



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EVALUATION OF THE REVISED DISABILITY
SUPPORT PENSION ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

STAGE 4 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PAPER

30 APRIL 2020



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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Social Services (DSS) appointed Health Outcomes International (HOI) in March 2020 to **evaluate the Revised Disability Support Pension (DSP) Assessment Process**.

The purpose of this document is to provide nominated stakeholders with the background to the evaluation and the issues to be explored during telephone consultation.

1.1 CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

From 1 January 2015, a revised assessment process was implemented for some DSP claims, to provide additional rigour to the DSP assessment process and improve and uphold the integrity of the welfare system.

Based on a review of DSP performance reporting conducted by HOI, it was noted that there had been a slight decrease in the percentage of people with disability who received a DSP payment, down from 17.7 per cent in 2016–17 to 17.4 per cent in 2018–19. The continued decrease in DSP recipients had been primarily attributed to the policy changes associated with improved assessment processes and streamlining eligibility.

In 2015, HOI was engaged to undertake the evaluation of the revised assessment process for the DSP to review the effectiveness of the revised DSP Assessment Process in achieving the specified policy objectives and to identify the related impact (if any) the measure had on applicants. In 2018, this was followed-on by a performance audit of the DSP, undertaken by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO).

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This evaluation will build on the initial evaluation and provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the revised assessment process, using the additional data available from 2015/16 – 2017/18 with the possibility of obtaining further data for 2018/19. In addition, the evaluation will utilise financial information from Services Australia and measure the cost-effectiveness of the revised assessment process, which will address the ANAO Recommendation 3 (November 2018):

Recommendation 3

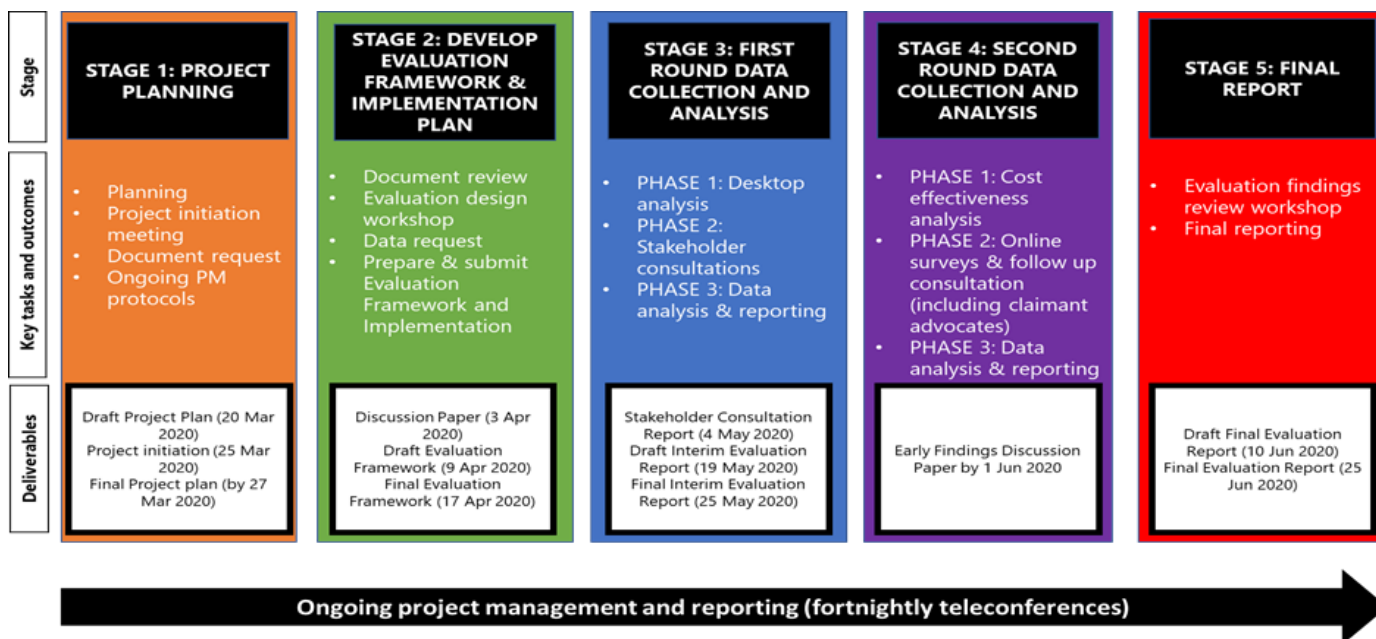
That Social Services conduct a further review in 2019 of the efficacy of 2015 changes to the DSP claims process to require raw medical records or evidence and a DMA by a GCD. The review should include:

