NDS CoP Report Cover Sheet 16.08.18 -

**Developing a model for ‘communities of practice’ to align with the NDIS roll-out in Victoria**

**Cover note**

“*Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis[[1]](#footnote-1)”*

Communities of practice are a tried and tested approach to encourage innovation in many industries and sectors.

This paper informs a project being led by National Disability Services (Vic) as a member of the Collaboration Panel. The project aims to establish a central coordination function to support the set up and operation of one or more communities of practice across Victoria, to help local service systems respond to changes required by the introduction of NDIS and National Aged Care Reforms.

The project aims to identify and support 1-2 communities of practice through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, structured to align with the geographic roll out of the NDIS in Victoria. The grant offered for the 2015/16 financial year will enable NDS to develop the necessary infrastructure to roll-out targeted cross-sector communities of practice networks in Victoria. The ongoing delivery of this project is contingent on further funding.

The attached report reviews literature on successful communities of practice (see Appendix One) and lists a few examples suggested by key stakeholders (see Appendix Two). Advice is provided on key design features (section 3) and proposes next steps (Section 4).

Themes of innovation, quality and participatory evaluation have come up as potential topics for exploration through a cross-sectoral community of practice model. While the focus is sector capacity development, the shift to a responsive, person-centred service system will require the community of practice to demonstrate leadership and shared vision, clear focus and objectives, effective organisation and documentation, deliver measurable outcomes and meaningfully engage people with disabilities and their careers, as well as others in the community sector and wider community.

A forum to stimulate cross-sector discussion and explore participant interest in late February/March is suggested, commencing with NE Melbourne, followed by Bendigo and Ballarat.

It is suggested that governance of the project might be efficiently managed through a combined approach with the other sector capacity development activities underway under Collaboration Panel auspices, and to cross-pollinate or combine forums and events where possible, as the three other Collaboration Projects get underway.

Kind regards,

Cath Smith, 4 December 2015.

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1. This definition of a community of practice is from Wenger, E., McDermott, R. & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.

   Literature review and advice to develop Communities of Practice to align with the roll-out of the NDIS in Victoria. [Cath Smith](mailto:cath.smith@changesmith.com.au), Changesmith Consulting Tel 0421 350 643 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)