

Freedom of Information Request -

Folio no	Date	Document	Status	Reason for Exemption
1	13/09/13	Respite Care Update	Full release	
2	Undated	Adult respite utilisation	Full release	
3-4	16/09/13	Email to all staff	Partial release	Outside the scope of request
5	13/09/13	Dot points	Full release	
6	10/09/13	Letter to respite users	Full release	
7	Undated	Fact sheet about changes to respite services	Full release	
8-10	Undated	Fact sheet about changes to respite services	Full release	
11-12	13/09/13	Media release	Full release	
13-17	Undated	Budget in Confidence Cabinet Paper	Exempt in full	s35, FOI Act 1989
18-37	14/07/13	Home2Home Shared Family Respite Business Case	Exempt in full	s36, FOI Act 1989



## Open Government

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# Changes to ACT respite services ahead of NDIS rollout

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Released 13/09/2013

The ACT Government has commenced consolidating its adult respite services as the ACT prepares to transition to DisabilityCare next year, ACT Minister for Disability Joy Burch said today.

Ms Burch said that as part of the consolidation, management of the centre based respite services will be transitioned to the non-government sector from March 2014, and from next month one of the Government-run respite houses, Elouera, will cease operating due to a steady decline in usage across the ACT's respite homes.

"DisabilityACT has begun notifying families who use Elouera about the changes, and assuring them that the remaining respite facilities will be able to meet demand," Ms Burch said.

"DACT staff are being notified of the changes, and assured that all permanent staff will be reassigned within DACT."

Ms Burch said the restructuring of the ACT's respite services is necessary as the disability services landscape undergoes significant change ahead of the rollout of DisabilityCare.

"The ACT is moving to an environment of greater control and choice as a launch site of DisabilityCare commencing in July 2014, where people with disability will decide what type of support will best suit their needs and directly engage with the support provider of their choice.

"While the Government recognises the importance of respite and respite-like support, there has been a steady decrease in the demand for out of home care for adults with disabilities, especially Government-operated services and it is expected that this trend will continue."

Management of the other respite houses, Kese House for children; Teen House for teenagers and young adults and Hughes House for adults with disability will be transitioning to the non-government sector, with the new providers expected to start in March 2014.

Families who use respite services will be consulted and updated on the transition.

"To ensure a smooth transition to the non-government sector, family representatives and people with disability will be included in the panel of assessors for identifying new community sector providers. Regular updates about the changes will also be provided to service users."

Ms Burch said the ACT Government had made significant investments in recent years to provide families with a range of respite alternatives, which attributed, in part, to the decline in demand for respite accommodation.

In the 2013-14 ACT Budget alone, more than \$5.53 million was committed in preparations and support of Disability Care Australia. This is a major expansion in funding and opportunities for people with disabilities, their families, carers and the community sector.

"We have also invested a total of \$9 million in the Getting a Life intentional community in Phillip and provided land and funding for Project Independence, both of which underline the need and support for alternative forms of accommodation for adults with disabilities.

"What we are hearing is that people want more flexibility in respite, such as the after school and vacation care programs we are providing.

## Changes to ACT respite services ahead of NDIS rollout - Open Government

people with disability will be supported to stay with a host family for a short period of time. This service is expected to commence in mid 2014."

Ms Burch said Disability ACT will be holding information sessions next Friday, 20 September, if families have any further questions about the changes.

- Statement ends -

Section: [Joy Burch, MLA](#) | Media Releases

## Media Contacts

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## Changes to Disability ACT centre based respite services

### What's happening?

Disability ACT is consolidating its adult respite services in October 2013 and the management of the centre based respite services will be transitioned to the Non-Government Sector in March 2014.

Disability ACT is preparing for DisabilityCare Australia by growing the Community Sector and allowing for the development of innovative and flexible support options for people with disability.

