

## Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW

27 February 2008

Dear Minister

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on JCA. However, my comments can only be brief given the short timeframe. I would welcome any future opportunities for further input.

The Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA) is the peak body for people from a non-English speaking background (NESB) with disability and their families and carers in NSW. MDAA is the only advocacy service in NSW available specifically to people from a NESB with disability, their families and carers. MDAA aims to promote, protect and secure the rights and interests of people from a NESB with disability and their families and carers in NSW.

MDAA has been concerned about the limited time allowed for JCAs, particularly when assessing people with complex needs such as people from NESB with disability. Cross cultural communication requires time to build understanding and trust and the limited timeframe does not allow sufficient opportunities for this to happen. When an interpreter is involved the amount of time required doubles. Effective communication is of critical importance to the quality of the assessment and the assessment outcome.

MDAA is of the view that cultural competence is an important quality for Assessors and therefore, training should be provided so that they can acquire these skills. MDAA has developed a two-hour online training module on cultural awareness for the dept of Human Services. However, I haven't received any feedback as to whether this module has been made available to Assessors. MDAA sees this training module as a start to bring about an increased awareness of cross-cultural issues. It doesn't go as far as providing the competencies required to respond effectively and professionally to the complex issues of working with diversity. This also applies to other disability related online training modules provided to Assessors as they are not sufficient to facilitate skill development. MDAA recommends that face to face cultural competence training workshops be provided to Assessors.

Kind Regards

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