capacity of providers to change, while remaining viable, to meet consumers' evolving needs and preferences.
- f. ACSA will keep the membership informed of best practice examples of CDC and enable providers and consumers to share their experiences.
- g. ACSA will promote and articulate the processes and practices that demonstrate industry's responsiveness to CDC.
- h. ACSA will provide members with information to enable them to position their business to support increasing consumer choice in aged care.

*Development of Consumer Directed Care as a concept for aged care is an evolving process and ACSA will review this position paper regularly to ensure its relevance to current wisdom.*