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CDS Outreach: Reflection on establishing therapy facilitator services under the NDIS in Western NSW

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Background

- * Inspired by the work of the Wobbly Hub Rural Research Team, University of Sydney, specifically the Outback Model (Dew et al., 2014).
- * CDS applied for and were successful in receiving a small Disability Sector Scale-Up Business Acceleration Grant in 2017 from NSW Government

Background

Rural and remote NSW experiences significant shortages in disability services

This can result in:

- * Long travel times
- * Long waiting lists
- * Limited access to services



Difficulties attracting staff

- * Limited resources
- * Low travel funding
- * Fewer career options
- * Fewer specialised resources



Our major inspiration

THE WOBBLY HUB AND DOUBLE SPOKES PROJECT: PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY IN RURAL AREAS



"Based on our research work in Western NSW and the experience of the team, we have developed four streams of enquiry related to people with a disability in rural areas: Insights into rural contexts; access to supports; alternative service models and workforce development."

- Dr Angela Dew, Project Manager

<http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/research/wobbly-hub>

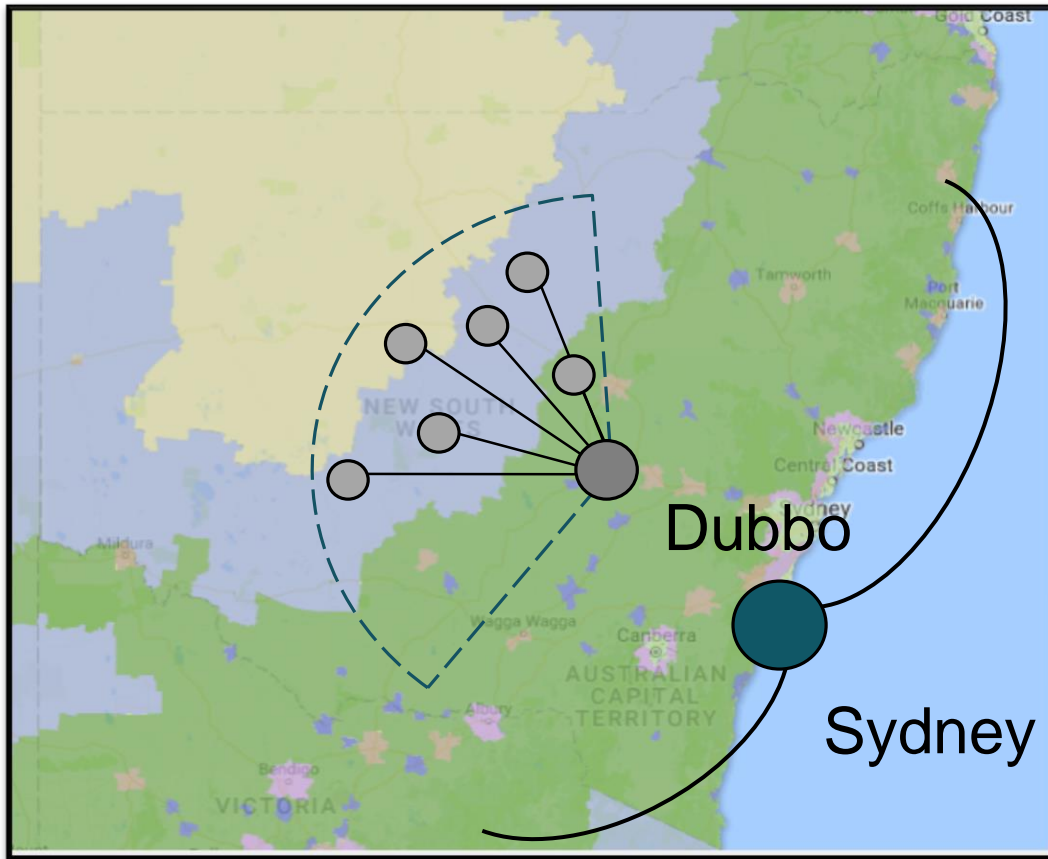
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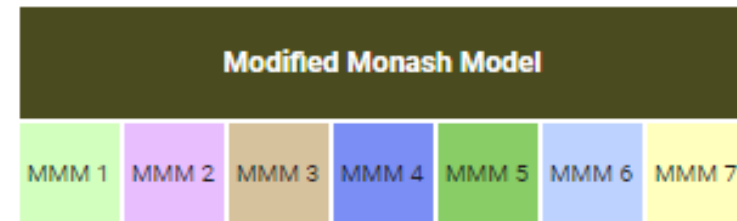
Scoping Works

- * Consultation with the Wobbly Hub Rural Research Team
- * Consultations with 4 rural and remote Disability Service Providers + Department of Family & Community Services regarding service demand data
- * Established 'hot spots' communities where people with disability (8 years +) in rural and remote NSW were accessing or waiting for allied health services

