



## Purpose

XCA would like to share our personal and business experiences in receiving and delivering services and support to people living with disabilities, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in remote and regional Australia.

## Background

XtremeCARE (XCA) is an Indigenous family-owned business delivering NDIS client management services such as Plan Management, Support Coordination and Core Services primarily to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disabilities in a culturally appropriate and safe manner. Our business was created as a result of our own experiences in acquiring services for our son, William Jnr who has high complex needs because of his cerebral palsy and respiratory illness, and to ensure that he has quality of service to achieve a quality level of life.

Since July 2018 XCA have been delivering NDIS services to participants in the Far North Queensland namely:-

- Cairns
- Palm Island
- Lower Gulf (Normanton)
- Western Cape (Napranum, Aurukun, Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw)
- Northern Peninsula Area
- Torres Strait Region (Including Outer Islands)

XCA is committed to building a local workforce within these communities and using a holistic approach to deliver support and services. XCA now employ 21 staff and over 80 percent of them are local Indigenous people. Majority of our staff live and work in these remote communities and have family, cultural and language connection. They also speak the local languages. XCA staff operate with community needs and meaningful outcomes at the centre of our approach, regularly demonstrating a strong understanding of cultural safety in our care and services. This approach underpins what we believe to be authentic community engagement and translates into connected community relationships.

Our services are mobile and flexible to support and cater for those living in rural and remote areas where services are either very limited or none.

We specialise in connecting Indigenous people and communities to services and products, through our networks and partnerships with suppliers and providers, both Government and Non-Government services providers.

XCA values and respects the willingness of participants to welcome and accept us to work in their communities. We believe in investing and giving back to our communities where we can.

**XTREMECARE AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**

ABN | 978 909 600 21 ACN | 132 379 376

W | [xtremecareaustralia.com.au](http://xtremecareaustralia.com.au) E | [admin@xtremecare.com.au](mailto:admin@xtremecare.com.au)

P | 07 5514 6500

## Issues

Addressing disability support needs is a complex issue. XCA has found that the complexity increases when considering remote and regional communities, as well as the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities (often requiring holistic wellbeing targeted solutions). As a result, XCA's sector experience to date has identified a number of factors and barriers that are impacting the outcomes shortfall for stakeholders (including government). Disability is often a priority considered in isolation but XCA recognises that to achieve meaningful sustainable outcomes for affected Indigenous families, disability should also be considered holistically as part of other priority areas such as health, education, employment, housing and children.

XCA's lived sector experience is supported by the disability service findings outlined throughout the recent June 2020 Coalition of Peaks report "*A Report on Engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to Inform a New National Agreement on Closing the Gap*", noting the specific key indicator statement on page 82.

The issues and challenges XCA experienced whilst delivering disability support under the NDIS funding model introduced in July 2018, include:

### *1. Access to Health Services such as Allied Health in the remote Indigenous communities*

Queensland Health is the only on-the-ground provider of these services and in/outpatients have priority over NDIS participants to access these services. The limited to none services on the ground has often resulted in high incidence of unspent funds for many remote NDIS participants. Currently Fly in/Fly out (FIFO) independent providers do service these remote communities. However, it is XCA's experience that community and family NDIS needs are not being optimally met by FIFO services. The issues are as follows:

- *No relationship building with these communities*
- *Service delivery is periodical and no continuity of service*
- *There is last minute cancellations, no show and results in spending of funds with no service or overspending in that line item*

### *2. No Local Workforce (Support Workers) within these areas – a need to authentically build and train local workforce exists*

Similar to other sectors already operating in remote Indigenous communities, NDIS family outcomes would be better achieved if focus shifted to building local professional workforce. This would greatly improve service delivery outcomes for NDIS families, as well as contribute to increased local employment. However, this factor requires time, resources and a considered multi-stakeholder approach and commitment.

**XTREMECARE AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**

ABN | 978 909 600 21 ACN | 132 379 376

W | [xtremecareaustralia.com.au](http://xtremecareaustralia.com.au) E | [admin@xtremecare.com.au](mailto:admin@xtremecare.com.au)

P | 07 5514 6500





One possible barrier for NDIA in strategically building local workforce is available staff accommodation, where housing stock in many Indigenous communities are limited or owned by other Federal and State Government departments.

3. *Capacity building of local providers – e.g. Community Council and Organisation – education and training in NDIS services and process (Business Development and Support)*

This factor expands on the local workforce issue identified above, where XCA is steered by how each remote community is different in service needs, governance and cultural operations. Capacity building community organisations and providers that wrap-around the service delivery workforce is also likely to better meet NDIS participants' needs. For example, currently in many QLD discrete communities, a core community organisation or council has oversight of multiple priority areas for their communities and often experience skilled resourcing shortages and capacity issues. An opportunity exists to upskill these organisations to participate in the NDIS process more effectively.