1. *an assessment of both effectiveness (including cost-effectiveness) and efficiency; and*
2. *consultation with both internal and external stakeholders.*

1.3 OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

HOI designed a five-stage methodology to address the evaluation objectives, as illustrated over page in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Illustrative Methodological Overview



1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STAGE 4 CONSULTATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation in Stage 4 is to invite nominated stakeholders to discuss

- the cost effectiveness of the reform,
- impacts of the changes, and
- opportunities for improvement.

The following chapters present the questions that will be asked in a semi-structured telephone interview with a HOI consultant. Stakeholders will also be given the option of providing a written response.

1.5 EVALUATION TEAM CONTACTS

Should you have any queries in relation to the evaluation, please feel free to contact either:

Health Outcomes International

Kelly Batsiokis

Senior Consultant (Project Manager)
 m: 0411 067 989 e: kelly@hoi.com.au

Lilian Lazarevic

Managing Director (Project Director)
 m: 0419 839 877 e: lilian@hoi.com.au

Department of Social Services

Darrin Smith

Assistant Director, Disability Support Pension Projects Carer & Disability Payments Branch
 p: 02 61462477 e: Darrin.smith@dss.gov.au

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION WITH DISABILITY ADVOCATES

This chapter outlines the issues to be discussed with the nominated informants related impacts and opportunities to improve the revised DSP Assessment Process.

2.1 ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION WITH DISABILITY ADVOCATES

The questions listed in Table 2.1 will be used as a guide to help direct the consultation and may be changed or omitted as relevant to each stakeholder consulted.

Note that all feedback provided by the informant will be considered and there will be no direct attribution to the respondent.

Table 2.1: Key Research Questions – Disability Advocates

Research Domain	Key Research Questions
Effectiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have the changes introduced improved the consistency and quality of the DSP assessment process and in what way? Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How satisfied are stakeholders with the revised assessment process? 2. To what extent has the revised DSP contributed to the ability to achieve consistency and equity in DSP claims assessment across Australia? Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Is the application and assessment process appropriate and accessible for all potential applicants? – Are there appropriate supports to enable applicants to participate in the assessment processes as needed? – What is the demographic and disability profile of those with unsuccessful claims? Are there one or more groups of applicants who fare less well in the assessment for eligibility process? 3. Are review/appeal outcome decisions communicated to applicants timely and clearly? Is there equity of access to these processes at present? 4. Are there any risks as a result of implementation of the revised DSP assessment process? 5. What are the known outcomes of those who are not considered eligible for the DSP? Do they seek alternative support?
Efficiency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Has the revised assessment process impacted in any way on the way manifest claims are identified, assessed and processed? 7. What has been the impact on the revised process on DSP claims lodged, assessment processes, referrals mad, claims granted, and appeals lodged? Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Has the introduction of the revised DSP had sufficient impact to justify the changed process? – Are there cohorts where the impact has been sufficient to warrant continuation of the process for that group? – To what extent have the changes to the DSP assessment process impacted stakeholders and claimants?

Research Domain	Key Research Questions
Opportunities for improvement	<p>8. What have been the key issues, barriers and enablers to implementation of the revised DSP assessment process which may impact ability to achieve intended outcomes? Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Are there opportunities to reduce any duplication in assessment or decision making or improve other aspects of information collection, sharing or management?– What have been the enablers and barriers to an effective transition stage?– What, if any, have been the unintended consequences or risks associated with the reform? <p>9. In reviewing the administration of the revised DSP assessment process, including the data collected and management systems, what if any changes are recommended to the administration of DSP in the future?</p>