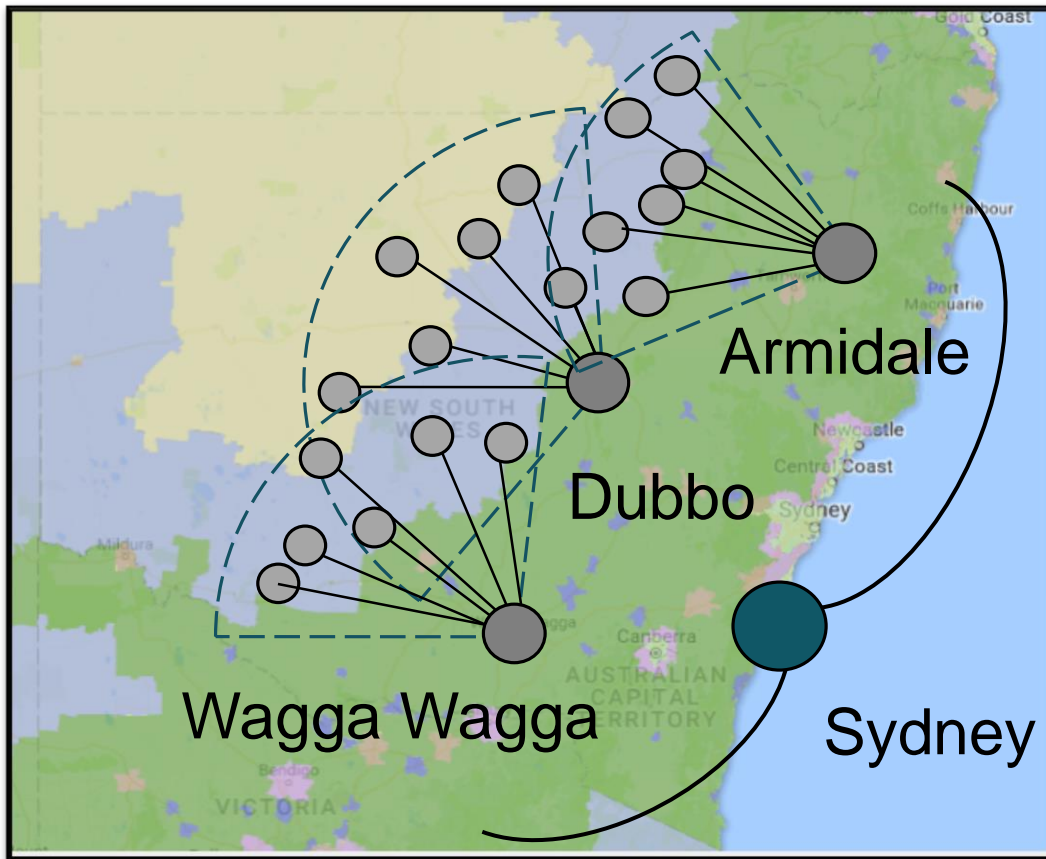
Our Plan – Year One



- Project management
- Supervision & training
- Therapy Facilitator (TF)
- Outreach Coordinator
- CDS staff



Our Plan – Year Two



Outcomes:

- 9 non-admin FTE
- 15,000 service hours
- 100 clients

Activities:

- 3 Directors

Modified Monash Model

MMM 1 MMM 2 MMM 3 MMM 4 MMM 5 MMM 6 MMM 7

Strengths of the model

- * Local people = local knowledge and capacity building
- * Ongoing supervision and professional development
- * Capacity for the program to grow through standardised training and roles
- * More appropriate use of therapeutic support funds



The importance of relationships

Project Lead & Officer

Outreach Coordinator

Clients

TFs

AHPs

Locals



Our goals

- * Increase the availability of therapeutic supports available in rural and remote NSW
- * Learn about the viability and realities of this model in an NDIS context



Current Situation

Western NSW

- Outreach Coordinator based in Orange
- 3 Part-time Therapy Facilitators (Cobar, Coonamble, Coonabarabran)
- Recruitment underway for Forbes/Eugowra and Bathurst



The challenges

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Challenges

- * Twelve rural or remote towns/regions were considered for initial recruitment (based on scoping work)
- * Initially there was no data available from the NDIA
- * Active participants (therapy) + waiting list data was sought from three Service Providers who identified as servicing one or more of the twelve towns/regions

Challenges

- * Of the twelve towns/regions only four had ten or more active/waiting list participants for therapy
- * These low active/waiting list numbers are significantly less than the numbers presented during scoping works
- * Limited capacity building funds in current plans

