

Working Together

Memorandum of Understanding

1. PARTIES

ACROD Limited
Aged and Community Services Australia
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
Carers Australia
COTA National Seniors

2. PREAMBLE

Australia's population is ageing. By 2044, one in four Australians will be aged 65 years or more, double the present proportion. With ageing comes an increase in the incidence of disability. While one in 25 Australians under 65 years has a severe or profound disability, this rises to almost one in four among people aged 65 and over.

The population of people with lifelong disabilities is also ageing. Historically it was rare for people with lifelong disabilities to reach old age, but now it is increasingly common. The needs that arise from ageing do not displace the needs that arise from a lifelong disability: they are in addition. Moreover, the needs associated with old age often arise earlier in people with lifelong disabilities.

The carers – in particular the parents – on whom many people with lifelong disabilities rely are also growing old, with their capacity to provide care for their sons and daughters diminishing as a consequence. There are an estimated 4,100 parents aged over 65 years who are caring for sons and daughters with disabilities at home and a further 2,200 caring for sons and daughters living elsewhere. Many of these carers need extra support and they want to know that alternative care arrangements will be available when they are no longer able to be the primary carer.

Public policy, eligibility for services, funding, service provision and service designs are not keeping pace with these trends. People who are ageing with a disability often require access to both disability and aged care services. But rather than easy-to-traverse service pathways, they encounter bureaucratic barriers and cul de sacs. The aged care-disability linkages between governments and between departments and programs in a single government are often weak or absent, resulting in service gaps and inflexibility. These service gaps place increased pressure on carers at the very time in their lives when their capacity to meet such demands is reduced.

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), representing aged care and disability service providers, service users, carers and seniors, intend to work cooperatively to try to resolve this dysfunctional situation.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the agreement are to:

a. highlight the needs of people who are ageing and have a disability;

- b. highlight the needs of ageing primary carers (usually parents) of people with a disability;
- c. raise awareness within governments of the issues that arise at the interface of aged care and disability services;
- d. assist governments to formulate policy, program and funding guidelines that respond effectively to the needs of people who are ageing with a disability, regardless of program and jurisdictional boundaries;
- e. increase the sharing of knowledge and skills between the ageing , aged care and disability sectors; and
- f. encourage the development, dissemination and adoption of service designs that respond to the needs and choices of people who are ageing with a disability.

4. ACTIVITIES

4.1 ACROD's National Committee on Ageing and Disability, on which all parties to the MOU are represented, will develop strategies, undertake activities and draft policy proposals aimed at achieving the Objectives. This Committee will be the principal entity through which the parties will develop joint approaches.

4.2 ACROD's National Ageing and Disability Conference will be the main (although not the sole) public forum through which the Objectives are advanced. ACROD's National Committee on Ageing and Disability will provide input to this Conference.

4.3 With advice from the National Committee on Ageing and Disability, the parties will develop mechanisms to increase the exchange of knowledge and skills between the disability and aged care sectors and seek to stimulate the development and adoption of service models that respond effectively to the needs and choices of people who are ageing with a disability.

4.4 Where the parties agree that it is relevant and appropriate, they will make joint representations and submissions to Federal, State and Territory governments.

5. TERM

5.1 This MOU is effective from July 2005 and continues until July 2008.

5.2 A party may withdraw from this agreement with one month's notice by notifying the other parties in writing of its intention to withdraw.

5.3 The agreement is cancelled immediately where a majority of parties notify the other parties in writing of their intention to withdraw.

6. AMENDMENT OR VARIATION

6.1 This MOU may be amended or varied by a further MOU in writing duly signed by the parties.

6.2 Notwithstanding the above, schedules to this MOU may be added or varied by the insertion of one or more new schedules duly signed by the parties. Schedules to this MOU may

be removed by agreement between the parties by a note to that effect duly signed by the parties and appended to this MOU.

6.3 This MOU is a voluntary statement of intent and demonstrates the commitment of all parties at the time of signing and for the duration of the MOU. It is not intended to create legally enforceable obligations between the parties.

Signatories to the document are

Mr Ken Baker	Chief Executive	ACROD Ltd
Ms Jennifer Bowers	Chief Executive Officer	Carers Australia
Mr Greg Mundy	Chief Executive Officer	Aged and Community Services Australia
Mr David Deans	Chief Executive	COTA National Seniors
Ms Maryanne Diamond	Chief Executive Officer	Australian Federation of Disability Organisations