XCA has witnessed the need for not only skilled workforce or providers in direct delivery of care plans, but also the administration expertise needed to support effective delivery.

XCA is increasingly absorbing the costs associated with supporting the community organisations/providers or NDIS families due to the existing service and capability gaps, in order for care plan goals for remote and Indigenous participants to be achieved. This also involves addressing critical baseline service components to ensure meaningful service delivery in both remote and Indigenous communities. Whilst it is critical, this is not financially sustainable long-term for us as a provider. However if it is properly addressed within the NDIS model (in consultation with Indigenous stakeholders), it may offer a modelling solution that could be applied across other priority areas serviced by these core community organisations.

4. *Cultural accountability in services & capacity building the sector.*

Authentic stakeholder engagement must underpin any providers' delivery servicing any community if NDIS outcomes are to be met, regardless of its locality. However, culturally appropriate service delivery that incorporates cultural safety for its participants is vital in remote and regional Indigenous communities across Australia. Currently NDIS targets are not being met in these areas and this is largely due to this consideration or lack thereof.

As wider community awareness grows of XCA as an Indigenous provider, the demand for our specific services by these remote communities has also rapidly increased. It highlights to XCA that these participants feel there is a gap in services and a lack of provider understanding/engagement to better understand Indigenous community needs and how it can be better met. XCA are presently experiencing referrals where non-Indigenous providers are unable or failing to properly service remote or Indigenous care plans.

**XTREMECARE AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**

ABN | 978 909 600 21 ACN | 132 379 376

W | [xtremecareaustralia.com.au](http://xtremecareaustralia.com.au) E | [admin@xtremecare.com.au](mailto:admin@xtremecare.com.au)

P | 07 5514 6500



As there is a current shortage of Indigenous providers, government must consider how the sector can be holistically capacity built to ensure providers are providing the services properly and Indigenous participants are not excluded (whether they live in metro or remote localities).

XCA are committed to ensuring that services are culturally appropriate to not only effectively meet care outcomes, but to minimise retraumatizing an existing trauma-affected cohort. It is important for government to be aware that Indigenous providers also operate with a cultural accountability to/by these communities that non-Indigenous NDIS providers do not experience. Thus community expectations for meaningful outcomes for participants are materially increased when an Indigenous provider is involved.

#### *5. New NDIS providers – particularly Indigenous providers*

A further concern is a lack of service criteria or training for new NDIS provider entrants, particularly those targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and their communities. XCA feels an opportunity exists to design a baseline approach involving key competencies/requirements, including Indigenous cultural competency that will help achieve meaningful NDIS outcomes. A current risk exists that providers can operate in a tick the box approach so the final indicators must be duly considered.

#### *6. Building sustainable options for local disability support*

XCA has identified the need for investment in a long-term strategy to build the local workforce and provide Pathways for further study and career progression. We see the benefits of recruiting CoS workers, Support Workers, key workers and Allied Health workers who are locals or who have a long term connection to community. Through our employment of local employees we have started to see the participants improved understanding of their NDIS plans.

XCA has been working with other providers and sectors to develop service provision models using a mixed mode of service delivery and a holistic approach. Our model provides training and mentoring to our employees.

### **Recommendations**

XCA currently has a strong working relationship with the NDIA and as the only established and registered Indigenous provider in this current space, XCA understands that the government is seeking to improve NDIS targets in a range of different ways.

Following the summary of informed insights above, noting this list is not exhaustive, XCA would like the government to consider the following going forward:

**XTREMECARE AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**

ABN | 978 909 600 21 ACN | 132 379 376

W | [xtremecareaustralia.com.au](http://xtremecareaustralia.com.au) E | [admin@xtremecare.com.au](mailto:admin@xtremecare.com.au)


P | 07 5514 6500



1. The development of a framework or strategy for delivery of disability services to remote areas be considered in consultation with Communities and Key Stakeholders
2. Working with providers and Indigenous communities to explore ways to:
  - a. Build local workforce with consideration of service delivery and administration needs, noting it will require time, resources and that there are community complexities but they are not insurmountable. However, it is expected that the longer-term costs and outcomes will be more effective and sustainable than current practices allow for.
  - b. Capacity build communities, providers and sector. Similar considerations as above. This may involve the NDIS model being revisited to how Indigenous-specific targets can be better met with considerations of the issues shared.
3. Explore developing a service criteria for providers, including consideration of culturally appropriate service delivery for Indigenous communities.
4. XCA's funding requirements be considered to fund critical baseline service components that will then enable remote services ability to better deliver?

We thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns as a sector provider.

Yours sincerely



William Tatipata

Managing Director

XtremeCARE Australia



Marjorie Tatipata

Managing Director

XtremeCARE Australia

11th August 2020

**XTREMECARE AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**

ABN | 978 909 600 21 ACN | 132 379 376

W | xtremecareaustralia.com.au E | admin@xtremecare.com.au

P | 07 5514 6500