Challenges

- * Intention was to support each employed Therapy Facilitator to complete the Cert IV Allied Health Assistant Qualification
- * Sector consultation revealed that the investment in time and money was not justified as the content didn't meet industry standards
- * This created a gap in the planned approach to a consistently skilled workforce

Provider Feedback

- * Some providers have ceased servicing previously serviced communities
- * Others reported that some communities are only serviced a few times per year, travel is a major factor
- * Participant plans do not include sufficient funds to establish and oversee a therapy plan
- * Some therapists are reluctant to work with therapy facilitator model

Consultation with NDIA

- * Consultation with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) revealed that participants who transitioned to the NDIS were lower than projected
- * Rationale for this included that ‘maintenance’ therapy previously provided is not funded under the NDIS

Adaptions for the future

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Plan Alignment Pilot - Cobar

- * Aligned plan start dates in Cobar (July 2019)
- * 7-18 year olds
- * NDIA shared specific data with providers
- * Balance between having enough providers to provide choice and control in a relatively small marketplace
- * NDIA's attempt to work with existing providers to try and prevent the need for stated supports
- * To date, there has been no increase in referrals

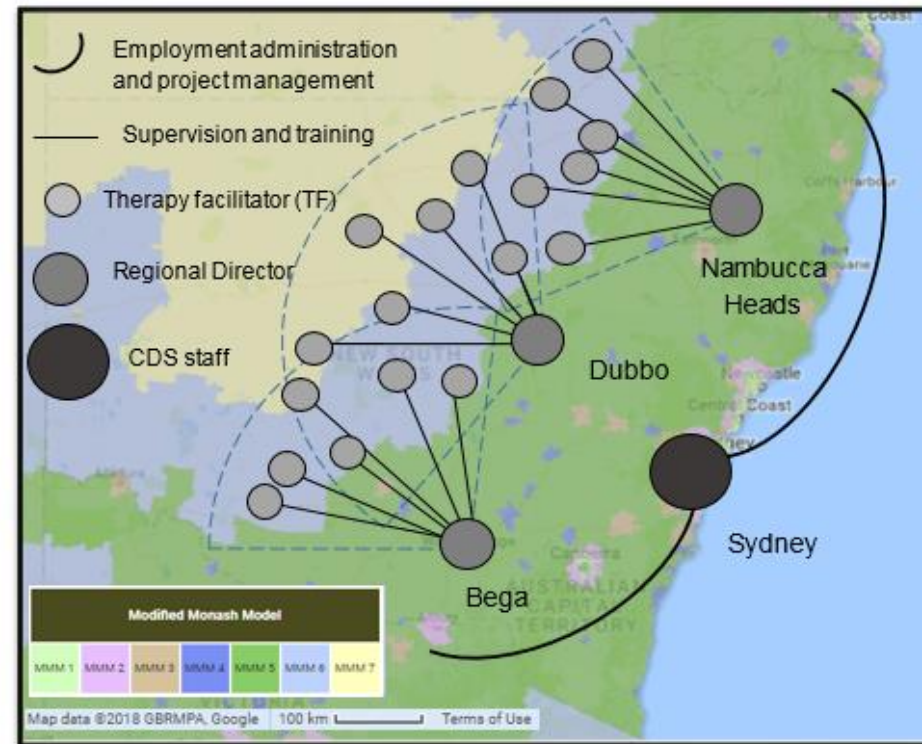


NDIS Price Guide

- * Invited to participate in the NDIS price review for therapy assistance
- * 2019 prices addressed our viability concerns
- * Differentiation between Level 1 & 2 work
- * The requirement for therapy facilitators to be covered by the AHPs insurance were rectified in the October 1 update

New Hubs

- * New hubs established in Nambucca Heads & Bega
- * New locations in response to recently released data on participant numbers and allocation of funds
- * Successful recruitment of appropriately skilled coordinators



Capacity Building

- * Therapy Facilitators are able to provide capacity building supports to participants for skill development that isn't part of a therapy plan
- * Providing CB supports has enabled CDS to diversify the skill set of therapy facilitators and service offerings creating greater financial viability

Training, Education & Supervision

- * Expanding the model to provide fee for service training and education
- * Establishing a community of practice open to external therapy facilitators
- * Working with VET sector to better understand the needs of therapy facilitators working in the disability sector

Competency Framework

- * The CDS competency framework draws on a number of resources including the NSW Health Allied Health Assistant Guideline, the Western Australian Country Health Service's Delegation, Monitoring and Evaluation of Allied Health Assistants document, the State Government of Victoria's Supervision and Delegation Framework for Allied Health Assistants SARRAH and position papers from Occupational Therapy Australia, The Australian Physiotherapy Association and Speech Pathology Australia.
- * The CDS competency framework was developed as a best practice guide to inform our professional development and supervision practices

Looking to the Future

- * Planning day
- * Newsletter/ social media
- * More staff

Questions

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