Management of respite houses, **Kese** House for children; **Teen** House for teenagers and young adults and **Hughes** House for adults with disability will be transitioning to the Non-Government Sector. The new providers are expected to start in March 2014. **Elouera** will no longer take visitors from mid October 2013.

You will be able to continue to access centre based respite throughout this transition.

In addition to the centre based respite, a new flexible service type will be implemented called *Home 2 Home*, where people with disability will be supported to stay with a host family for a short period of time. This service is expected to commence in mid 2014.

### How will I know what is happening?

People with disability and their families who currently access these respite services will be contacted by staff from Disability ACT to inform them of the changes. Visitors of Elouera will be contacted first. People will be invited to attend one of 2 initial information sessions to seek further clarification and may be consulted about particular provisions they would advise be included in the tender. The information sessions are Friday 20 September at 12:30pm and 4:30pm, at Nature Conservation House, 153 Emu Bank, Belconnen.

To ensure a smooth transition to the non-government sector, family representatives and people with disability will be included in the panel of assessors for identifying new community sector providers. Regular updates will be provided on the Disability ACT website, through mail outs to service users and through staff when accessing respite.

Staff will be contacted directly by Management of Disability ACT both over the phone and in person. Updates will be provided regularly to staff.



**ACT**

Government

Community Services

# fact sheet

## Why are you doing this?

The ACT is moving to an environment of greater control and choice as a launch site of DisabilityCare commencing in July 2014; where people with disability will decide what type of support will best suit their needs and directly engage with the support provider of their choice.

ACT Government recognises the importance of respite and respite-like support, however, there has been a steady decrease in the demand for out of home care for adults with disabilities, especially Government operated services and it is expected that this trend will continue. These changes, like the introduction of *Home2Home* will allow for greater flexibility in the provision of respite support in an out of home environment.

Future Directions: Towards challenge 2014 identified a need to remodel existing individual grants, respite and family and community support programs. A range of activities have been undertaken to progress this work and these actions are in keeping with preparing the community and community sector for a DisabilityCare environment.

DisabilityCare will fundamentally change the nature of disability support by transforming it into a market-based arrangement in which people with disability have greater choice and control over the funding and supports that they receive.

Building capacity within the non-government sector, developing new capacities and competencies within the workforce and investing in people with disabilities and families to support alternative ways of thinking about what is possible in their lives, will be priorities in order to ensure participants and providers are able to operate effectively under DisabilityCare.

In any market based system, the ACT community should expect changes in service providers, including new providers into the ACT. Current disability service providers will need to consider their future and what areas of service they are interested in providing.

## How much will it cost?

Currently, visitors make a contribution towards the cost of their stay at the respite services. This arrangement will continue until people with disability are in receipt of funds from either a grant round or from DisabilityCare Australia to pay the true cost of service.



**Does this indicate the future for the Disability ACT Supported Accommodation (Group Houses)?**

No. These actions and the strengthening of non government respite opportunities do not indicate the future arrangements for Disability ACT Supported Accommodation Service. The ACT Government has not made any decisions or plans at this time with regards to specialist accommodation services.

**Will standards of support change with a new provider?**

No, all successful new providers will need to comply with existing government contractual provisions including compliance with the Disability Service Standards and all staff having undertaken a Working with Vulnerable People Check. The successful providers will indicate their willingness to be flexible to individual needs and mindful of recruiting and training skilled and person centered staff.

**For more assistance on Disability ACT matters, please telephone 133 427.**

### **Accessibility**

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If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the **TTY typewriter service** – please telephone **(02) 6205 0888**.



## Changes to Disability ACT centre based respite services

### Staffing Impacts

#### What is happening?

Disability ACT is preparing for DisabilityCare Australia by allowing for the development of innovative and flexible support options for people with disability. Disability ACT is consolidating the adult respite services in October 2013. Elouera will no longer take visitors from mid October 2013.

Management of the respite houses Kese, Teen House and Hughes will also be transitioning to the community sector, with an expected start for the new providers to be in March 2014.

#### Will staff lose their jobs?

No, all permanent ACT Government employees will be reassigned to other locations within Disability ACT accommodation support services. We also recognise that a range of the staff have specialized skills in supporting children and young people and may seek opportunities in that area elsewhere, that is their choice. We will also be working with the staff to ensure they are best placed for the opportunities presented through DisabilityCare Australia.

Disability ACT casual staff and casual agency staff are highly regarded and we are always looking for good support workers. Disability ACT will look at where we can utilise your skills across the accommodation support services.

#### Who do I speak with if have questions?

You can speak with your direct manager or senior manager Ms Louise Cooper-Finch on 6205 2126 if you have any further questions or queries.

The Employment Assistance Program (EAP) is also available and can provide you with professional and confidential counselling and support. They can be contacted on 1800337068

Disability ACT is in contact with CPSU and HSUA to outline the decision to consolidate and transfer management of the respite services to the non government sector.



## Changes to Disability ACT Respite Services

I am writing to advise you about changes to the way in which Disability ACT will be providing centre based respite services.

Disability ACT is the major centre based respite provider within the ACT. As the ACT transitions to DisabilityCare Australia we are needing to build greater flexibility and diversity into the range of services that are available to people. To enable us to move towards this change, Disability ACT is consolidating and transitioning its respite services to best ensure that innovation and flexibility can develop.

Disability ACT will be consolidating its adults respite services into one location, Hughes, from Monday 14 October 2013 and Disability ACT will also be transitioning management of the other 3 respite centres to the non-government sector in the first half of 2014. Further, Disability ACT will be expanding flexible respite options through the introduction of a host family respite service, *Home2Home*. An information sheet is attached.

We are confident that people with disability who regularly use, or would wish to use centre based respite will continue to be able to do so. However, if you have any concerns, Officers from Disability ACT are very happy to meet with you to discuss the options of respite support for your family member during this time of transition.

In addition, Disability ACT will be holding information sessions at Nature Conservation House, 153 Emu Bank Belconnen, on Friday 20 September 2013 at 12:30pm and again at 4:30pm to outline the changes and answer questions you may have.

Please contact Mr Ian Gumm on 62052125 or [Ian.Gumm@act.gov.au](mailto:Ian.Gumm@act.gov.au) to arrange a convenient time for a meeting or to RSVP your attendance at the information session. Please do not hesitate to contact this contact number to discuss your personal concerns as a result of this letter.

Lorna Sullivan  
Executive Director  
Disability ACT  
10 September 2013



## Disability ACT – Respite Care Update

**Date:** 13th September 2013

- All families who use the four respite houses have been phoned over the past 2 days to talk about the changes to respite and the impact for their family on these changes.
- The community sector providers have been informed about the changes to Disability ACT centred based respite.
- Black Mountain School and Woden School have been informed.
- Disability ACT staff who work in the respite service have been informed of the changes.
- Appointments are being made for families to meet with Disability ACT staff to discuss their personal concerns.

### **Next steps**

- Begin developing the transition plan for each individual Elouera visitor to Hughes respite.

**From:** Sullivan, Lorna  
**Sent:** Monday, 16 September 2013 9:00 AM  
**To:** ##All Staff Community Services Directorate  
**Subject:** FW: Changes to Respite Services

All CSD staff

I am writing to inform you about changes to the way in which ACT Government operated centre based respite will be managed. I will continue to keep you updated with progress reports as we proceed.

Disability ACT is consolidating its adult respite services in October 2013 and the management of the centre based respite services will be transitioned to the Non-Government Sector in March 2014.

Disability ACT is preparing for DisabilityCare Australia by growing the Community Sector and allowing for the development of innovative and flexible support options for people with disability.

Management of respite houses, **Kese** House for children; **Teen** House for teenagers and young adults and **Hughes** House for adults with disability will be transitioning to the Non-Government Sector. The new providers are expected to start in March 2014.

**louera** will no longer take visitors from mid October 2013.

Disability ACT will be holding information sessions for visitors and families on Friday 20 September at 12:30pm and 4:30pm, at Nature Conservation House, 153 Emu Bank, Belconnen.

These actions and the strengthening of non government respite opportunities do not indicate the future arrangements for Disability ACT Supported Accommodation Service.

The ACT Government has not made any decisions or plans at this time with regards to specialist accommodation services.

All permanent ACT Government employees will be reassigned to other locations within Disability ACT accommodation support services. We also recognise that a range of the staff have specialized skills in supporting children and young people and may seek opportunities in that area elsewhere, that is their choice. We will also be working with the staff to ensure they are best placed for the opportunities presented through DisabilityCare Australia.

Disability ACT casual staff and casual agency staff are highly regarded and we are always looking for good support workers. Disability ACT will look at where we can utilise your skills across the accommodation support services.

Attached to this email is a fact sheet for staff, a fact sheet for visitors and their family and a copy of the letter sent to families, and a brief update on progress as at Friday.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Sullivan

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### Adult Respite Utilisation

	Elouera	Hughes
Number of bed nights for the year	2136*	2118*
Annual Occupancy Rate (% of bed occupied)	55.99%**	56.28%**

\* Respite bed nights are not available over the Christmas period.

\*\*Short term respite occupancy only.

Disability ACT is committed to supporting and assisting every family connected with Elouera and the other respite services.

Respite provision will continue to be individualised, reflecting reasonable and necessary support requirements as defined by NDIS. Other options could include:

- Support to access and participate in the community
- Support to volunteers
- Flexible in-home supports and
- Holidays.

## Disability ACT – Respite Care Update

**Date:** as at COB 13 September 2013

### Background

- During 2011-12 and 2012-13, the four Government respite services had on average around 63% or around 13 of the 22 beds occupied by casual respite users. Given the low occupancy, additional beds were utilised (a further 4 beds on average) by long term users who required an emergency response. Combined, the average occupancy still remained around 75%.
- From July 2014, the responsibility will rest with DisabilityCare Australia to support people in crisis, however, Disability ACT is working with its colleagues in the ACT Government to ensure that it can respond to the urgent and crisis response which is likely to occur over the coming months prior to DisabilityCare.
- Disability ACT has 14 permanent staff working across the locations, with the additional hours made up by casual and agency staff. A further 2 Network Co-ordinators manage the respite services from within Nature Conservation House.

### Update

- All families who use the four respite houses have been phoned over the past 2 days to talk about the changes to respite and the impact for their family on these changes.
- 64 Families were contacted on Thursday 12 September, with the balance of 84 Families contacted on Friday 13 September.
- The community sector providers have been informed about the changes to Disability ACT centred based respite, and in addition Black Mountain School and Woden School have also been informed.
- Disability ACT advised staff who work in the respite services of the changes, with the majority conducted face-to-face or over the telephone. Given many staff work shifts and some are on leave, a small number were contacted by letter or email. Disability ACT will follow up with face-to-face meetings to all staff.
- Appointments are being made for families to meet with Disability ACT staff to discuss their personal concerns.
- Two information sessions are arranged for Friday 20 September at 12:30 and 4:30pm.
- To date, only two families have expressed dissatisfaction such that it would be considered a complaint, although many are shocked and naturally concerned. One family who complained is not a respite user, but rather has a son in accommodation services.

### Next steps

- Only 3 individuals are booked into Elouera beyond 14 October, with only 1 booked in beyond 21 October. Given these dates, Disability ACT will extend the date to 22 October so that only 1 booking will need to be transferred to Hughes.
- Disability ACT's individual response team, will begin developing individual transition plans for Elouera visitors so that they may utilise Hughes respite.
- This will be undertaken gradually, such as through a visit with family, progressing to meals and ultimately through to overnight stays.